

***Expression of Condolence for Ken Higgs
by Toronto City Council***

Moved by: Councillor Paul Ainslie

Seconded by: Councillor Paula Fletcher

The Mayor and Members of Toronto City Council are saddened to learn of the passing of Ken Higgs, a visionary leader and key architect of the modern conservation authority movement in Ontario.

Ken's involvement in conservation began in 1949 as a forestry student at the University of Toronto, conducting watershed surveys for the Ontario Department of Planning and Development, including the Don River. After graduating in 1952, he joined the Humber Valley Conservation Authority as Field Officer, laying the groundwork for the modern conservation authority program. His achievements at Humber Valley Conservation Authority included establishing Ontario's first conservation area (Albion Hills CA, 1955), first conservation education field school (Camp Kneale, 1953), and first pioneer park (Dalziel Pioneer Park, 1956).

Following Hurricane Hazel and the formation of the Metro Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (now Toronto and Region Conservation Authority) in 1957, Ken was appointed Toronto and Region Conservation Authority's Senior Field Officer, later becoming General Manager. Over 26 years, he formalized Toronto and Region Conservation Authority's work in restoration, reforestation, planning, flood warning and protection, environmental monitoring, recreation, education, park development, and land acquisition. Ken's key accomplishments include the 1959 Plan for Flood Control and Water Conservation, establishing Toronto and Region Conservation Authority's science-based approach, acquiring valley lands and natural heritage systems, creating a collaborative framework with Metro Toronto, and establishing the Toronto and Region Conservation Foundation (1961).

Ken retired from Toronto and Region Conservation Authority in 1983 but remained actively involved in the conservation movement. He shared his insights at Toronto and Region Conservation Authority's 50th Annual General Meeting (2006) and the 50th anniversary of Albion Hills Field Centre (2013). In 2017, Toronto and Region Conservation Authority honored him by naming its aquatic monitoring and research vessel the R.V. Ken Higgs. Ken passed away peacefully in his 95th year surrounded by

family.

Flags at Toronto and Region Conservation Authority offices and facilities were lowered to half-mast for seven days, commencing Monday, January 13, 2025, in Ken's honor. A celebration of Ken's life will be held in the coming months.

The City Clerk is requested to convey, on behalf of the Members of Toronto City Council, our sincere sympathy to the family and friends of Ken Higgs.

February 5, 2025