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STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

Naming Opportunity at the Dufferin/St. Clair Branch: Nancy Byers Children's Room

Date: April 2, 2026
To: Naming Committee
From: City Librarian

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to seek approval to name the Children's Room at the Dufferin/St. Clair Branch as the Nancy Byers Children's Room. This naming is in commemoration of Nancy Byers, a former TPL staff member and branch head of the Dufferin/St. Clair Branch from 1971-1987. The request to name this room was brought forward for consideration by the Joseph J. Piccininni Community Recreation Centre Advisory Council and recognizes Nancy Byers' contributions to public library service and the St. Clair West community.

The proposed name complies with Toronto Public Library's (TPL's) [Naming Policy](#).

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Librarian recommends that the Naming Committee:

1. approves the name of the Children’s Room at the Dufferin/St. Clair Branch as the Nancy Byers Children’s Room, and recommends this naming to the Toronto Public Library Board for approval.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

This report has no financial impact beyond what has already been approved in the TPL 2026 Operating Budget and the TPL 2026 – 2035 Capital Budget and Plan.

The Director, Finance & Chief Financial Officer has reviewed this financial impact statement and agrees with it.

EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT

TPL’s Equity Statement outlines the Library’s commitment to creating and maintaining work and public service environments where everyone is welcomed, included and supported, and that are grounded in tolerance and mutual respect, so that library customers, stakeholders, staff and the public can freely and equitably access or deliver library services, which meet the changing needs of Torontonians. The naming opportunities presented in this report have been considered in alignment with TPL’s Naming Policy, including ensuring that proposed names will not be or be perceived to be discriminatory or derogatory of race, colour, ethnic origin, gender identity or expression, sex, sexual orientation, creed, political affiliation, disability or other social factors.

DECISION HISTORY

At its October 27, 2025 meeting, the Toronto Public Library Board referred the [Communications](#) from Margaret Smith, Chair, Advisory Council of the Joseph J. Piccininni Communication Recreation Centre with a request to name the Children’s Room at Dufferin/St. Clair after former TPL staff member Nancy Byers, to the Naming Committee.

At its [March 24, 2025 meeting](#), the Toronto Public Library Board approved TPL's updated Naming Policy.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

The Dufferin/St. Clair Branch offers a variety of spaces for children and families to interact with TPL collections, build community connections, and develop early literacy skills. This includes a Children's Room containing a KidsStop early literacy centre, children's furniture and board book collection. The Children's Room is also the location of the fairy tale themed murals painted in 1932 by Canadian artist, Doris Jean McCarthy formerly referred to as the [Children's Club Room](#). It is a unique space in the library system as it is a room separate from the co-located area containing the Children's collection.

TPL's [Naming Policy](#) requires that names for library rooms, programs and collections be approved by the Board, where there is a commemorative name or a name in recognition of a donor or sponsor. This includes responsibility for approving the terms and conditions and amount of any donation or sponsorship.

The policy also outlines the factors to be considered for naming opportunities related to commemorative naming:

- Potential commemorative names will be considered based on alignment with the City of Toronto's [Guiding Principles for Commemoration](#)
- Potential commemorative names for rooms will be considered in honour of a Toronto Public Library Board member, TPL staff member or any individual who has made an exceptional contribution to TPL or to the city of Toronto.
- When a room is named after an individual, it should contain both the name of the individual and the function of the room.
- Prior to confirming a commemorative name, the Library will conduct a screening assessment to assess the reputation of the individual or group whose name will be used and the effect that an affiliation will have on the Library's public image.

COMMENTS

Nancy Byers' Relationship to Library Service in the Dufferin/St. Clair Community

Nancy Leonard Byers (October 13, 1924 – January 15, 2024) worked at Toronto Public Library for 23 years, until her retirement in 1987. Byers served as branch head at TPL's Dufferin/St. Clair Branch from 1971-1987.

The proposed naming is to recognize Nancy Byers' legacy and dedication to public library service and her engagement with the St. Clair West community. As indicated by the Joseph J. Piccininni Community Recreation Centre Advisory Council, Byers championed children's literacy, outreach and engagement in the St. Clair West community, including the development of strong relationships with children, families and local community groups and schools. Byers also served as President of the Ontario Public Library Association (OPLA) in the 1980's.

The Joseph J. Piccininni Community Recreation Centre Advisory Council highlighted how Byers extended her commitment to community engagement into broader civic and neighbourhood initiatives. Byers served as Chair of the Advisory Board of the Joseph J. Piccininni Community Recreation Centre and continued her active involvement after her retirement. Byers also authored a local history book, along with contributor Barbara Myrvold, titled [*St. Clair West in Pictures*](#), published by Toronto Public Library in 1997 and reissued in 1999 and 2008.

Considerations related to the Commemoration of Nancy Byers for the Children's Room at the Dufferin/St. Clair Branch

TPL's Naming Policy establishes the process to name TPL branches, rooms, programs, or collections. TPL has a history of naming branches, rooms, programs and collections for their geographic location, function or subject, or to honour individuals or donors. The policy sets out criteria and conditions for naming in recognition of an individual or in association with a donation or sponsorship.

TPL's Naming Policy states that: "Potential commemorative names for rooms will be considered in honour of a Toronto Public Library Board member, TPL staff member or any individual who has made an exceptional contribution to TPL or to

the city of Toronto.” Naming the Children’s Room at the Dufferin/St. Clair Branch as the Nancy Byers Children’s Room would commemorate Byers’ role and contribution in public library service in the St. Clair West community.

TPL’s Naming Policy states that: “Prior to confirming a commemorative name, the Library will conduct a screening assessment to assess the reputation of the individual or group whose name will be used and the effect that an affiliation will have on the Library’s public image.” TPL staff undertook a research and due diligence process and verified Byers’ employment history and standing. There are no known complaints about the use of Nancy Byers’ name or associated discriminatory views or actions identified.

TPL’s Naming Policy states that: “When a branch or room is named after an individual, that name will be effective for the useful life of the facility or collection or for a term as specified in the terms of the agreement. Should a physical facility be replaced or substantially renovated, or the use of an area redesignated, the renaming of the facility may be considered.” In addition, “appropriate recognition of previous donors or honorees may be included in the new or renovated facility.”

Naming Recognition

Signage will be developed and installed leading into the space and on wayfinding signage, where appropriate.

CONCLUSION

Incorporating Nancy Byers’ name into the name for the Children’s Room at the Dufferin/St. Clair Branch is a commemorative naming of a former TPL staff member. As indicated by the Joseph J. Piccininni Community Recreation Centre Advisory Council, the local community group that brought this request forward, this commemoration recognizes Nancy Byers’ legacy and contributions to public library service and to the St. Clair West community. The proposed name complies with Toronto Public Library’s (TPL’s) [Naming Policy](#).

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SIGNATURE

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