

Expression of Condolence for Ronnie Hawkins by Toronto City Council

Moved by: Mayor John Tory

Seconded by: Councillor Mike Colle

The Mayor and Members of Toronto City Council are deeply saddened to learn of the passing of Ronnie Hawkins, celebrated singer-songwriter and talent scout, who passed away on May 29, 2022 at the age of 87. Ronnie Hawkins was a bedrock on the Toronto music scene and many of the greatest musical stars who have come out of this City would point to a Ronnie Hawkins connection.

Ronnie Hawkins was known by his adoring fans as Mr. Dynamo, Sir Ronnie, Rompin' Ronnie and the Hawk. He began his foray into music in his hometown state of Arkansas where he formed his band, the Hawks. He found limited success and decided to launch a Canadian tour in 1958 on the advice of fellow musician Conway Twitty.

Ronnie Hawkins produced several hits including "Ruby Baby," "Mary Lou" and "Who do you Love." While performing sold-out shows in clubs such as Le Coq D'or, and the Nickelodeon on Yonge Street, Ronnie Hawkins mentored several musicians and continued to do so throughout his career. Many flocked to Ronnie Hawkins over the years to learn his craft, and the list of mentees that benefitted from his guidance included Robbie Robertson, Garth Hudson, Levon Helm, and David Clayton-Thomas.

The Hawk received multiple awards for his musical influence including two Juno Awards, and was inducted into the Rockabilly Hall of Fame. Ronnie Hawkins was also made an Officer of the Order of Canada for his contributions to the Canadian music scene.

Ronnie will be remembered for his enormous stage presence, acrobatic performances and also his rigorous boot camp-style training. As the "godfather" of Canadian rock and roll, Ronnie Hawkins' mark on the genre was immortalized on the Canadian Walk of Fame on "Ronnie Hawkins Day" on October 4, 2002.

The City Clerk is asked to convey, on behalf of Members of Toronto City Council, our sincere sympathies to his wife Wanda, and his three children Robbie, Leah and Ronnie Jr., and all those whose lives he touched.

June 1, 2022