



## Honorary Life Members Report – May, 2026

Each year, the Friends of the Guelph Public Library recognizes outstanding individuals whose long-term volunteer service has helped shape and sustain our mission. Honorary Life Membership is the highest recognition we offer, awarded to those whose dedication, leadership, and generosity have made a lasting impact on our organization and the broader community. This year, we are proud to honour two such individuals: **Norman C. McLeod** and **Nancy Ryan**.



Among **Norman C. McLeod's** many contributions as **Chief Librarian** at the Guelph Public Library from 1977-2009 were the creation of the current branch system and introduction of an automated library circulation system. In 1995, Mr. McLeod issued a Request for Proposals from parties interested in building a new main library. We look forward to the fruition of this proposal when the new central Library opens early next year.

Help for this project came with the formation of the **Friends of the Guelph Public Library** in which Mr. McLeod played a critical role. The minutes of the Guelph Public Library Board recorded that: "Nov. 20, 2003, Chief Librarian, Norman McLeod had a chance meeting with Bill McKinnie in the Stacks of the Guelph Public Library and after a short discussion introduced him to Susan Percival, chair of the library board, Madeline Bakker, GPL staff. The four met in the Board Room and after a brief discussion decided it was time to form a group called Friends of the GPL. At a meeting held in the Library's Board Room that afternoon the founding members were identified as Bill McKinnie, (late) Sheilagh McKinnie, Susan Percival, Madeline Bakker, and Marilyn Shapka."

This overdue Honourary Life Membership recognizes the role played by Mr. McLeod in the founding of FGPL and providing on-going assistance in FGPL's efforts to support the central library project: help with its main fundraising project, the annual book sale, and encouragement of the Friends to establish a fund to support the new central library, particularly the Children and Youth area.



**Nancy Ryan's** contributions to the Friends have been impressive, to say the least. Nancy has given her time to us since 2011 as a volunteer with the book sale, and importantly, since 2015, she has led the Post Sale team through the arduous process of packing up our furniture for storage, and responsibly dispersing the remaining books, through working with prison librarians and non-profits and charities. Nancy is also passionate about providing thoughtful programming, such as the popular **Open Minds** Lecture Series, to the Guelph community, while at the same time creating opportunities for connection and appreciation for the volunteers that make up our organization. And all of that is separate from her work these past 8 years on the Board of Directors! She has worn many hats for the Friends, and we are so lucky to have had her as a leader in our organization.

Together, **Norman** and **Nancy** exemplify the spirit of the Friends—commitment, generosity, and deeply supportive of others. We extend our heartfelt thanks and congratulations to Norman McLeod and Nancy Ryan as they receive Honorary Life Memberships—an acknowledgment so well deserved.