



**STAFF REPORT
INFORMATION ONLY**

Communications Report

Date: September 23, 2024

To: Toronto Public Library Board

From: City Librarian

It is recommended that the Toronto Public Library Board:

1. receives Communication (a) and its attachments from Brandon Haynes, President, Toronto Public Library Workers Union Local 4948, dated August 31, 2024, thanking the Board for approving a recommendation to rename the branch located at 620 Jane Street to the Daniel G. Hill branch, for information.

SIGNATURE

Vickery Bowles
City Librarian



**Toronto Public Library
Workers Union
Local 4948**

Affiliated with
CUPE and the
Toronto & York Region
Labour Council

Brandon Haynes
President

Jinkie David
Vice-President

Jenna Liu
Recording Secretary

Giselle Chu
Secretary-Treasurer

Mary Bissell
Toronto Reference Library

Corinne Parzanese
North York Central Library

Selwyn Chung
North Region

Alice Schonblum
South Region

Melanie McKinnon
East Region

Christie Paschakis
West Region

Evangelos Karagounis
Facilities

Steven Burdick
Support Services

20 Eglinton Avenue West
Suite 1109, Box 2053
Toronto, ON M4R 1K8
Telephone: (416) 440-7981
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www.local4948.org

a.

Toronto Public Library Workers Union – Local 4948
20 Eglinton Avenue West
Suite 1109, Box 2053
Toronto, ON M4R 1K8

August 31, 2024

Alim Remtulla
Chair, Toronto Public Library Board
C/o The Secretary
789 Yonge Street
Toronto, ON
M4W 2G8

Dear Mr. Remtulla:

RE: Renaming of the Jane/Dundas branch

At the Toronto Public Library (TPL) Board meeting held on June 24th, 2024, library board members approved a recommendation to rename the library located at 620 Jane Street to the Daniel G. Hill branch.

I would like to thank members of the Board for this unanimous decision.

The Daniel G. Hill location will be, as you know, the first Toronto Public Library branch to be named after a Black Torontonian. As I write this letter to the Board, it is fitting that today (August 31st) commemorates the United Nations (UN) International Day for People of African Descent.

Honouring Dr. Daniel Grafton Hill III—nine years after an initial request from family and community members—is a necessary step in the right direction towards TPL's stated commitment to “creating culturally safe and relevant spaces that reflect the diversity of Toronto's population, confront anti-Black racism, increase awareness and amplify the voices of the Black community in Toronto”.



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On a related note, and in addition to Dr. Hill's exceptional legacy, his spouse Donna Hill worked for the Toronto Joint Labour Committee for Human Rights. She was the author of a brief on immigration reform that was presented to the federal government by a delegation of 35 Black community and labour leaders who travelled to Ottawa in 1954.

TPLWU Local 4948, through our affiliation with the Toronto & York Region Labour Council, also plays a role in this regard. In 2019, our Executive Board endorsed the Charter of Inclusive Workplaces & Communities. In doing so, we affirmed our responsibility to "continue to work with all levels of government, Indigenous peoples, civil society and communities to develop policies, programs and initiatives to reduce and eliminate racism, hate and bigotry."

While there still remains much work to be done, I would hope that members of the Board share our desire to continue to dismantle systemic racism both inside and outside of TPL.

I respectfully request that the Board ensures any plans related to the renaming of this library branch continue to be shared with the leadership of TPLWU Local 4948 to enable us to be a part of this significant moment in history.

Yours truly,



Brandon Haynes
President
TPLWU Local 4948

Encl.

1. [Jane/Dundas Branch Renaming](#)
2. [The Toronto Joint Labour Committee for Human Rights](#)
3. [Charter of Inclusive Workplaces & Communities](#)



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CC: Recording Secretary, TPLWU Local 4948

Andria Babbington, President, Toronto & York Region
Labour Council

Yolanda McClean, President & International Board
Member, Coalition of Black Trade Unionists – Ontario
Chapter

Neethan Shan, Executive Director, Urban Alliance on
Race Relations

Nigel Barriffe, President, Urban Alliance on Race
Relations Board

Natasha Henry, President, Ontario Black History
Society

Jane/Dundas Branch Renaming



We are pleased to confirm that the proposed new name for the Jane/Dundas branch was approved by the Board on Monday June 24th, 2024. **Daniel G. Hill** will replace Jane/Dundas in the coming months. The name Daniel G. Hill recognizes and celebrates the significant legacy of a prominent Black Torontonian and pioneer in human rights in Ontario.

As part of the larger Dundas Street Renaming Project to rename City of Toronto assets bearing the Dundas name, City Council requested that Toronto Public Library (TPL) rename the Jane/Dundas branch to remove the Dundas name by the third quarter of 2024.

The library as a culturally safe and relevant space

The new name is aligned with the City's **Commemorative Framework**, which is intended to encourage greater equity and inclusion in placemaking, and promote a broader understanding of history and its legacy on communities.

Renaming the branch to honour Daniel G. Hill also supports TPL's commitment to creating culturally safe and relevant spaces that reflect the diversity of Toronto's population, confront anti-Black racism, increase awareness and amplify the voices of the Black community in Toronto.

What happens next

Over the next few months, changes will be made to the branch to introduce and incorporate the new name. In addition to the exterior signs, changes to the library systems and processes will be incorporate the name Daniel G. Hill. Any celebratory plans and unveiling will be posted on this page.

About Daniel G. Hill III

Daniel G. Hill III (1923-2003) is a recipient of the Order of Canada (OC), the Order of Ontario (OOnt), and a pioneer and champion of human rights in Canada. He was also a distinguished writer and historian on the history of Black people in Canada.

Originally from the U.S.A. and the great-grandson of American slaves, Daniel Hill moved to Canada in 1950 to study at the University of Toronto and, after completing his PhD in sociology, was appointed the first director and later the Chair of the Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC). He worked tirelessly to establish the OHRC and transformed it from a tiny office with a small staff into a major public agency in the Province of Ontario with statutory powers. As Director of the OHRC, Daniel G. Hill III diligently fought discrimination for Ontarians from all social, racial and religious backgrounds. He resigned from the Commission in 1973, to establish the first human rights consulting firm in Canada, and advised a number of high profile clients including the Government of Ontario, the City of Toronto, the Toronto Star, and the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission.

In 1978, Daniel Hill co-founded the **Ontario Black History Society (OBHS)**. This was the first public organization in the nation focused on the history of Black people in Canada, and he was its President for the first six years. He published his seminal book, **The Freedom Seekers: Blacks in Early Canada**, in 1981, which was the first

popular history on the topic. The book had a wide readership, and remains available in Canadian libraries. He also wrote "A Brief Pictorial History of Blacks in Nineteenth Century Ontario" that was published by the OHRC.

Daniel Hill was appointed Ombudsman for the Province of Ontario in 1984, a position he held until his retirement in 1989. As Ombudsman, he advocated on behalf of citizens who felt they had been mistreated by the government. He received the "Outstanding Service to Humanity" award from the Canadian Labour Congress in May 1984, was awarded the Order of Ontario in 1993, and was appointed an Officer of the Order of Canada in 1999.

With his wife Donna Bender Hill, Daniel Hill raised three children – Dan, Lawrence and Karen. More information about his life is [available through the Archives of Ontario online exhibit](#).

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LABOUR | 150

(<https://labour150.ca>)

THE TORONTO JOINT LABOUR COMMITTEE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

The end of the Second World War saw a massive mobilization by workers across the globe to secure dignity, decent wages and labour rights. The lessons of the fight against fascism were deeply felt, and many unions took on the fight against racism and anti-Semitism. In 1947 the Toronto Joint Labour Committee to Combat Racial Intolerance was formed. Kalman Kaplansky spearheaded the initiative with strong support from the Steelworkers, Autoworkers, and Packinghouse Workers. Bromley Armstrong of UAW Local 439 and Stanley Grizzle of the Sleeping Car Porters were Black leaders in the Committee as it led a relentless campaign against racist practices by employers, landlords and businesses

The re-named Toronto Joint Labour Committee for Human Rights (TJLCHR) developed anti-racism material and presentations for union events and the annual Labour Day parade. It carried out a series of test cases, visiting hotels, restaurants and clubs to challenge discriminatory practices. Its work with community activists helped win the Ontario Fair Employment Practices Act in 1951 – some of the earliest human rights legislation in North America.





In 1954 a delegation of 35 leaders from Toronto's Black community, including Armstrong and Grizzle, travelled to Ottawa to demand reform of Canada's racist immigration laws. Donna Hill, secretary of the Committee (mother of author Lawrence Hill and singer Dan Hill) prepared the brief for the delegation.

That same year, TJLCHR lent its support to Black residents of Dresden Ontario. Discrimination was rampant in the town, with restaurants and hair salons refusing to serve Black customers. Numerous complaints were filed, and Bromley Armstrong and Ruth Lor went to Dresden Ontario to run a test case under the new Fair Accommodations Act. The McKay's Cafe case garnered widespread media attention and ended up in the courts. McKay was fined, and eventually obeyed the law. These stories are captured in the Labour Council videos "Welcome to Dresden" and "Welcome to Canada".

The TJLCHR campaigned against discrimination for many years. This legacy is honoured through the Labour Council's annual Bromley Armstrong Award, given to union activists who have been leaders in equity, inclusion and human rights work.





Ruth Lor and Bromley Armstrong

CHARTER OF INCLUSIVE WORKPLACES & COMMUNITIES

Discrimination in all its forms threatens our country's rich social fabric, including the workplaces of union members and the communities in which we live. Dividing people because of race, religion, ancestry or any other difference that undermines human rights serves only to weaken our unions and our society.

We commit to standing up for the rights and dignity of everyone in order to promote inclusive, just and respectful workplaces and communities.

THIS IS WHY WE AFFIRM THAT:

- » Anti-Black and all other forms of racism, xenophobia, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism and bigotry have no place in our workplaces or communities.
- » Discrimination and acts of hate against union members and others marginalizes and excludes them from participating fully in our unions, workplaces and their communities.
- » The dignity of every member is essential to a healthy and vibrant union and workplace.
- » We will continue to work with all levels of government, Indigenous peoples, civil society and communities to develop policies, programs and initiatives to reduce and eliminate racism, hate and bigotry.
- » We must work together to nurture inclusive workplaces and strengthen our shared commitment to our shared values of equality, respect, justice, and dignity for all.



labourcouncil.ca