

CONDOLENCE MOTION

Moved by: Councillor Janet Davis

Seconded by: Councillor Joe Mihevc

The Mayor and Members of Toronto City Council are deeply saddened to learn of the passing of Dr. Eldon Byron Comfort on June 2nd 2015.

At age 102, Dr. Comfort was one of Canada's oldest World War II veterans. He is predeceased by his wife, Betty, and is survived by his three children Nancy, Janet and Jim, his 5 grandchildren and his 4 great-grandchildren. While his family will forever miss his gentle humour, his witty limericks, and his ability to school anyone in a game of chess, it is his contributions to social justice that are his lasting legacy.

A career teacher and principal in Toronto and North York, Dr. Comfort worked as an educator to encourage critical thinking about conflict. He challenged those who favoured war as a means to solve conflict to answer not "Who is my enemy?", but "Who are my brothers and sisters?" While he worked toward the goals of social justice over his career, it was following his retirement in 1972 that he was able to devote his efforts full-time.

A founding member of the United Church of Canada, it was through his local parishes that Dr. Comfort organized and participated in many actions in support of the poor, of refugees and of those who shared his belief that violence only begets more violence. He helped found Witness for Peace Nicaragua in the early 1980s and travelled there many times over the years, venturing unarmed into conflict zones to help prevent attacks by the contras against civilians. Locally, he demonstrated regularly, participating in sit-ins, marches and advocacy action against the mounting crisis of homelessness in Toronto. He supported efforts to ensure vulnerable refugees had safe haven, shelter, and legal support. He joined The Council of Canadians and the activist group 'Homes Not Bombs' to further his reach, and was at the front lines of the movement Veterans Against Nuclear Arms through the Cold War.

A great lover of the natural world, his ashes will be interred in a family plot next to those of his wife of 63 years in Canmore, Alberta. Dr. Comfort's family also plans to commemorate him with a wildflower and milkweed butterfly garden in Toronto marked with his simple and clear message "Wars don't end wars."

The City Clerk is requested to convey, on behalf of the Members of Toronto City Council, our sincere sympathy to Dr. Eldon Comfort's family.

July 7, 2015