

As the appropriate stakeholders have been contacted and community engagement has now begun (see February 26 Naming Committee meeting – Agenda Item No. 7 – Naming Opportunity – Branch Renaming: Jane/Dundas – Rec. No. 2 and 3), Confidential Attachment No. 1 is now public in its entirety.

Confidential Attachment 1:

Branch Renaming: Jane/Dundas

CONFIDENTIAL RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Librarian recommends that the Naming Committee:

1. request staff to explore renaming the Jane/Dundas branch after Dr. Daniel Grafton Hill III, including seeking permission from the family, consulting with the Ontario Black History Society and the local Councillors, as well as engaging the local community; and
2. direct staff to conduct local community engagement that includes education and awareness on the history and significance of Dr. Daniel Grafton Hill III

Summary

In 2015, the Ontario Black History Society contacted TPL to consider renaming the Scarborough Civic Centre branch for Dr. Daniel Grafton Hill III with a presentation to the Library Board. Although [the Board decided](#) to retain the existing branch name in order to raise the profile of the Scarborough Civic Centre, the Board also directed staff at that time to consider a future naming opportunity to recognize Dr. Daniel Grafton Hill III.

Dr. Hill was a pioneer in and champion of human rights in Canada as the first Director of the Ontario Human Rights Commission. He was a writer, historian and educator who brought Black history into the public domain with the publication of his book “The Freedom-Seekers: Blacks in Early Canada”, and as a co-founder of the Ontario Black History Society.

Renaming Jane/Dundas to honour Dr. Hill is aligned with the principles of the City’s Commemorative Framework and 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. Furthermore, Dr. Hill's achievements, which include working passionately against discrimination and racism in Ontario, and his body of work, embody the values of TPL related to equity, inclusion and intellectual freedom.

Prior to publicly releasing the proposed name, TPL will seek permission from the Hill family in accordance with the Naming Policy, and will work with the Ontario Black History Society to inform the public engagement process.

Public engagement will include an educational component to inform the community about the rationale for the renaming as well as to build awareness about the legacy of Daniel Grafton Hill. This is aligned with the Commemorate Framework guiding principles that any proposed names be supported through meaningful community engagement where the knowledge and stories behind the commemorative naming is shared.

Councillors for wards 4 and ward 5 will be engaged to ensure that their constituents are aware of the opportunity to participate in the process.

Career and Legacy

Dr. Daniel Grafton Hill III (1923-2003) is a recipient of the Order of Canada (OC), the Order of Ontario (OOnt), a human rights activist, sociologist, scholar and writer.

Originally from the U.S.A. and the great-grandson of American slaves, Dr. Hill moved to Canada because he found the entrenched patterns of racial segregation intolerable. In Canada, Dr. Hill was a pioneer in human rights. Appointed the first director of the Ontario Human Rights Commission, Hill worked tirelessly to establish it as a major public agency in the province of Ontario. He was a distinguished writer and historian on the history of Black people in Canada.

Early Life

- Daniel Grafton Hill III was born in Independence, Missouri and raised in Colorado, Oregon and California.
- He began university studies at Lincoln University in Pennsylvania.
- World War II interrupted his studies. During the war, he served in the segregated American Army.

- After the war, he completed his degree at Howard University in Washington D.C.
- In 1950, he began a Master's program in sociology, in the Faculty of Social Work, at the University of Toronto.
- He met his future wife Donna Mae Bender, while teaching at Morgan State College in Maryland after completing his Master's degree. She was a white civil rights activist working for a Democratic Senator, and staged anti-segregation sit-in protests in Washington D.C. in her free time.
- They wed on June 8, 1953. Knowing the challenges they would face as an interracial couple in the American south, days after marrying, they drove to Canada, honeymooning in Québec City and settling in Toronto.

Early History in Toronto

- Hill worked on his PhD program at the University of Toronto, while Donna Hill worked for the Toronto Labour Committee for Human Rights documenting instances of racial discrimination in Ontario. This was part of a wider effort to persuade the Ontario government to enact more comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation.
- Hill received his PhD and completed his ground-breaking dissertation *Negroes in Toronto: A Sociological Study of a Minority Group*, as his PhD thesis for the University of Toronto in 1960.
- The couple had 3 children: Daniel, Lawrence and Karen

Accomplishments in Canadian Public Life

- Hill was appointed first Director of the Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC) in 1962. The Commission was the first of its kind in Canada. Under his leadership, Hill transformed it from a tiny office with a small staff, into a major public agency in the Province of Ontario with statutory powers.
- The [Ontario Human Rights Code](#) was enacted in 1962. The Commission was the first government agency established in Canada to combat discrimination and to enforce anti-discrimination laws.
- As Director of the OHRC, Hill worked tirelessly to try to fight discrimination in the province for Ontarians from all social, racial and religious backgrounds, with some of his wins recognized outside of Canada.
- Hill resigned from the Commission in 1973, to establish the first human rights consulting firm in Canada, and advised a myriad of clients including the Government of Ontario, the City of Toronto, the Toronto Star, the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission, and the Government of Bermuda.

- He also dedicated his time to another passion, researching, writing about, and advancing the history of Black people in Canada.
- In 1978, 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. Hill was its President for the first six years.
- Through the efforts of the OBHS, in 1979, Toronto was the first Canadian municipality to proclaim and celebrate February as Black History Month.
- Hill published his major, seminal book, "The Freedom Seekers: Blacks in Early Canada", in 1981. He was the first to write a 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 Ontario Human Rights Commission.
- Hill was appointed Ombudsman for the Province of Ontario in 1984, a position he held until his mandatory retirement in 1989. As Ombudsman, he advocated on behalf of citizens who felt they had been mistreated by the government.
- Daniel Hill and his wife both received the "Outstanding Service to Humanity" award presented in May 1984 by the Canadian Labour Congress.
- Hill was awarded the Order of Ontario in 1993 and was appointed an Officer of the Order of Canada in 1999.

References

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Ontario Black History Society. n.d. About Us. Retrieved February 1, 2024 from <https://blackhistorysociety.ca/about/>