
TO: BURNABY CITY COUNCIL **DATE:** 2008 December 22
FROM: HIS WORSHIP, MAYOR D. R. CORRIGAN
SUBJECT: FREEDOM OF THE MUNICIPALITY
PURPOSE: To advise of the appointment of Victor Stusiak, Dr. Egon Nikolai, Doug Evans and Celeste Redman as Freeman of the City of Burnaby

RECOMMENDATION:

1. **THAT** this report be received for information.

REPORT**Introduction**

Burnaby City Council, at the 'Closed' Council meeting held on 2008 December 15, conferred the honour of Freeman of the City upon former Councillors Victor Stusiak, Egon Nikolai, Doug Evans and Celeste Redman.

Section 158 of the Community Charter of B. C. grants the Council of a municipality the authority to honour a distinguished person by conferring upon that person the title of "*Freeman of the City*". It is the unanimous decision of Council that this is an appropriate time to honour four individuals who have made significant contributions to the Community.

Victor Stusiak (*Member of Council 1973-1977, 1979-1987*)

Prior to ever getting involved with local politics, Vic Stusiak had earned a reputation for being a hard-nosed businessman. The owner of a building products manufacturing firm, Vic and his wife Frances had been long-time Burnaby residents and the parents of three boys before he decided to run for Municipal Council in 1973. When he was elected, Vic brought his skills as a financial watchdog to work and oversaw Burnaby's fiscal policies during the turbulent 1970s and early 1980s. He brought to the municipality the sound financial planning skills that have left Burnaby in the enviable position it is in today.

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After serving as a member of Council from 1973-1977, Vic decided to run for Mayor in 1977. Although unsuccessful at this attempt, he returned to Council in 1979. Having already acted as the liaison to the Finance Department throughout his earlier tenure, Vic was asked to bring his management skills back to this position in 1979 and in 1983 he was called upon to chair the newly-created Finance Advisory Committee – a chairmanship he would hold until he left office in 1987.

But Vic's accomplishments went far beyond fiscal responsibility. Vic was also instrumental in numerous Parks and Recreation projects such as the Burrard Inlet and Fraser Foreshore parks, the Burnaby Beautification program and the design and development of the Heritage Village (later the Burnaby Village Museum). He supported the 2400 acre green space reserve on Burnaby Mountain and initiated parks levy on new developments. Vic was also a member and later the Chair of the Housing Committee during a period when the Residential Neighbourhood Environment Study was underway to help the municipality create sound plans and policies for the development of its residential areas.

Vic's personal achievements are no less impressive than his political accomplishments and, as noted, he was a successful businessman long before he entered politics. He was also a dedicated community worker and served for a number of years on the Burnaby Parks and Recreation Commission prior to holding elected office. He donated thousands of hours to organizations such as the United Community Service, New Vista Society, United Way and the Burnaby Arts Council. Well into the 1990s and 2000s, Vic remained a familiar face to Council members as he appeared representing the needs of the Action Line Housing Society. Even after retirement, he continued to work tirelessly for the betterment of his community.

As can be seen, it is not hard to appreciate the impact that Victor Stusiak had on the City of Burnaby. He ushered in policies that would safeguard the municipality's assets and allow Burnaby to enjoy sound financial strategies for generations to come. He was also just as diligent in aiming to protect the cultural and natural heritage that is so renowned in our community and helped to ensure the dedication of hundreds of acres of parks and the creation of the Burnaby Village Museum. As a result, it is easy to see why Victor Stusiak was – and still remains – one of the most well-respected members of Council and one who left a significant legacy for the citizens of Burnaby.

Dr. Egon Nikolai *(Member of Council 1981-1993)*

Dr. Egon Nikolai first ran for Burnaby Municipal Council in 1977 after having lived in the municipality for many years – and having practiced dentistry here for 14 while raising four sons with his wife Fern. A graduate of the University of Alberta, Dr. Nikolai had also attended UBC prior to his bid for office and was considered to be a highly motivated and dedicated newcomer to the political scene. Although unsuccessful in this initial attempt, Egon would go on to serve as Councillor for 12 years from 1981-1993.

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In 1993 when Egon was seeking re-election, he explained in an interview that his goal was to represent citizens more democratically and “build a safer, crime-free, healthy community.” And as was evident from his service over more than a decade as Councillor, these were goals that he had worked hard to achieve. During his 12 years in office, Egon served as Chair of the Community Issues and Social Planning Committee, was founding chair of the Crime Prevention committee, and a member of both the Traffic Safety and Transportation Committees.

Egon worked tirelessly to promote expanded block watch programs and to increase the number of civilian staff in the RCMP offices to allow the officers to focus on crime prevention and not administrative tasks. He also served on a committee to oversee the phasing out of the Oakalla Prison and was an advocate for the community in matters of crime and crime prevention.

In some ways – perhaps even more impressive – it has been Dr. Nikolai’s work outside of local politics that has earned him the respect of so many people around the world. For more than 40 years, Egon has taken his desire to serve the community outside the borders of our city and our country and has devoted countless hours to his international aid missions. Egon first started volunteering in the 1960s when he took his skills to the isolated communities of the Nootka Sound. Since that time, he and his family have been to Ecuador, Jamaica, Peru, Nicaragua, and Honduras providing medical-dental aid and education to those who need it most.

In 1998, Egon was awarded the Paul Rondeau Humanitarian Award for his exemplary service to the dental profession and to his community. He has served on the Burnaby Hospital Board, the South Burnaby Men’s Club, the Burnaby Association for the Mentally Handicapped and the United Way and numerous other organizations and groups. For these countless hours of volunteerism and his commitment to the citizens of Burnaby, Dr. Nikolai has earned his reputation as a humanitarian and devoted public servant.

Doug Evans (*Member of Council 1990-2005*)

In 1990, Doug Evans decided to run for a seat on Burnaby Council and not only did his candidacy prove successful; but he would also go on to become a mainstay in local government for the next 15 years; winning each subsequent re-election in which he stood in 1993, 1996, 1999 and 2002.

A long-time Burnaby resident, having settled here in the 1950s, Doug was witness to the rapid growth and development that occurred in Burnaby during the following four decades and saw firsthand how the booming population and sprawling urban environment could affect the quality of life for Burnaby residents. As a result, after his retirement, he decided to do his part to make sure that Burnaby remained a good place to live and work. Doug came into the political race with a few key priorities on his agenda. When asked in 1990 why he wanted to run for office, Doug identified his desire to see Burnaby remain a safe, family-oriented community. He believed that Council should work to find ways to address community needs such as housing affordability while also offering solutions for other day-to-day issues such as traffic congestion and public transit.

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After winning his place on Council, it didn't take Doug long to get to work on these matters. In 1991, he was appointed to the Transportation Committee and shortly thereafter was asked to be a member of the Traffic Safety Committee. He went on to serve as Chair and Vice Chair of both of these committees, remaining an integral figure on each until he left office in 2005. During his tenure on these committees, Burnaby saw some major changes in transit service with the construction of the Millennium Line and the introduction of traffic calming measures in many neighbourhoods throughout the City.

The safety and security of Burnaby citizens was always of major concern to Doug. This is exemplified by his work as Chair of the Community Policing Committee. In 1995, Doug was approached by then Mayor Bill Copeland and asked if he would be interested in chairing a new committee to be known as the Community Policing Committee. Burnaby had recently been chosen by the RCMP Headquarters in Ottawa to be the site of a pilot project for the RCMP's move to more community-based policing. Doug agreed and the committee was established as a means of forging new relationships with the RCMP and, more importantly, with the citizens in whose neighbourhoods the police were working.

Over the next decade, with Doug as its chair, this public-focused approach to policing would go on to be a much-lauded success. Four district community police offices were opened and communication between the City, the RCMP and the public reached new levels. The Committee acted as a liaison between these groups and provided public input into the development of police service priorities while in turn offering support to the Community Police offices by aiding in the development and implementation of a volunteer recruitment program. This remarkable program owes much to Doug's dedication and guidance, and the citizens of Burnaby have certainly benefited from his commitment to improving their safety and security.

As well as the Community Policing Committee, Doug was also asked to chair a newly created Emergency Planning Committee in 2000. This committee was established to oversee and coordinate an emergency preparedness plan for the City of Burnaby after the adoption of an Emergency Program Bylaw in 1998. Doug's previous experiences with regards to community safety and security gave him a great deal of insight into this program and under his chairmanship, the committee helped to prepare and approve information to be distributed to the public concerning safety, survival and emergency preparedness, was responsible for the preparation, annual review and updating of the Burnaby Emergency Plan, and oversaw all programs of training, disaster and emergency exercise planning. Although this committee was disbanded in 2003, its duties and responsibilities became the responsibility of the Executive Committee of Council and once again, Doug's experience was called upon as a both a member and Vice-chair of this committee.

Of course, Doug contributed to the City of Burnaby in many other ways, serving on such boards and committees as the Library Board, the Civic Development Committee, the Community Issues and Social Planning Committee, and the Lougheed Area and Royal Oak Area Advisory Committees – just to name but a very few. And those are just the Burnaby committees; to that

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we can also go on to list his service on regional groups such as GVRD committees, or community groups such as the St. John Ambulance or New Vista Society, and we begin to scratch the surface of his contributions to our City and our region.

Throughout his 15 years on Council, Doug worked tirelessly to ensure that Burnaby remained a City that was a safe place for families to live and ultimately, it was his dedication to family that saw him retire from public life. Citing his desire to spend more time with his children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, Doug decided not to run for Council in 2005, and while he is no longer actively serving the City, the decisions, policies and programs he helped usher in during his tenure will endure for many more years to come.

Celeste Redman (Council Member 1990-2005)

Celeste Redman was already a successful businesswoman and well-known community leader before she ever decided to run for a seat on City Council. Having moved to Burnaby in 1966, Celeste soon became a respected voice in her north Burnaby neighbourhood and by 1983 she had decided to try her hand at local politics. Although not successful at this initial attempt, she went on to win a seat during the campaign in 1990 and all of Burnaby would soon learn why so many North Burnaby residents adamantly supported her and wanted to see her leadership applied city-wide. It didn't take long for the wider community to learn to appreciate her many contributions, and Celeste went on to serve on Council for the next 15 years.

Although not a member of Council until 1990, Celeste did serve on a number of Council committees as a citizen volunteer prior to her election, including the Ad Hoc Committee on Dog Control as well as the Advisory Planning Committee. Most notable, however, was her work as chairperson of the Hastings Street Advisory Committee. This committee was formed in 1989 with the purpose of reviewing the Hastings Street Community Plan to upgrade the Hastings commercial area economically, and to prepare land use guidelines for the Hastings Street area while considering the needs of all neighbourhood residents and businesses. This intensive and interactive review process led to the development of the Hastings Street Area Plan which helped foster a revitalization of the Heights. Councillor Redman has been credited with playing a significant role in this process, acting as chair of the committee and champion of the re-development of the Heights.

Celeste did not limit herself to just focusing on the Hastings Street area, and indeed, her knowledge and problem solving abilities and knack at seeing the "big picture," led to her membership and chair of the Housing and Civic Development Committee. A member of the Committee from 1991-1999 and then Chair from 2000-2005, it was during her tenure as Chairperson, that the Committee dealt with everything from affordable housing initiatives to seniors' housing projects, to neighbourhood rezonings. And while this work remains ongoing, the decisions and precedents set by Celeste still help guide the work to this day.

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Celeste worked in many other ways to improve the quality of life for all Burnaby residents and was a member and, later, chairperson, of the Community Issues and Social Planning committee – sitting on this committee from 1991 to 1998 (1994-98 as Chair). While serving with this committee, numerous improvements were made to the quality of service and access for citizens and projects such as the “Citizens’ Guide to City Services” and the “Burnaby Access Guidebook” were produced and published.

Throughout her time on Council, another of Celeste’s passions would come to the fore and would translate into improved public policy in relation to animal control. A long-time animal rights advocate and member of the Wildlife Rescue Association and SPCA, Celeste worked hard to improve the City’s animal bylaws and to offer incentives such as rebates for spaying and neutering household pets. She also fought to strengthen the City’s animal control bylaws, giving officers the authority to enter a property to investigate complaints of cruelty or neglect.

Celeste was also adamant about protecting the natural environment and from 1991 to 2005, she sat as member and then Vice Chair of the Environment and Waste Management committee – fulfilling an early campaign promise to ensure that the urban growth in Burnaby was tempered by careful planning and maintenance of quality green space. Her knowledge of environmental concerns was also called upon when she was asked to chair the Chevron Greenbelt/Buffer Zone Advisory Committee from 1997-1999.

Formed in 1997, this committee was tasked with reviewing the 1974 Chevron Expansion Plan in order to determine if the greenbelt/buffer zone outlined at that time was still relevant and supported by affected residents in the neighbourhood twenty years later. After two years of public input and a detailed review process, the committee was able to successfully report out to Council in 1999, updating the plan and bringing it more in harmony with the neighbourhood requirements and expectations.

Along with her Council and Committee work, Celeste also volunteered as a member of the Burnaby Historical Society, showing a commitment to preserving a connection to the past for the benefit of present and future generations of citizens. This dedication to building a heritage legacy led to her service both as Vice Chair and Chair of the Community Heritage Commission – on which she sat from 1997 to 2005. During her tenure on the Commission, numerous heritage properties were protected and the City of Burnaby Archives were created to house the City’s records in perpetuity. Celeste enthusiastically oversaw these projects as a way to ensure that Burnaby’s unique history was highlighted and protected for the use and enjoyment of all citizens, and all those generations to come.

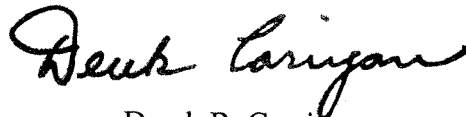
As can be seen from this brief overview – Burnaby and its citizens owe a great debt to Councillor Redman. Beyond what has already been indicated, she also worked tirelessly on such committees as the Library Board, the Economic Development and Tourism Advisory Committee, the Executive Committee of Council, the Family Court and Youth Justice Committee and the Traffic and Transportation Committees – creating a lasting legacy after 15 years of devoted service.

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Conclusion

The combined contributions of these four individuals span four decades, a time of growth, development and change for the City of Burnaby. Through their contributions and lasting legacies the City is well positioned to continue to meet the challenges of the future. It is a privilege to honour Victor Stusiak, Dr. Egon Nikolai, Doug Evans and Celeste Redman as Freeman of the City of Burnaby.

Respectfully submitted,



Derek R. Corrigan,
Mayor

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