

Expression of Condolence for Sheila Cary-Meagher by Toronto City Council

Moved by: Councillor Paula Fletcher

Seconded by: Councillor Shelley Carroll

The Mayor and Members of Toronto City Council are deeply saddened to learn of the passing of Sheila Cary-Meagher on January 13, 2022, at the age of 86.

Throughout her many years of public service, Sheila was a fierce and passionate fighter for high-quality and equitable education for all children. Sheila always pushed the boundaries, and was known widely as a 'force of nature' for her relentless dedication to her causes.

Sheila served as a trustee on the Toronto Board of Education from 1972 to 1986. When the Provincial Government's funding formula threatened cutbacks in the following years, she worked within the East End Parent Network, a group of determined parent activists, to protect students in public education.

Returning to her Trustee role on the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) in 2000, Sheila was determined to ensure that parents always had a voice – never simply fighting on their behalf, but always alongside them.

Sheila's dedication to the ground-breaking Inner City School Program of the former Toronto Board of Education, which ensured that educators, students, and their families got the resources they needed to close the gaps, led her to pioneer the Toronto District School Board's Model Schools for Inner Cities program.

When the Toronto District School Board tore down a number of school playgrounds, it was Sheila who made sure they were replaced, and when a proposal came forward to close pools in local schools, Sheila fought to ensure they stayed open. She also played a leading role in maintaining the Heritage Languages Program.

While her legacy exists in these programs, resources and facilities, Sheila's impact is felt keenly by the countless people who have learned from her unstoppable commitment over the years, and the families she assisted in traversing the bureaucracy to help their kids. Sheila's tenacity and dedication have inspired so many parents, students and educators. In so many ways, Toronto's education system is indebted to her work.

Sheila passed peacefully after a battle with pancreatic cancer. Her family will be organizing a celebration of Sheila's life once pandemic restrictions allow for such a gathering.

The City Clerk is requested to convey, on behalf of the members of Toronto City Council, our sincere sympathy to Sheila Cary-Meagher's community, friends and family.

February 2, 2022