

Expression of Condolence for Ray Biggart by Toronto City Council

Moved by: **Councillor Paul Ainslie**

Seconded by: **Mayor John Tory**

The Mayor and Members of the Toronto City Council are deeply saddened to learn of the passing of Ray Biggart on November 11, 2021.

Ray Biggart, born June 22, 1942, passed away on November 11, 2021. Ray is survived by his wife Lorrie, his daughter Katherine (Gareth Tingling) and his son Andrew (Barbara). Ray will be greatly missed by his entire family, including his four grandchildren Emma, Alexander, Daniela, and Julia. Ray is also survived by his sister Barbara Dowds.

Ray led a fascinating life which included traveling the globe in 1969 in a propeller plane as a reporter for the Toronto Telegram. He soon became the Assistant City Editor and Editor of Toronto Week Magazine for the Telegram. When "The Tely" folded in 1971, Ray, at age 29, became the City Editor of the Toronto Sun upon its creation. He also opened its Queen's Park Bureau before leaving the news business to join the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto as Executive Assistant to Paul Godfrey, then Metropolitan Toronto Chairman.

One of the most interesting aspects of that time was his efforts, along with Paul Godfrey, Herb Solway, Don McDougall and others, to, as Ray told it, "glad-hand, cajole and persuade baseball executives that Toronto was the best location for any Major League Baseball expansion." These efforts resulted in the Toronto Blue Jays coming to Toronto. Ray was at the field with his family when the Jays first took the field in Dunedin and when they first took the field in Toronto on April 7, 1977. When it was time to build a new stadium, Ray was the senior civil servant responsible for all political and media relations necessary to achieve approval of the 'Skydome'. He also ran the World Series parades in 1992 and 1993.

Not satisfied with only doing World Series Parades, Ray was also on the Board of Directors of the Toronto Santa Claus Parade after Metropolitan Toronto took over operation of the annual parade from Eaton's Department store. It brought great joy to Ray to see the millions of happy children show up each year to see Santa Claus while Ray rode a golf cart along the parade route and assisted in supervising the fruits of the labour of the Santa Claus Parade staff. After working with Metropolitan Toronto Chairmen Godfrey, Flynn and Tonks, Ray then became Commissioner of Metropolitan Toronto Parks and Property where he stayed until he retired in 1998

No recounting of Ray's life would be complete without a reference to Magnolia Square in Florida, which is where Ray and Lorrie bought a condo in 1976, to enjoy the warmth of Florida and, equally important, be a short distance from the Jays' Spring Training Facility. Many winters were enjoyed in Florida with family and friends while Ray served numerous terms on the Board of the condominium corporation. During retirement Ray continued as an avid reader and continued to pursue his love of travel with Lorrie. During their time together Ray and Lorrie traveled to almost every country in Europe, as well as to Thailand, Japan, and China. Ray will be dearly missed by his entire family. Most missed will be his quick wit, his wink, his endless source of knowledge, and his desire to correct the grammar of his children and his grandchildren. It was certainly a life well-lived. Ray's family can best express its feelings towards Ray/Dad/Grandpa by quoting Ray's mother, Doris Biggart, "Thank you for being you." We will miss you greatly.

The City Clerk is requested to convey, on behalf of the Members of Toronto City Council, our sincerest sympathy to Ray Biggart's family.

December 15, 2021