

ACTION

Subject: Recognition of Claude B. Aubry

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Prepared for: Ottawa Public Library Board

Meeting of: September 10, 2012

Date of preparation: August 19, 2012

Recommendation:

That the OPL Board recognize and commemorate Claude B. Aubry, former Chief Librarian of the Ottawa Public Library (1953-1979) by naming the Children's Room at the St-Laurent Branch in his honour and by installing a bronze reading bench in his name at the entrance of the St-Laurent Branch.

References:

1. Doc. 14, September 12, 2011, Naming of the Central Archives and OPL Materials Distribution Centre: Update
2. Report to Commemorative Naming Committee (August 30, 2011)
3. Doc. 3, January 18, 2010, Naming of Central Archives and OPL Material Distribution Centre

Attachment:

1. Excerpt from the January 18, 2010 report to the Board

Background:

In January 2010, the Library Board approved a recommendation that a hyphenated name be considered for the new Municipal Archives and Materials Distribution Centre. As this was a city-owned facility, it was recognized that Ottawa City Council would approve its naming. Nonetheless, the name of Claude B. Aubry, the first bilingual Chief Librarian in the City of Ottawa was forwarded for consideration by the Ottawa Public Library Board.

On August 30, 2011, the City's Commemorative Naming Committee met to review the results of the consultation process. The name "James K. Bartleman" was approved and forwarded to City Council for final ratification. The building was officially commemorated earlier this year.

Following this decision, both trustees and official representatives of the City of Ottawa believed that an opportunity to recognize Mr. Aubry's contribution to the OPL and to the City of Ottawa should not be lost. Many ideas and suggestions were reviewed and the following were proposed to discuss with Mr. Aubry's family.

- **Special recognition** of Mr. Aubry's contribution to the Ottawa Public Library and to the City of Ottawa during *Public Library Month* by Ottawa City Council, prior to its meeting scheduled for Wednesday October 10, 2012.
- **Naming of the Children's Room at the St-Laurent Branch** in honour of Mr. Aubry. The original St-Laurent Branch was first opened during Mr. Aubry's tenure as Chief Librarian. He was also a renowned children's author and the International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY) Canada has established an award in his name. The biennial award is given to an individual for distinguished service within the field of children's literature. The 2012 award would take place Saturday, October 20, in conjunction with the 50th anniversary celebrations of St-Laurent Branch's existence in the community.
- **Installation of a bronze reading bench** at the entrance of the St-Laurent Branch inviting one and all to come read at the OPL. The statue displays an elderly gentleman reading from a book, with ample space for all who wish to sit next to him.

Throughout the past months, Trustee Bergeron and Mme Désormeaux undertook discussions with Mr. Aubry's family to ensure that this recognition was suitable with the family's wishes. We have confirmation that all members of the family are supportive of the recognition proposed by the Library. Funding for the bronze reading bench is available in a library capital account. Funding for the October 20th celebration event is provided by community partners.

Next Steps:

• Order and install the bronze reading bench	September 2012
• Special recognition ceremony at Ottawa City Hall	Wednesday, October 10, 2012
• Naming ceremony and unveiling of bronze reading bench	Saturday, October 20, 2012

ATTACHMENT 1 – Excerpt from the January 18, 2012 report to the OPL Board

Claude B. Aubry

Claude Aubry, born in Morin Heights, Québec, was an exemplary contributor to the Ottawa Public Library and Canadian society at large. He was the first Bilingual Chief Librarian in the City of Ottawa. He served as Ottawa's Chief Librarian for 26 years from 1953 to 1979. Throughout his career, he wrote and translated children's books, CBC radio plays and a collection of French-Canadian Folk Legends. He was also a qualified accountant.

Aubry pioneered several notable enhancements to the Ottawa Public Library through organizational expansions and operational changes.

Aubry's first major accomplishment as Chief Librarian was the launch of the bookmobile, which became an immediate success. He later initiated the catalogue conversion from the Cutter classification to the more commonly used Dewey classification – a task that exceeded his career as Chief Librarian and took 23 years to complete. He played a crucial role in the advent and development of the Ottawa Room, which preserves and collects Ottawa's history.

During Aubry's term as Chief Librarian, the City of Ottawa experienced a rapid influx of newcomers from various countries. To meet the demands of Ottawa's rapid growth, he expanded the language collection to serve as many ethnic groups as possible. His devotion to serving the Francophone community resulted in a substantial acquisition of French books, eventually making the Ottawa Public Library the largest bilingual collection in North America.

Furthermore, Aubry was the first Chief Librarian in Canada to introduce juvenile paperbacks to the library collection and open branches in shopping malls. He further expanded services by delivering library books to retirement homes across Ottawa. Prior to his retirement, he oversaw the creation of today's Main Library, which was triple the size of the previous Carnegie library. In 1979, Claude Aubry retired as Chief Librarian at the age of 65.

Mr. Aubry clearly represents the name of an individual who demonstrated excellence in his career and service to the Library and made a significant contribution to the Library system as a whole. Moreover, he was an author and the first bilingual City Librarian in Ottawa.