

## Condolence book set to open Friday at Town Hall in memory of Queen Elizabeth II



A condolence book will open Friday morning, September 9, at Aurora Town Hall in memory of Queen Elizabeth II.

Canada's longest-serving Head of State died at Balmoral Castle in Scotland on Thursday afternoon at the age of 96, bringing to a close a 70-year reign which saw significant change across Canada, the United Kingdom, the Commonwealth, and the world.

?Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II was a true example of gracious leadership who oversaw so many changes in her lifetime and devoted her life to service,? said Mayor Tom Mrakas in a statement. ?On behalf of the Town of Aurora and members of Council, I mourn this tremendous loss with members of our community and my thoughts today are with the Royal Family.?

Flags were lowered on all municipal facilities within an hour of Buckingham Palace's announcement.

In downtown Aurora as well, the bells of Trinity Anglican Church tolled 96 times, once for each year of the Queen's life.

On Friday morning, a condolence book will be opened at Town Hall for members of the community to share their memories and express their sympathies. The book will remain available to the community until the day of the late Queen's funeral, the date of which is yet to be announced.

?For the vast majority of Canadians, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II was also the only sovereign they have known in their lifetime, and the love and admiration Canadians bestowed upon her, including the residents of Aurora, was simply unrivaled,? the Town concluded.

Shortly after the Queen's death, her successor, King Charles III, made a statement on behalf of the Royal Family.

?The death of my beloved Mother, Her Majesty the Queen, is a moment of the greatest sadness for me and all members of my family,? said the new King, who succeeds to the throne of Canada, the United Kingdom, and 13 other nations across the Commonwealth. ?We mourn profoundly the passing of a cherished Sovereign and a much-loved Mother. I know her loss will be deeply felt throughout the country, the Realms and the Commonwealth, and by countless people around the world.

?During this period of mourning and change, my family and I will be comforted and sustained by our knowledge of the respect and deep affection in which The Queen was so widely held.?

Words of condolence were also shared with Canadians by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, the last in a long line of Canadian Prime Ministers who served under the Queen, beginning with Louis St. Laurent.

?For most Canadians, we have known no other Sovereign,? said the Prime Minister. ?Queen Elizabeth II was a constant presence in our lives. Time and again, Her Majesty marked Canada's modern history. Over the course of 70 years and twenty-three Royal Tours, Queen Elizabeth II saw this country from coast to coast to coast and was there for our major historical milestones. She would proclaim, ?It was good to be home? when returning to her beloved Canada. She was indeed at home here, and Canadians never ceased to return her affection.

?Her Majesty vowed to devote her life to the service of the Commonwealth and its people. On behalf of all Canadians, I thank Queen Elizabeth II for honouring this vow and for a lifetime of service. Her Majesty's reign spanned so many decades ? a period when we came into our own as a confident, diverse, and forward-looking country. It is her wisdom, compassion, and warmth that we will always remember and cherish.

?Today, a page has not only been turned, but a chapter in our shared history has drawn to a close. I know Her Majesty's service to Canada and Canadians will forever remain an important part of our country's history. The coming days will be a period of mourning for Canadians, as it will be for all Commonwealth citizens, ending with a national day of mourning when a commemorative service will be held to mark the passing of our Sovereign.?

By Brock WeirEditorLocal Journalism Initiative Reporter