

Expression of Condolence for Florence Wong by Toronto City Council

Moved by: Mayor Olivia Chow

Seconded by: Deputy Mayor Ausma Malik

The Mayor and Members of Toronto City Council are deeply saddened to learn of the passing of Florence Wong, a pioneer in geriatric care in Canada, who died on January 19, 2024, at the age of 74.

In 1987, Florence immigrated to Canada with her family and settled in Toronto. Despite her educational and professional credentials, Florence's work experience in Hong Kong was not recognized in her new home. She found an opportunity with the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB), moving up rapidly to become a manager of a newly opened site for the institute. Florence's work with the CNIB led to her appointment to a provincial advisory committee for seniors and people living with disabilities.

In 1994, Florence became the executive director of the Yee Hong Centre for Geriatric Care, a newly established nursing home dedicated to providing culturally appropriate care to Chinese residents. Florence became the centre's first Chief Executive Officer and under her leadership, Yee Hong Centre for Geriatric Care obtained national accreditation. It expanded to 715 long-term care beds across four homes and a 308-unit senior living centre.

Florence was a pioneer in her field who was instrumental in building Yee Hong Centre for Geriatric Care into one of Canada's largest non-profit long term care providers. She helped the Centre to become the first care home in the province to have only two residents to a room. It was also one of the first such centres to establish resident and family councils. Resident and family councils would both later become provincial standards for senior care operators in Ontario. Florence also became an expert in provincial legislation, to have a better understanding of how to operate the Centre. She was noted for her tremendous drive and determination in serving her community.

Florence retired from her role as Chief Executive Officer from Yee Hong Geriatric Centre in 2012. In her retirement, she spent time with her family and pursued her passions. Florence also became a resident of Yee Hong Geriatric Centre. Despite being an integral force behind the Centre's success, Florence humbly added herself on the waiting list for a spot within the care home.

She will be remembered for her outstanding contributions to the well-being of older residents in Toronto, whose comprehensive approach to senior care paved the way for provincial standards across Ontario. Thanks to her hard work, residents across the Greater Toronto Area can now access culturally appropriate care that was not previously available. Her impact on senior care extends far beyond Yee Hong Geriatric Centre and she will be greatly missed.

The City Clerk is requested to convey, on behalf of the Members of Toronto City Council, our sincere sympathy to Florence's husband, Samuel; her children, Dennis and Iris; her grandchildren; Chester, Portia, Nora, and Heather; the community at Yee Hong Centre for Geriatric Care, as well as to the many people whose lives she touched through her work.

February 6, 2024