

## ***Expression of Condolence for Norman Jewison by Toronto City Council***

**Moved by: Mayor Olivia Chow**

**Seconded by: Councillor Brad Bradford,  
Councillor Mike Colle,  
Councillor Paula Fletcher, and  
Councillor Chris Moise**

The Mayor and Members of Toronto City Council are deeply saddened to learn of the passing of Norman Jewison, CC, OOnt – one of Canada's most iconic and acclaimed filmmakers – who passed away on January 20, 2024, at the age of 97.

Norman Jewison grew up in Toronto's Beach neighbourhood where his passion for the arts first began as a child, while watching the latest Hollywood films at the local theatre. His vocation as a great storyteller began by re-enacting dramatic scenes from the movies for his friends.

He served briefly in the Royal Canadian Navy in the mid-1940s and during the Second World War. Following his military service, he travelled throughout the southern United States where he first encountered racial injustice, a profound experience that would later inform his work in film. Witnessing racial segregation would inspire his most famous films, particularly his 1967 social drama *In the Heat of the Night*.

In the late 1940s, he returned to Toronto where he attended Victoria College at the University of Toronto and earned his Bachelor of Arts. In addition to his studies, he participated in several theatrical school productions as a writer, actor, and director.

His career began as a television director in the early 1950s with the BBC in London. He moved back to Canada in 1951, to eventually work as a director at the CBC in Toronto. Seven years later, he headed to New York to work for CBS. He would go on to work on the Judy Garland Show and it was there that he met Tony Curtis, who suggested that Norman start working on feature films. As a result, Norman moved to Hollywood later that year and his first feature film *40 Pounds of Trouble* saw him directing Tony Curtis. His next two films were comedies that featured Hollywood legend Doris Day, *The Thrill of it All* and *Send Me No Flowers*.

One of Norman's early successes came in 1959 with an hour-long television special, *Tonight With Belafonte*, featuring the music of Harry Belafonte. At the time, the program

set a precedent as the first television special dedicated to a Black performer.

Throughout his career, Norman used light entertainment to address important topics such as racism and injustice that deeply impacted him. He became a motion picture director with his film, *The Cincinnati Kid* (1965) and over the next two decades was part of multiple films that experienced great success including: *The Russians Are Coming, the Russians Are Coming* (1966), *The Thomas Crown Affair* (1968), *Fiddler on the Roof* (1971), *Jesus Christ Superstar* (1973), *Rollerball* (1975), *F.I.S.T.* (1978), *...And Justice for All* (1979), *A Soldier's Story* (1984), *Agnes of God* (1985), *Moonstruck* (1987), *In Country* (1989), *The Hurricane* (1999), and *The Statement* (2003) among others. With each of these films – where he served as either director or producer, or often in both roles – Norman crossed over several genres to explore diverse subjects. Norman became a three-time Oscar nominee whose feature films garnered 45 Academy Award nominations and won 12 Oscars.

In addition to his work on films, in 1988, Norman founded the Canadian Film Centre (CFC) a non-profit organization that works to advance the careers of actors, writers, composers, singer-songwriters, and entrepreneurs in film, television, and digital media spaces. Based in Toronto, the CFC continues to operate to this day with Norman's vision of being a Canadian-made institution that trains, mentors, educates, and fosters future generations of talent within the country's screen-based industry.

Throughout his life, Norman was the recipient of many awards and honours. He was first appointed an Officer of the Order of Canada in 1982 and was later promoted to Companion in 1992, which is the highest level of the Order. He received the Order of Ontario in 1989 and was given a star on Canada's Walk of Fame in 1998. In 1999, he was awarded Toronto's Key to the City by then-Mayor Mel Lastman. He also received the honorary Irving G. Thalberg Memorial Award for a lifetime achievement in film that same year. In 2001, the City of Toronto honoured Norman by naming a park after him.

Norman received other lifetime achievement awards from the Directors Guilds in both Canada and the United States, as well as other international accolades. In 2003, he received the Governor General's Performing Arts Award. From 2004 to 2010, he served as Chancellor of Victoria University at the University of Toronto. He also received the Queen's Golden and Diamond Jubilee Medals in 2002 and 2012, respectively.

Norman was committed to advancing storytelling and filmmaking through his work. He continually broke ground on controversial and complex subjects and gave them universal accessibility. While he left an indelible mark on the film industry, his enormous contributions to cinema belied his humble Canadian roots. He leaves behind a legacy as a director who was responsible for some of the most culturally relevant and celebrated films of the latter half of the twentieth century. However successful Norman's films were in Hollywood, he never lost sight of championing and empowering the next generation of Canadian storytellers.

The City Clerk is requested to convey, on behalf of the Members of Toronto City Council, our sincere sympathy to Norman Jewison's wife, Lynne; his children Kevin, Michael, and Jennifer; their families; his many friends and colleagues; and all those whose lives he impacted through his work.

February 6, 2024