

Media Release/ Communiqué



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Canadian Urban Institute honours Phyllis Lambert and other champions of the public realm

TORONTO, ON – Close to 500 celebrants will gather on Tuesday, May 27, 2008 to honour 16 of Canada's brightest urban visionaries, activists and local heroes at the 5th annual Urban Leadership Awards Luncheon, in the Canadian Room at the Fairmont Royal York Hotel, at 11:30 a.m. Phyllis Lambert, architect, philanthropist and Founding Director and Chair of the Board of Trustees of the Canadian Centre for Architecture (CCA) will receive the Jane Jacobs Lifetime Achievement Award. Others being honoured include the Province of Ontario, the Habitat for Humanity Movement in Canada and Evergreen.

Each year, the Canadian Urban Institute (CUI) presents Urban Leadership Awards (ULA) to honour outstanding individuals and organizations that have made profound contributions to the quality of urban life. The awards are presented to individuals and organizations that, through their leadership, activism, tenacity and vision, change lives and transform communities.

In all, the CUI will present 16 awards in 7 categories, including the **Jane Jacobs Lifetime Achievement Award** to be presented to **Phyllis Lambert**, Founding Director and Chair of the Board of Trustees of the Canadian Centre for Architecture, Companion of the Order of Canada, Grand officier of the Ordre national du Québec and life-long urban advocate.

Canadian Urban Institute Urban Leadership Awards 2008 Award Recipients

The Jane Jacobs Lifetime Achievement Award for 2008 is awarded to Phyllis Lambert, Founding Director and Chair of the Board of Trustees of the Canadian Centre of Architecture.
Recipients are individuals whose exemplary achievements, in the betterment of the public realm, demonstrate a level of leadership that only a few attain.

City Renewal – the **Habitat for Humanity Movement in Canada; Quartier International de Montréal**
Activities that renew, revitalize and restore our cities through advocacy that shapes policy on major urban issues, thereby promoting attitudinal change, encouraging public participation and transforming our urban landscape for future generations.

City Soul – artist and community advocate, **Dyan Marie**; founder of the first urban-format radio station in Canada, **B. Denham Jolly**
Pursuits that inspire, inform, enrich and engage our collective spirits whether through the arts, entertainment, heritage programs, sport and recreation, cultural exchange, or other initiatives.

City Livability – landscape architect **Janet Rosenberg**; **Evergreen**
Actions that make our cities more livable from finding new ways and means to improve our healthcare, education and the environment to enhancing public places and spaces and instilling confidence about our personal safety and security.

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City Initiatives – the Province of Ontario, for programs and legislation designed to build strong city regions; **The Bird-Friendly Development Working Group**, the volunteer team who developed the internationally recognized Bird-Friendly Development Guidelines.

Innovative initiatives that should make a significant impact on the public realm.

City Youth – role model and champion of the Canadian Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, **Christopher Beausoleil**; social and human rights advocate, **Ayan Hersi**; passionate advocate for community safety and youth engagement, **Ryan Teschner**.

Outstanding contributions to any aspect of the public realm by individuals under the age of 30.

Local Heroes -- Thunder Bay community group, **Evergreen-A United Neighbourhood**; the **Toronto Police Service** for their Toronto Anti-Violence Intervention Strategy; Founder and President of the Toronto Children's Breakfast Club, **Richard Gosling**; and, **Michel Labbé**, Founder and President of Options for Homes

Individuals who have had a profound and lasting impact on the quality of life in their neighbourhood

Jane Jacobs Lifetime Achievement Award

This award was created by the Canadian Urban Institute in honour of the late Jane Jacobs, a distinguished Canadian whose vision and leadership has fostered the development of cities around the world. Known for her dedicated and thoughtful activism, contributions to urban theory, numerous publications plus her energetic devotion and determination, Jane encouraged us to look for the best in ourselves and to never give up. In her final book, *Dark Age Ahead*, Jane reminds us of the importance of cherishing, nurturing and utilizing our own cultural characteristics in the pursuit of practical solutions.

Phyllis Lambert, 2008 recipient of the Jane Jacobs Lifetime Achievement Award

(excerpts from a profile by Christopher Hume)

Architect, activist, philanthropist, pioneering urbanist, and institution-builder, Phyllis Lambert played a seminal role in the triumph of modernist architecture in North America in the 1950s. As the champion of influential German-American designer, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, she ensured he got the opportunity to build the oasis of towers and plaza [the Seagram Building and Plaza in New York City] that would change the face of corporate architecture and cities around the globe.

More significant, perhaps, is Lambert's commitment to the city. She has demonstrated that commitment innumerable times in Montreal, which like so many cities during the 1960s and 1970s, decided that no building was so important it couldn't be torn down to make way for a highway, an overpass, an underpass, whatever. As much as anyone, Lambert shamed her hometown into doing the right thing – not every time, it's true, but often enough to make a difference.

"In 1971," Lambert recalls, "wishing to pass from the theoretical to the actual in order to understand the structures and growth of the city, I began a citywide photographic mission to document the greystone buildings of Montreal. In doing so, I became aware of the impending threat contemporary development and infrastructure posed for the city's historic 19th-century building fabric. This prompted me to join the citizens' group, Save Montreal, which was in formation at the time. [That] led to my creation in 1975 of Heritage Montreal, an organization that raises funds to support immediate actions to stop demolition, and long-term, to undertake public education on areas and sites threatened with demolition or inappropriate new construction."

In 1979, Lambert founded the Canadian Centre for Architecture. This unique institution – part museum, part research facility – stands as her crowning achievement. Since the CCA moved into the building she built for it in 1989, it has attracted world-wide attention and helped keep architecture and cities on the agenda in Canada and internationally.

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In her seminal work volume, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, Jane Jacobs wrote about the organized complexity that lies at the heart of the urban condition. Lambert has embraced this notion from the beginning, dedicating her life and her fortune to understanding that complexity and keeping it alive. Her success has been our success.

The CUI gratefully acknowledges the following participants who have helped make this event possible:

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Ontario Power Generation;
Toronto Hydro Corporation;
MintoUrban Communities;
George Brown College.

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