

***Expression of Condolence for  
Joseph "Jo Jo" Bennett by Toronto City Council***

**Moved by: Councillor Mike Colle**

**Seconded by: Councillor John Filion**

The Mayor and Members of Toronto City Council are deeply saddened to learn of the passing of Joseph "Jo Jo" Bennett on August 3, 2021 at the age of 81.

Born in 1940 in Kingston, Jamaica, Joseph Bennett was the youngest of nine children. He attended the Kingston's Alpha Boys School at the age of 10 where his passion for music began. His studies of jazz and the classics set him on a life-long musical journey. At 16, Joseph Bennett left school and joined the Jamaica Military Band as lead trumpeter and later, became a songwriter and music arranger for Lians Thelwell and the Celestials, a popular band in Montego Bay. He joined a well-known group in Jamaica – Byron Lee and the Dragonaires - and began touring and recording albums with Mr. Lee, taking up the coronet and flugelhorn.

After visiting Toronto in the late 1960s, Joseph Bennett decided to settle in the City, joining other Jamaican musicians that had made Toronto their home. Joseph Bennett recruited other Jamaican musicians and soon the musical group Jo Jo and the Fugitives was born, going on later to become one of the main acts performing at The West Indies Federation Club on Brunswick Avenue at College Street. The group's energy and distinct sound were a hit with audiences, and they played at venues around the City and toured the Province. In 1970, Joseph Bennett went on to record a solo album and later started his own record label.

Later, Joseph Bennett partnered with Fergus Hambleton who also worked with reggae star, Leroy Sibbles, to form their band, the Sattalites. Throughout the '80s and '90s, the Sattalites went on to record albums, win Juno Awards, and tour the Country and beyond, becoming the first Canadian band to be invited to perform at Jamaica's Reggae Sunsplash festival. Through their reggae and pop harmonies, the band helped introduce Canadians to Caribbean music.

Joseph Bennett's influential legacy on the City's Caribbean reggae music scene is celebrated in Toronto's Reggae Lane mural, where he is included alongside other trailblazers of the local Jamaican music scene.

Joseph Bennett is remembered not only as one of the Country's most talented musicians, but as a great friend, role model, and mentor, who was patient, generous, and kind. Joseph Bennett became a teacher to countless other young musicians through the creation of the Sattalites Music School with Hambleton in the City's Little Jamaica neighbourhood in 1980.

Jo Jo will be deeply missed by the City of Toronto.

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

October 1, 2021