

***Expression of Condolence for Michelle DuBarry (Russel Alldread)
by Toronto City Council***

Moved by: Councillor Josh Matlow

Seconded by: Councillor Alejandra Bravo

The Mayor and Members of Toronto City Council are deeply saddened to learn of the passing of Michelle DuBarry, also known as Russel Alldread, a beloved Toronto drag legend, performer, and community icon, who passed away in 2026 at the age of 95.

Born in Bowmanville, Ontario in 1931, Michelle dedicated more than seven decades to the art of drag, performing from the 1950s through the early 2020s. A trailblazer and source of inspiration for generations of performers, Michelle's creativity, courage, and unwavering commitment to authenticity helped shape Toronto's vibrant 2SLGBTQ+ community. Michelle was recognized by Guinness World Records as the oldest performing drag queen.

Michelle performed during a time when drag was often hidden, stigmatized, and criminalized. Through artistry and resilience, Michelle helped create spaces where performers could express themselves freely and safely. As a member of renowned drag collectives including The Great Imposters and The Golden Girls, and through many performances at iconic venues such as the St. Charles Tavern, Michelle became a cherished figure in Toronto's cultural history.

Beyond the stage, Michelle was known as a mentor and "drag mother" to many performers, offering guidance, friendship, and support during a time when drag families were essential sources of community and belonging. Generosity, humour, and dedication to helping others left an indelible mark on countless lives.

Michelle's legacy will live on through the performers inspired by Michelle, the community strengthened through decades of leadership and mentorship, and the generations of artists who continue to carry forward a spirit of joy, resilience, and pride.

The City Clerk is requested to convey, on behalf of the Members of Toronto City Council, sincere sympathy to Michelle DuBarry's family, friends, fellow performers, and the broader community who mourn the loss of Michelle while celebrating an extraordinary life and lasting contributions.

July 29, 2026