

ERA BANNER



Business awards

Chamber honours Aurora's outstanding companies

BUSINESS/PAGE 7

Celebration of Arts

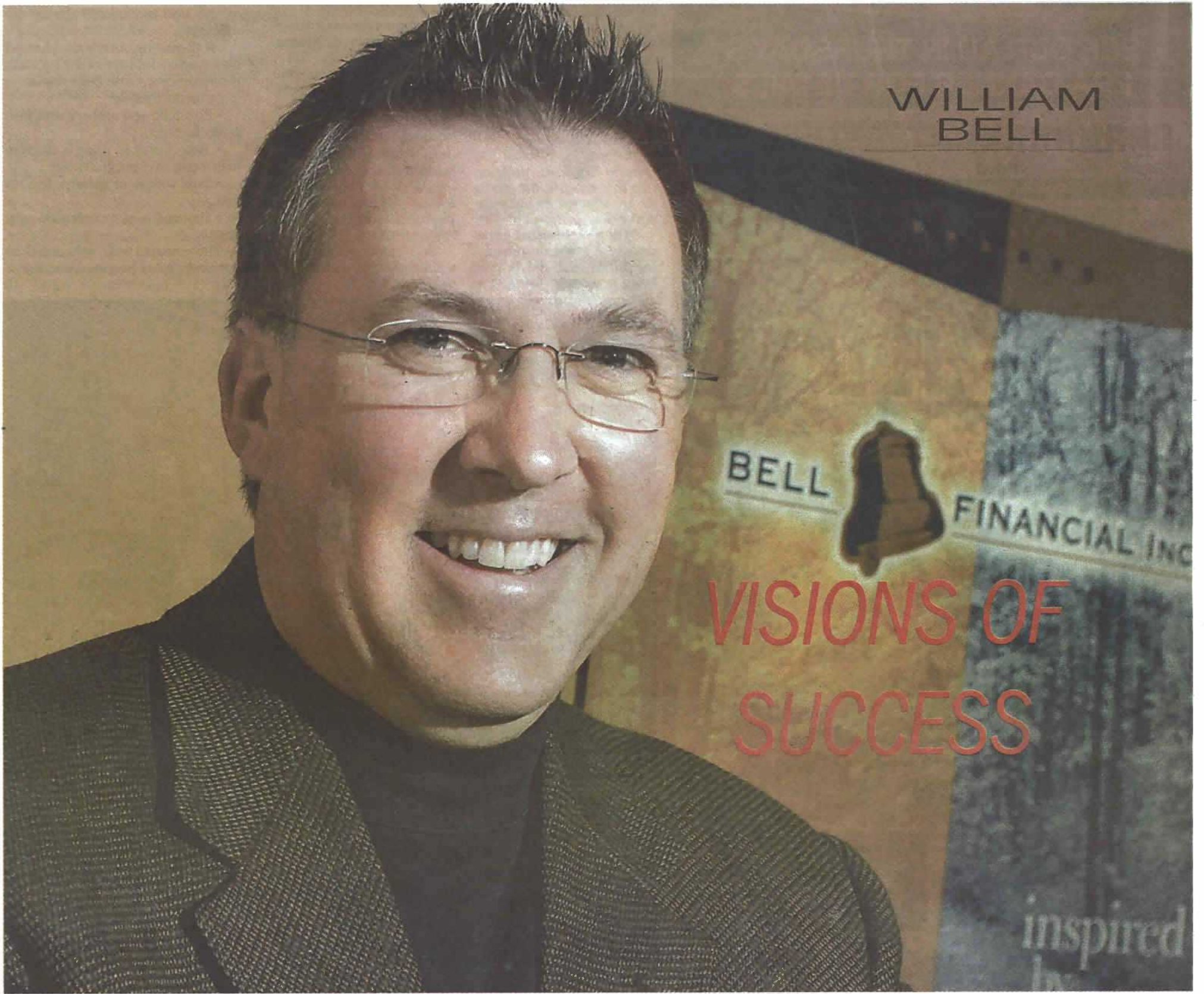
York's young talent takes stage at gala

ENTERTAINMENT/PAGE 6

Tigers on tear

Three straight wins last week have Aurora firmly at top of division

SPORTS/PAGE 17



SIMPLE PATH TO WEALTH

Success starts
with vision, author
William Bell says

For William Bell, the answer to living a fulfilling life is simple. Have a vision. Once you have that, you can start building toward the life you want, the 48-year-old financial planner and author insists.

At the helm of Aurora-based Bell Financial Inc. since 1996, Mr. Bell isn't what people might expect when meeting a financial planner.

Friendly and jovial with a keen sense of humour, one of the reasons he decided to write *One Step to Wealth* five years ago was to show people financial planning doesn't have to be based on fear, as so often is the case.

"People are more likely to do well if they are inspired. A lot of financial planning is fear based," the Newmarket resident explained, noting most people fear they don't have enough money or aren't saving enough as opposed to focusing on what they want to have and how to get there. "Before you can be successful with money, you need to know what you want to do."

Stressed people should see money as a motivator. Once a person's attitude shifts, financial planning becomes easier, Mr. Bell said.

Ironically, giving people advice on how to invest and save their money wasn't in Mr. Bell's plans.

From as far back as he could remember, growing up, he always wanted to be a teacher.

Growing up in a family of five where he was the middle child sandwiched between two older sisters and a younger sister and brother, his first work experience was in his father's hardware store.

It is working at that store Mr. Bell believes he first toyed with the idea of owning a business.

But the first path he chose was to pursue teaching. Armed with a strategy of taking English and math at the University of Waterloo with the idea that schools would always need teachers in those subjects, he graduated with a bachelor of math.

From there, he attended teachers college at Brock University in St. Catharines.

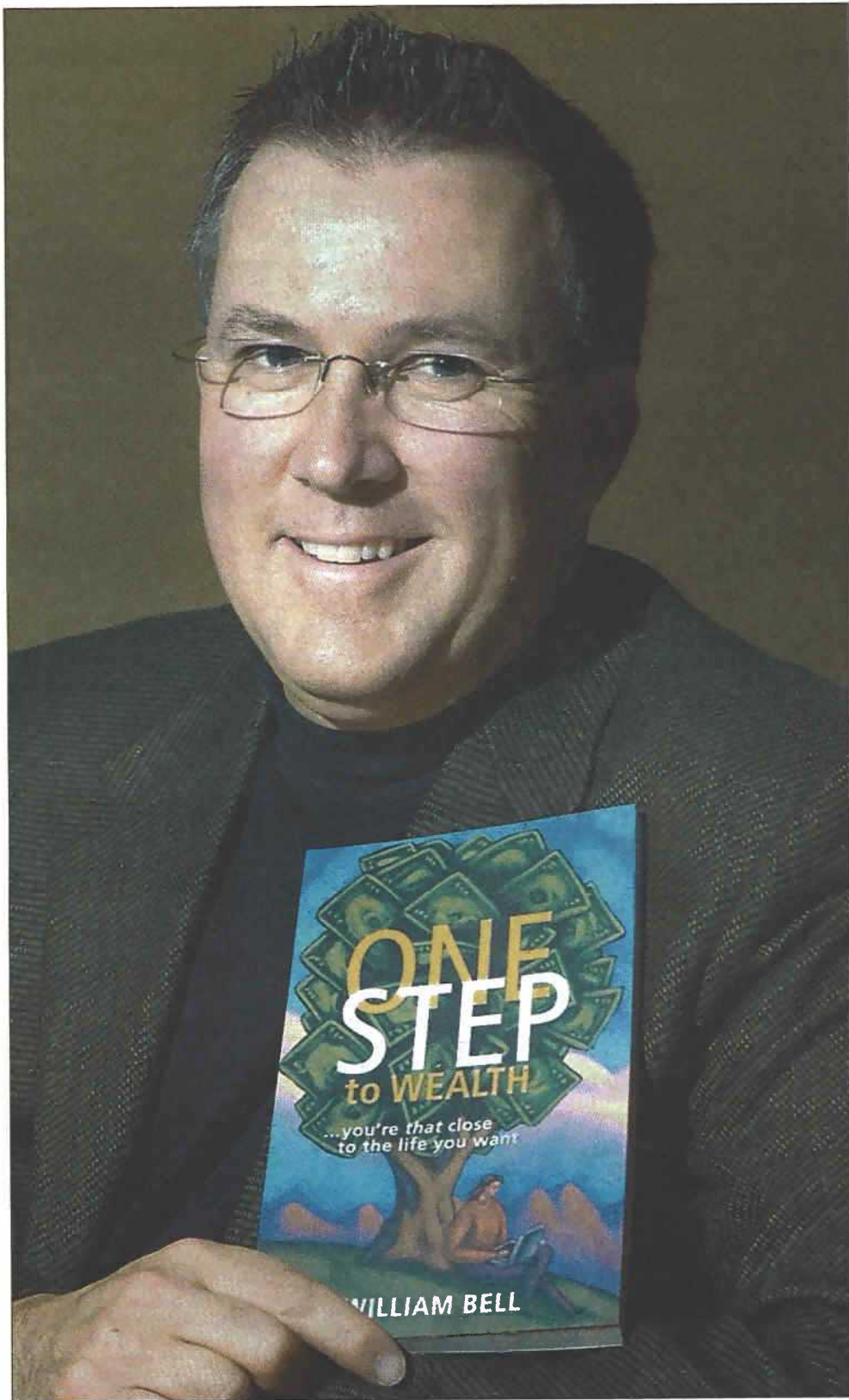
It was during his university years he met Ellen, his wife of 24 years.

She was a friend of his sister, Nancy, and once Mr. Bell met Ellen, he invited himself along to a baseball game and the pair have been inseparable since.

Married right after university, they soon moved to Muskoka, where Mr. Bell landed his first teaching job at Rosseau Lake College.

Ecstatic at the opportunity to start teaching right after graduation, the Bells also became house parents to 30 boys.

• STORY BY CAROLINE GRECH • COVER PHOTOGRAPHY BY BILL ROBERTS •



Aurora financial planner William Bell is known for his book, *One Step to Wealth*.

"It was great. We jumped into life with that," Mr. Bell said, laughing at the memory.

While he enjoyed teaching for four years, true to his own business philosophy, he realized he had a different vision for what he wanted to do with the rest of his life.

"I wanted to own my own business," Mr. Bell said.

Always good with numbers, Mr. Bell started working for an insurance company and eventually opened Bell Financial Inc.

While the jump between teaching and financial planning may seem a stretch, Mr. Bell said the skills required to be a good teacher, mirror those necessary to be a financial planner.

"Educating clients is part of my job. It's important for an adviser to be able to listen and inspire," the father of three explained, adding his job isn't to tell people what to do with their money so much as to tell them how to get where they want to go.

Admitting the message in his book isn't one people haven't heard before, taking a right-brained approach to money issues differs dramatically from most advice on money matters where numbers take centre stage.

"Money is one of the most emotional subjects. You can't have a conversation about money without emotion. How you relate to money is what is getting in the way of you being successful," Mr. Bell said.

With his first book being successful, he has already started writing another he expects will be in stores by March.

The new book will be more of a nuts and bolts how-to publication on financial planning.

While work is clearly important to him, when he is not out trying to help people get an upper hand on their finances, Mr. Bell can usually be found on a golf course.

Stumbling on the sport at 13 when his father came home with a set of golf clubs for him, he hasn't stopped and hopes to play until he is 95.

That first set of clubs was left-handed and, despite being a right-handed athlete, 35 years later he is still using left-handed clubs. Pros have even suggested he might be better off to switch sides.

When he isn't golfing, Mr. Bell spends time with his wife and daughters Leah, 20, Deandra, 17, and Alexis, 15.

He is proud of his relationship with his family.

"The girls are great people," Mr. Bell said, adding he and his wife always wanted to have a good relationship with their daughters.

Inspired to help people, he doesn't plan on keeping his financial expertise to himself.

"I want to be a positive influence on the most people I can in the most profound way I can," Mr. Bell said.

While his book is not available in bookstores, copies are available at his office. Call 905-713-3765 or go to Bell Financial's website at www.bellfinancial.ca for more