



CONDOLENCE MOTION

Moved by: Councillor Michael Thompson

Seconded by: Mayor John Tory

The Mayor and Members of Toronto City Council are saddened to learn of the passing of John Kam on November 18, 2019, at the age of 68.

John worked for the City of Toronto for nearly 34 years in increasingly significant roles, retiring in 2002 as a Senior Financial Budget Systems analyst. But John's lifelong passion was Caribbean culture and his beloved Toronto Caribbean Festival.

Raised in Woodbrook, Port-of-Spain, just a few metres from the home of one of Trinidad and Tobago's greatest band leaders, John was bitten by the carnival band bug early. He played with Stephen Leung's band in Trinidad for five years before immigrating to Canada with his family in 1969. After a decade as a Caribana parade spectator in Toronto, John joined Eddie Merchant's band. After five years, he moved to the Arnold Hughes & Associates band for two years before forming his own group, the Caribbean Canadian Cultural Club, or the 4Cs, which performed for another four years.

John won the King of the Band title in 1990 and 1991, and shared the top spot the following year, making him the first person to win three straight competitions.

John's commitment to the Caribbean festival went far beyond competing in the parade. In 1992, he joined the festival's management committee and was elected treasurer the next year. John held that post until 1998, when he took a four-year-long task as committee Chair. In the following years, John continued to serve the event, first as festival producer. And later as Toronto Mas Bands Association liaison manager and the management committee's liaison manager.

Within the Festival community, John was admired for his dedication to the event, his eagerness to engage young people in Caribbean festival culture, his willingness to share his knowledge and advice with others, his commitment to making a positive difference in his community, and his unwavering honesty in word and deed.

The City Clerk is requested to convey to John Kam's family, on behalf of the Members of Toronto City Council, our sincere gratitude for his contributions to the City of Toronto, and our deepest sympathy on his passing.

December 18, 2019