

## ***Expression of Condolence for Sharon Elaine McLeod by Toronto City Council***

**Moved by: Councillor Michael Thompson**

**Seconded by: Mayor Olivia Chow**

The Mayor and Members of Toronto City Council are saddened to learn of the passing of Sharon Elaine McLeod on March 19, 2025, at the age of 54.

Born in Toronto on April 6, 1970, she is dearly missed by her beloved mother, Elaine; her cherished siblings, Donald and Julie; uncles, aunts, cousins; and a grieving cross-sectional community of church, academia, arts, extended family and friends.

Sharon didn't just walk among us; she paused and occupied and interfaced at the deepest human and institutional levels. Where others left footprints, she carved out imprints that will outlast our memories and reverberate to inform future discourses on justice, equality, race, and identity.

Following studies at University of Toronto (BA '93) and Howard University (MSW '95) Sharon spent 25 years as an Addiction Therapist and Senior Social Worker at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health and the Donwood Institute. An early advocate for Black Health, she and other thought leaders successfully negotiated a sanctuary for Black Health concerns. It's now known as TAIBU.

At CAMH, Sharon was part of a generation tasked with removing the stigma of mental health from Canadians and demanding a greater space for Indigeneity, race, gender and disability. This work highlighted histories of racism in psychiatry and color-coded health care in general.

Her activism cultivated her musical soul and the co-founding of *Sharon Riley and the Faith Chorale*, and scoring a Juno's for Best Gospel Choir in 1998. Sharon fell into politics and media, playing both with an ease displayed on CHIN Radio and on CBC.

In 2004, this multi-faceted life proved to be perfectly suited to the role of professor at Toronto Metropolitan University's school of social work. Here, her lectures curated the rise of understanding the pernicious, violent, disproportionate nature of Anti-Black Racism -- a legacy project founded by her mentor Dr. Akua Benjamin. This was

presented at the 2018 International SWDS Conference in Dublin, with eight other Black, women-identified academics.

The City Clerk is requested to convey, on behalf of the Members of Toronto City Council, our deepest sympathy to the McLeod family on Sharon's passing.

March 26, 2025