

*Expression of Condolence for
The Honourable Jim Peterson by Toronto City Council*

Moved by: Mayor Olivia Chow

Seconded by: Councillor Lily Cheng

The Mayor and Members of Toronto City Council are deeply saddened to learn of the passing of the Honourable Jim Peterson, PC – former Federal Cabinet Minister and Member of Parliament (Willowdale) – who passed away on May 10, 2024, at the age of 82.

James Scott Peterson was a gifted intellectual who earned degrees from McGill University, Columbia University, and the University of Western Ontario. He also earned diplomas from the Hague Academy of International Law in The Hague as well as La Sorbonne in Paris.

In his early career, Mr. Peterson taught at the Faculty of Law at the University of Toronto and consulted for the United Nations Development Organization. As a lawyer he made headlines in 1974 when he helped Mikhail Baryshnikov, one of the world's most acclaimed ballet dancers, defect in Toronto from the Soviet Union to Canada.

Mr. Peterson was first elected as a Member of Parliament in 1980, representing Willowdale until 1984. During this time, he served as Parliamentary Secretary to then justice minister, Jean Chrétien. He was re-elected in 1988, and won re-election in the next six consecutive elections, representing Willowdale until his retirement from public life in 2007. He was appointed Secretary of State for International Financial Institutions from 1997 to 2002 and served as Minister for International Trade from 2003 until 2007. As a member of Cabinet, he played a pivotal role in shaping Canada's international trade policies in portfolios under both Prime Ministers Jean Chrétien and Paul Martin.

Following his career as a parliamentarian, Mr. Peterson returned to practicing law as counsel for Fasken Martineau DuMoulin. He also served as chief negotiator on trade between Ontario and Quebec regarding investment and labour mobility, and between Canada and the United States regarding softwood lumber.

Mr. Peterson leaves behind a legacy as a long-time advocate for his community of Willowdale, which he represented in the House of Commons for 23 years. He will also be remembered for his dedicated service to Canada and his tireless commitment to the law and justice.

The City Clerk is requested to convey, on behalf of the Members of Toronto City Council, our sincere sympathy and deepest condolences to his wife of 60 years, Heather; his brothers, David (Shelly), and Timothy (Mary); their families; and to the many other people he impacted throughout his life.

June 26, 2024