

Urban Leadership Award recipients reflect the vision and strength behind our cities

Toronto, Wednesday, May 26, 2004
For Immediate Release

Today's urban leadership award recipients bring us "renewed hope for the future and show us that vision, strength and tenacity can have a lasting impact upon our cities," says David Crombie, President and CEO of the Canadian Urban Institute (CUI). Today at the Fairmont Royal York Hotel, the Institute awarded honors to five recipients for making a significant contribution to the public realm.

Avana Capital Corporation received the City Renewal Award for its pioneering efforts to generate public discourse on such issues as new financing for cities, affordable housing, immigration and settlement, public transit, and sustainable development. In convening the Ideas that Matter conference, and the resulting forums and publications, Avana has shown exemplary leadership moving forward the urban agenda in Canada.

The award in City Engagement was presented to **Anne Golden**, President and CEO of The Conference Board of Canada. Anne was honored for her extraordinary efforts in reshaping public policy in addressing such issues as property tax, homelessness, regional planning and government reform. She has shown an "indomitable spirit" in engaging thousands across this city and Canada, and her impact will be felt for years to come!

The Toronto Public Library received the City Livability award in recognition of its constant innovation, ingenuity and impact on Toronto's social development, cultural landscape and economic growth. A familiar institution to all, the Toronto Public Library is the busiest public library in North America. Its 98 branches circulate over 30 million items annually. The Library maintains active collections in over 40 languages, provides children's programs, Internet services and support for newcomers.

The City Soul award was presented to **The Toronto International Film Festival Group**, whose passion and leadership have positioned Toronto as a "premier" international cultural centre for film. Although best known for its International Film Festival, The Group also provides important resources to the public through the Film Circuit, Cinematheque Ontario, the Film Reference Library, and the "Sprockets" Film Festival for Children. These initiatives generate 67 million dollars in economic impact including 33 million dollars in tourism to Toronto every year.

Ed Mirvish was acknowledged as recipient of the first Jane Jacobs Lifetime Achievement Award for his unique contribution to business and the arts and entertainment (**See next page for more**).

The CUI's Jury Panel selected today's recipients from over 130 nominations by the public. Nominations for the 2005 Urban Leadership Awards Program will begin this Fall. Please visit www.canurb.com for nomination details and other information.



Backgrounder on 2004 Urban Leadership Awards Program May 26, 2004

Defining the Public Realm

“The quality of urban life in Toronto has been rooted deeply in the quality and strength of its public realm. Education, healthcare, social services, public transit, arts and culture, energy resources, public safety and security, justice, libraries, environmental stewardship, roads, streets and public places have been the connecting tissues linking our individual private worlds and fusing one generation to another. The public realm has been the glue that holds the City together and the bedrock upon which it built its prosperity, its communities and its social peace.”

David Crombie, *The Urban Century*, Spring 2004

Jane Jacobs Lifetime Achievement Award

This award was created by the CUI in honour of Jane Jacobs, a distinguished Canadian whose vision and leadership have 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 has encouraged us to look for the best in ourselves and to never give up. In her latest 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.

Tribute to Ed Mirvish, 2004 Jane Jacobs Lifetime Achievement Award Recipient

For over seven decades Torontonians have come to love and take pride in Edwin “Honest Ed” Mirvish thanks to his extraordinary contribution to the community, his acts of kindness, business acumen and unfaltering sense of humour. It began in the 1940s when Ed and his wife, Anne, opened Canada’s first discount retail store, Honest Ed’s. Entering the world of show business in 1963, Ed saved the majestic Royal Alexandra Theatre on King Street west from demolition; it has since been declared as a historical landmark. Nearby, Ed built his “World Famous Restaurants,” which were in existence for nearly 40 years. In 1982, he also purchased the historic Old Vic Theatre in London, England. In 1983, Ed and his son, David, built that jewel of Toronto’s Entertainment District, The Princess of Wales Theatre. Credited with launching Toronto’s thriving entertainment district, the Mirvish family has presented over 500 theatrical productions here and abroad, winning the industry’s highest honors from the Oliviers (UK) and Tonys (USA) to the Doras in Canada. Among Ed’s numerous honors are The Retail Council of Canada’s Distinguished Retailer of the Year Award, the Order of Canada, the Order of Ontario, the Order of the Commander of the British Empire and induction into the Canadian Business Hall of Fame – to name a few.

Jury Panel

The 2004 Urban Leadership Awards Program Jury Panel includes: David Crombie, President and CEO of the Canadian Urban Institute, Christopher Hume, architecture critic and urban issues columnist for the Toronto Star, Mitzie J. Hunter, VP of Marketing for Goodwill, Bob Onyschuck, senior partner at Gowling Lafleur Henderson LLP, lawyer Jane Pepino of Aird & Berlis LLP, Dr. Joseph Wong from the Yee Hong Centre and Leslie Woo, Architect and Executive Assistant to the Honorable David Caplan, Minister of Ontario’s Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal.

Sponsor Support

The Inaugural Urban Leadership Awards were held at the Fairmont Royal York Hotel thanks to the generous support of our founding partner, The Ontario Trillium Foundation; Leadership Awards Sponsors include Gowling Lafleur Henderson, LLP, John McKellar Charitable Foundation, Ontario Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal, TD Bank Financial Group, and the Toronto Star. Community Builder Sponsors include: Bell Canada, Carpenters & Allied Workers Local 27, Toronto Construction Association, General Contractors’ Section of Toronto Construction Association, Diamante Development Corporation, One City Hall, Hon Kwok Investments, Molson, Ontario Power Generation, The Sorbara Group, and DOLCE magazine.



Urban Leadership Awards Finalists - May 26, 2004

City Renewal

This includes those who have developed assets like parks and libraries; improved people's lives in health, education, the environment or recreation; beautified our streets and landmarks, or advocated passionately for their city or community.

Finalists

Ms. Elyse Allan
Avana Capital Corporation
Mr. Jack Diamond
Mr. David Pecaut
TD Bank Financial Group

City Soul

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.

Finalists

Ms. Karen Black and Ms. Jane French
Mr. Richard Bradshaw
Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre
Ms. Eleanor Koldofsky
Toronto International Film Festival Group

City Livability

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.

Finalists

Black Business & Professional Association
George Brown College, The Toronto City College
Mr. Vern Harper
Metropolitan Action Committee on Public Violence Against Women and Children, METRAC
Mr. Jim Richards / General Motors of Canada Limited / Friends of Second Marsh
Toronto Public Library

City Engagement

Contributions that enlist community, government and corporate support to provide services and promote attitudinal change through social action and public participation.

Finalists

Carpenters Local 27 Joint Apprenticeship and Training Trust Fund Inc.
Ms. Anne Golden
Mr. Rahul Raj
United Way of Greater Toronto
YMCA of Greater Toronto
Yonge Street Mission