

Expression of Condolence for Sheila Colla by Toronto City Council

Moved by: Mayor Olivia Chow

Seconded by: Councillor Paula Fletcher

The Mayor and Members of Toronto City Council are deeply saddened to learn of the passing of Dr. Sheila Rafaella Colla, a teacher, scientist, author, ecologist and activist who passed away on July 6, 2025, from Mesothelioma, at the age of 43.

Dr. Colla's research and advocacy focused on pollinator conservation and conservation policy in response to environmental change, and she is widely considered one of North America's most respected voices for wild bee conservation. She inspired many to learn more about Toronto's native bees and the plants that support them. She was instrumental in the creation of the City's Pollinator Protection Strategy and PollinateTO. She contributed to the adoption of Toronto's Official Bee symbol by serving on the expert advisory committee.

As a York University professor, Dr. Colla taught conservation science and ecology to university students, but she was as committed to public education and outreach to the general public, non-governmental organization staff and staff of government bodies. She taught them to appreciate the value, beauty and vulnerability of all at-risk pollinators and encouraged them to participate in protecting them.

Dr. Colla's legacy will live on through her books, the conservation policies she influenced, the work of Colla Conservation Science Lab, and the many students and scientists she mentored.

The City Clerk is requested to convey, on behalf of the Members of Toronto City Council, our sincere sympathy to Dr. Sheila Colla's husband Marc Michalak, her children Tristan and Rowan, her parents, Daniel and Marlene, her siblings Christina, Elia and Michael and their families, and all those whose lives she touched.

July 23, 2025