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FINANCE: CIBC celebrates 140 years

By BOB BOUGHNER

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Gerl Mehlenbacher has seen numerous changes at the CIBC branch at 99 King Street in historic downtown Chatham during her 37 year banking career.

And so have Maureen Robert and Teri Warren, who have each been with the branch for the past 33 years.

The trio were among the 22 current bank employees and a number of former employees who turned out Friday to celebrate the branch's 140th anniversary.

Peter Weller, a CIBC associate vice-president, attributed the bank's success in Chatham-Kent to the hard work and dedication of employees such as Mehlenbacher, Robert and Warren.

They were joined in the celebration by retired employees Donna Agar, who served more than 30 years and Audrey Chevallier, who devoted more than 40 years to the branch.

Branch manager Angie Shreve noted the Canadian Bank of Commerce was founded in 1867, and the Standard Bank of Canada in 1873. The Standard Bank was acquired by the Imperial Bank of Commerce in 1928.

The Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce was created through the mergers of the Canadian Bank of Commerce and the Imperial Bank of Canada in 1961.

After the merger of the Imperial and the Commerce in 1961, CIBC had two branches next to each other in downtown Chatham - one at 99 King Street and the other at 101 King Street.

Shreve said the two branches combined in a new branch building at 99 King Street in 1969.

A 1977 description of the branch area read as follows: "The branch is well located in the central downtown core and services the city and surrounding rural area.

The economy is buoyant and there is a good mix of manufacturing, industrial, food processing and retail businesses. Farmland is highly productive and the growth pattern is expected to continue."

A cheque for \$1,500 was presented during the anniversary celebration to Community Living Chatham-Kent for its anti-bullying Respect Tour, which has been seen by more than 14,000 area students in over 42 schools.

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