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To: "[Direct to Mayor and Council - DL](#)"

Date: 10/28/2024 7:05:35 AM

Subject: Upcoming news release: Philanthropists presented with Freedom of the City Award (October 29, 2024)

Dear Mayor and Council,

I am writing to inform you that the City will be issuing the below news release on October 29 regarding the awarding of the Freedom of the City Award. Please keep this news release embargoed until it goes live from the City media email account at 2:30 pm.

The news release will include an official photo from the presentation ceremony that morning. The news release will also be shared on City's social channels.

Maria will reply to this email with the relevant Vancouver.ca link and social media links, once these are live.

Best,
Paul

Paul Mochrie (he/him)
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The City of Vancouver acknowledges that it is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the xw'kməy (Musqueam), S'wxwú7mesh (Squamish), and s'liw'at'a (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

City of Vancouver
News release
October 29, 2024

Philanthropists presented with Freedom of the City Award

Leslie and Gordon Diamond are the recipients of the City's highest award

To recognize their exceptional leadership and philanthropic impact in Vancouver and across Canada, the Vancouver City Council has unanimously agreed to bestow the Freedom of the City upon Leslie and Gordon Diamond.

"Leslie and Gordon have devoted their lives to the people of Vancouver," says Mayor Ken Sim. "Their remarkable work in healthcare, affordable housing, community services and beyond has made a lasting impact, shaping not only our city's history but also its future."

An Officer of the Order of Canada and a recipient of the Order of British Columbia, Gordon Diamond founded the Diamond Foundation in 1984. Leslie, who is also a recipient of the Order of British Columbia, has worked alongside Gordon in driving initiatives that support affordable housing, social and seniors' services, community development, education, and healthcare.

The Diamond's philanthropic vision, particularly in healthcare, has catalyzed critical initiatives addressing health and substance use. Their contributions include landmark donations of \$20 million each to Vancouver General Hospital's Gordon and Leslie Diamond Health Care Centre and to the St. Paul Foundation's 'Road to Recovery' substance use disorder initiative.

As champions for the arts Leslie and Gordon have enabled countless underprivileged youth to access and enjoy the cultural fabric of our city. Their substantial support for the new Vancouver Art Gallery, stands as a testament to the Diamonds' vision for arts accessibility and patronage.

"We are truly honoured to be recognized by the city we love," say Leslie and Gordon Diamond. "To receive an award for doing what we love doing is humbling. Thank you."

Leslie and Gordon Diamond were awarded the Freedom of the City on December 12, 2023. An award presentation was held on October 29, 2024.

About the Freedom of the City award

The Freedom of the City is the highest award given by the City of Vancouver. The City grants the award only in exceptional cases to individuals of the highest merit. The recipient is usually someone who has gained national and international acclaim in the arts, business, or philanthropy, and who has brought recognition to Vancouver through their achievements.

The City began honouring individuals with the Freedom of the City Award in 1936.

Recipients of the award are recognized during a special ceremony at Council, which consists of the reading and presentation of a certificate and a lifetime recreation card for free access to Park Board pools, rinks, and fitness centres the presentation of the Freedom Medal, and the signing of the Book of Freedoms. Members of City Council nominate individuals for the award and nominations must be approved by unanimous vote of Council.

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