

NOTICE OF MOTION

Replacing A Missing Plaque at Tommy Thompson Park Honoring Renowned Marathon Swimmer Vicki Keith (Ward 14 Toronto – Danforth)

Moved by: Councillor

Paula Fletcher

Seconded by: Councillor

Paul Ainslie

SUMMARY:

On August 29, 1998, the Toronto Mayor Mel Lastman, City Councillors and local residents gathered at Tommy Thompson Park to erect a plaque honouring legendary marathon swimmer, coach and disabled athlete advocate Vicki Keith. The event marked the 10th anniversary of Keith's historic swims across all five great lakes, culminating in her Lake Ontario swim from the Niagara River mouth to the tip of the Leslie Street Spit. The plaque, which named the location the "Vicki Keith Point" was especially meaningful as it was there that Keith launched her first Lake Ontario swim in 1986, and became the first swimmer ever to complete a two-way crossing of Lake Ontario a year later. In 1989, she was the first to use her famous butterfly stroke to cross the English Channel and Strait of Juan de Fuca, and also completed swims across the Catalina Channel in California and Lake Ontario using the stroke.

The recipient of 41 awards and honours, Vicki Keith was a successful coach, with six of her athletes winning world records. She coached many disabled athletes of whom 24 competed at the national level and another four competed at the international level. Her dedication to children and athletes with disabilities and to the Variety Club motivated her to raise over one million Canadian dollars for worldwide charitable projects including the Variety Village Sunshine Pool.

Sadly, plaque honouring Vicki Keith and her achievements was removed. Its absence is felt not only by residents and visitors who valued it as part of our shared waterfront heritage, but also by Ms. Keith herself, for whom the plaque carried personal meaning. The restoration of this plaque would reaffirm the City's commitment to celebrating those who inspire us and would ensure that Ms. Keith's legacy remains visible to future generations.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. City Council request the General Manager, Parks and Recreation, in consultation the CEO of TRCA replace the plaque made to honour Vicki Keith at the Vicki Keith Point on the Leslie Street by June 30, 2026 and the re-installation of the plaque take place as part of a ceremony commemorating Vicki Keith by local representatives and residents.

September 29, 2025