

To: Toronto Public Library Board – January 29, 2007

From: City Librarian

Subject: **Recognition for June Callwood**

Purpose:

To propose naming a Library program after June Callwood in recognition of her significant contributions to Toronto and to the Toronto Public Library.

Funding Implications and Impact Statement:

Funds to introduce a program on contemporary social issues would be covered within the Toronto Reference Library's existing program budget. Any funds generated by the endowment fund would supplement this budget.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Toronto Public Library Board approve the naming of a program on contemporary social issues after June Callwood to be inaugurated in spring of 2007.

Background:

At its meeting of September 18, 2006, the Library Board received a request from Councillor Fletcher to consider the renaming of the Queen/Saulter Branch for June Callwood to recognize and honour her extraordinary contributions. The Board directed staff to develop a response to this request.

The Board approved a Naming Policy at its Board meeting of June 19, 2006 to provide a framework and guidelines to consider naming requests and opportunities (Attachment 1). The policy covers the naming of branches, with the relevant section being:

The naming of branches will be considered based on the following priorities:

- the Library will give priority to naming its buildings after their geographic location, either the community or the street location where they are situated;
- alternatively, consideration will be given to naming, where appropriate, after the type of service or function offered at that branch;
- in exceptional circumstances, consideration will be given to naming a branch after an individual whose contribution to the Library or the City of Toronto, is well documented and is widely recognized and valued. At least two years shall have passed since the individual's death.

An exception to the policy would need to be made in order to rename the Queen/Saulter Branch.

Comments:

June Callwood is a well-known journalist, author and social activist. Her entire career has been marked by a strong concern for social justice, especially on issues concerning women, children and civil liberties. She has written over 30 books, 1500+ journal articles, and founded or co-founded many organizations, most notably Nellie's Hostel for Women, Jessie's Centre for Teenagers, and Casey House Hospice which was the first AIDS hospice in Toronto. She was a founding member of the Writers' Union of Canada, and served as the president of PEN Canada.

She has lived in Toronto for many years, and has also had a long and supportive association with the Toronto Public Library and its predecessor libraries. She served as the North York Public Library's writer in residence in the 1990's, and received the Canadian Library Association Award for the Advancement of Intellectual Freedom in Canada in 2006.

In considering the request to name the Queen/Saulter Branch, staff considered the policy guidelines, the nature and scope of Ms. Callwood's contributions, and also consulted directly with Ms. Callwood. A program with an emphasis on contemporary social issues, was considered to be the most appropriate recognition, in keeping with her lifelong interests and reflective of her writing career.

Ms. Callwood's career has been notable for her readiness to speak out on important issues affecting the lives of individuals and communities. As an author, she has many titles to her name reflecting her concern for social justice, and her intention to contribute to its achievement. Naming an annual program for Ms. Callwood would reflect and honour her life as an author and an activist. The diversity of her interests and concerns would provide a source of themes around which the series might evolve. Naming a program in honour of Ms. Callwood could be achieved without a change in Library policy.

Toronto Public Library Foundation also identified the opportunity to establish an endowment in June Callwood's name to offer additional recognition and to provide value-added funding in support of the annual program.

Ms. Callwood has been consulted about this option and is enthusiastic and supportive of the proposed program and the endowment.

Conclusion:

It is recommended that the Toronto Public Library Board approve the naming of a program on contemporary social issues after June Callwood, and that the program be inaugurated in Spring of 2007.

Contact:

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Josephine Bryant  
City Librarian

List of Attachments:

Attachment 1: Toronto Public Library's Naming Policy