

LOCAL

Master museum planner Barry Lord was 'a genius'

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Barry Lord was involved in museum planning and cultural projects around the globe, but he would have loved to have done something special for his hometown of Hamilton.

That desire got going in 2014 when he met with then Mayor Bob Bratina — who knew him from high school — and one idea they mulled over was turning their old alma mater, Delta Secondary School, into some type of high-tech high that could specialize in teaching such courses as animation.

"He was still hoping to do something for his hometown," said Bratina. "We had a lot of good discussions. It was about what the City of Hamilton could do for its young people."

The ideas, however, did not go anywhere and likely never will. Lord died March 9 at the age of 77.

Lord was one half of the pioneering Lord Cultural Resources of Toronto. He founded it with his wife, Gail Dexter Lord, in 1981 and the business of helping museums plan their facilities, finances and collections saw them work with such clients as the National Capital Commission in Ottawa, the Louvre in Paris, the Tate Gallery in London, the Hong Kong Heritage Museum, Constitution Hill in Johannesburg, the National Discovery Museum in Thailand and the National Infantry Museum at Fort Benning, Georgia. As of 2016, the firm had completed more than 1,600 projects in 42 countries. Lord was also the author of five books, including "The Manual of Museum Planning" (1991) and "Art and Energy" (2014).

Dozens of people expressed their sorrow over Lord's passing on his company's website.

Ford W. Bell of Minneapolis, Minn., who served as president of



TORONTO STAR FILE PHOTO

Barry Lord and his wife, Gail, stand before the Toronto skyline in 2005. They were working on a museum project to tell the story of the city at that time.

the American Alliance of Museums from 2007-2015, said the field owes "a great deal to Barry, and museum practice and planning will benefit from his inspiration for years to come." The staff at The Canadian Museum of History in Gatineau, Que., wrote that Lord's "enthusiasm and passion for the museum and cultural sector have been infectious and no one can ignore the innovative leadership that Barry brought to museum planning throughout his long career. He had an incredible impact on the museum sector across Canada and the world."

Bratina said Lord was the son of an International Harvester worker and attended Queen Mary Public School. At Delta, he was active in drama and student activities and was the valedictorian in 1957 (He was inducted into the Delta Wall of Excellence in 2008). He won a scholarship to McMaster University and graduated in 1961 with a degree in philosophy. He received the Woodrow Wilson Scholarship to Harvard, where he studied the history and philosophy of religion. In 1963, he received a Canadian Coun-

cil grant focused around art studies in Europe. He became a curator and an art critic and in the 1970s he went to work for the Canadian government in its museum assistance program.

Bratina, now Hamilton East-Stoney Creek MP, said he followed Lord's career over the decades and said it was "unbelievable what he accomplished" and that he did Hamilton proud.

"Everybody knew about Barry Lord in the cultural industry," said Bratina, recalling a talk he had a few years ago with Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel about Lord and his contributions to a museum project there. "I was always fascinated by him. He was a genius but he didn't act like a genius. He was a good guy."

Last year, Lord and his wife received honorary degrees from McMaster University for their work in the cultural sector.

Lord is survived by his wife, sister, two children, grandchildren, nephews and nieces.

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