

Expression of Condolence for Barbara Caplan by Toronto City Council

Moved by: Mayor Olivia Chow

Seconded by: Councillor Frances Nunziata

The Mayor and Members of Toronto City Council are deeply saddened to learn of the passing of Barbara Caplan, a former Toronto City Clerk who passed away on November 13, 2023, at the age of 78.

Barbara began her career with the former City of Toronto as Executive Committee Secretary and Director of Secretariat. She moved on to become the first and only woman to hold the office of City Clerk in the former municipality of Toronto. Barbara's time as City Clerk was marked by her work during several Mayoral administrations and Council terms, as well as her immense contributions to the management and modernization of the City Clerk's Office.

Barbara oversaw the introduction of the City's first website and launched a series of exhibitions showcasing archival material at St. Lawrence Market. She overhauled support services for Members of Council, championed the introduction of the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA), and was involved in hosting many high-profile dignitaries including Queen Elizabeth II, and then Prince and Princess of Wales, Charles and Diana. She also participated in the City's international knowledge exchanges and led her team through several elections and by-elections. As a Returning Officer, she increased accessibility for voters.

Following her retirement in 1997, Barbara remained active and engaged in the community. Her passion for engagement was evident in her contributions to various boards such as Yonge Dundas Square, Performing Arts Lodges Toronto, Homes First Society, and in serving on her own condo board. She will be remembered as someone whose career was defined by a commitment to lifelong public service and positive institutional change. She leaves behind a legacy as a forward-thinking leader, whose work touched upon nearly every aspect of the City Clerk's Office as we know it today. Barbara was predeceased by her husband, Michael; and her parents, Jack and Grace.

The City Clerk is requested to convey, on behalf of Members of Toronto City Council, our sincere sympathy to Barbara's sister, Laura (Greg); brother, David (Mary); her stepchildren, Maria-Elena and Ashley; her extended family; her former colleagues; and to all those whose lives she impacted through her work.

December 13, 2023