

CONDOLENCE MOTION

Moved by: Councillor Vincent Crisanti

Seconded by: Councillor Rob Ford

The Mayor and Members of Toronto City Council are deeply saddened to learn of the passing of Mary Avis Harker on Saturday, January 24, 2015.

Mary Avis Harker (nee McNally) was born on November 7, 1932 in Georgetown, Ontario to parents Avis and Hugh McNally. Mary was the eldest of 5 children. When Mary turned 16, she moved to Toronto. In 1954, Mary McNally married Ronald George Harker. They had two daughters and were loving grandparents to three grandchildren. In 1957, Mary and Ron bought a house in Rexdale (North Etobicoke) which they lived in for the rest of their lives. Over the nearly 60 years living in Rexdale, Mary was actively involved in many aspects of the community.

Mary began her career at the Jamestown Unit with a friend. These two inspirational women took it upon themselves to nurture and empower women and children who had not had an easy time in their life. They formed the Nightgown Brigade, which helped women living in Jamestown who were being physically threatened inside or outside their home. Mary served as a board member for the Rexdale Community Legal Clinic and worked in close association with Albion Neighbourhood Services. She actively supported the Dorothy Ley Hospice, Ernestine's, Rexdale Women's Centre, Youth Without Shelter, Albion Neighbourhood Services, Thistletown Multi-Service Centre, Rexdale Legal Clinic, and was devoted to the Community Police Liaison Committee. Mary also volunteered for organizations like the Heart and Stroke Foundation, Canadian Cancer Society, and the United Appeal. This ignited Mary's tireless commitment to helping others and to make the world a better place.

The many staff and board members, as well as community agencies and elected representatives in North Etobicoke owe a debt of gratitude to Mary: first and foremost, for her helpfulness and commitment during her long years working as a constituency assistant for various elected officials, including federal, municipal and provincial. Over the years, she zigzagged across party lines, and across electoral boundaries. In addition to her career spent making government systems work better for people, Mary will be missed for her hundreds of hours of volunteer commitments in so many places of need, and for her warm, generous and fun-loving spirit. She saw no divisions, and wanted all of the people in her community to know: accept and love all the others, just as she did.

The City Clerk is requested to convey, on behalf of the Members of Toronto City Council, our sincere sympathy to Mary Avis Harker's family.

February 10, 2015