

REVISED

## NOTICE OF MOTION

### **Naming of New Park at 2788 Bathurst Street in Honour of Dr. Joseph Leventhal**

**Moved by:**            **Councillor Mike Colle** \_\_\_\_\_

**Seconded by:**    **Councillor James Pasternak** \_\_\_\_\_

#### **SUMMARY:**

A true Renaissance man, Dr. Joseph Leventhal was a devoted family man, trusted friend, gifted physician, community stalwart, talented and award-winning artist, WWII veteran, storyteller, and proud centenarian.

Dr. Joe was born on Grange Avenue between the Ward and Kensington Market - historic gateways for new immigrants – and grew up during the Depression. In classic immigrant fashion, Toronto’s Jewish community gradually migrated north along Bathurst Street, transforming it into the vibrant heart of Jewish life in Toronto. This northward movement reflects more than a century of migration, institution-building, and community continuity. It was in the Eglinton-Lawrence neighbourhood and beyond where Dr. Joe raised his family and dedicated himself to the community.

His artistic talent was recognized at a young age and after attending Harbord Collegiate, he received a scholarship to study at the Ontario College of Art (now OCAD) under the tutelage of Group of Seven member Arthur Lismer.

Serving in the Royal Canadian Air Force during World War II, Dr. Joe was a bomber navigator chasing Nazi submarines up the St. Lawrence River. He was also stationed in Trenton, Quebec, Halifax, and Iceland, and was awarded multiple medals for his distinguished service.

With RCAF support, Dr. Joe studied medicine at the University of Toronto and became a beloved family physician known for his compassion, unwavering care, and humour. He built a busy practice, made house calls, served as Parish Doctor for the local Catholic church, and was the attending physician at the RCAF base in Downsview. He proudly lined his office walls with pictures of many of the 3,000 babies he delivered throughout his outstanding career.

Dr. Joe also volunteered in geriatric medicine at Baycrest and served on staff at Northwestern, Humber Memorial, and Branson hospitals. He was the founding member of the Ontario Family Practice Association and a founding member of Temple Sinai, where he remained an active congregant for many years.

Dr. Joe was deeply engaged in community life, committed to making Toronto more inclusive, supportive, and connected. As the son of immigrants who fled persecution in search of a better life, he never forgot his roots, devoting much of his career to serving marginalized communities and providing compassionate care to many of the city's most vulnerable residents. Dr. Joe made the decision to locate his practice in an underserved neighbourhood, often offering free medical care in the years before universal health coverage.

In February 2023, Dr. Joe passed at the age of 102 after a life extraordinarily well lived. A pillar of our community, he leaves a legacy of distinguished service and dedication.

A property naming application was submitted to Strategic Partnerships including 23 letters of support and a consent form.

The proposal to name the parkette in his honour has garnered very strong support through a petition of over 850 signatures and counting, a local mail drop, newsletters, social media outreach, and endorsements from local synagogues, Jewish schools, neighbours, and members of the community he served. To date, not a single concern or any opposition have been expressed to my office.

Naming the park in Dr. Joe's honour celebrates his remarkable legacy, ensures his decades of service are remembered for generations, and inspires others to carry forward his lifelong commitment to community service and care.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. Despite the provisions of the City of Toronto Naming Policy, City Council approve the naming of the new park at 2788 Bathurst St. as Dr. Joe Leventhal Park.
2. City Council request the General Manager of Parks and Recreation, in addition to the design and installation of facility and wayfinding signage, to report to the May 26, 2026 meeting of North York Community Council with a plan to locate an appropriate space within Dr. Joe Leventhal Park and designate it with a plaque as "Dr. Joe's Healing Garden".

Date: March 17, 2026