

Oct. 10, 2008

Chair, Toronto Public Library Board  
789 Yonge Street  
Toronto, ON M4W 2G8

NAMING THE TORONTO REFERENCE LIBRARY FOR JANE JACOBS

Dear Chair and Board Members,

I am writing to lend my strong support to the proposal to rename the Toronto Reference Library the **Jane Jacobs Library**. An avid reader, researcher and user of libraries Jane's insatiable curiosity about the way things are led her to write a remarkable series of highly original and influential books and articles starting with the extraordinary *Death and Life of Great American Cities* in 1961. Through these works and her highly selected but always powerful interventions on major public issues, Jane Jacobs, perhaps more than any other thinker in this century, has profoundly changed the ways in which we think about that most complex of human artefacts, the city, as well as profound reflections on economics, natural science and the general connectedness of things in entirely new ways.

It is not entirely a coincidence that Ms. Jacobs chose Toronto as her adopted home in the 1960's, in part having come to despair of the future of the future of cities in her native United States. In the interim, perhaps to our own surprise, Toronto became a city which is noted for its diverse, lively, humane, and even occasionally delightful qualities. To a much greater degree than is generally recognised, Jane Jacobs, through her penetrating wisdom, tireless scholarship, and unflinching common sense, gave us the courage to become what we are. She inspired and deeply influenced several generations of decision-makers, activists, creators and investors to take a second, often irreverent look at the received wisdom of established practices and break new ground, seeing value and vital connections where none were apparent.

I cannot think of any more appropriate way of acknowledging the great debt we all owe to Jane Jacobs.

Sincerely,



Ken Greenberg  
Principal