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NEWS



Ethel Karmel was named an honorary member of the B.C. Society of Landscape Architects for her work to save trees along the Cambie Heritage Boulevard. Photo-Dan Toulgoet

Landscape protector honoured

By Sandra Thomas-Staff writer

One of the original founders of the Cambie Boulevard Heritage Society was honoured with an award last month recognizing her commitment to preserving the city's landscape.

Ethel Karmel says as an artist she loves trees, and as a resident of Vancouver she has a passion to save as many as she can from being destroyed. Last month she was named an honorary member of the B.C. Society of Landscape Architects.

"It breaks my heart every time one is removed," she said. "Trees are important to me, not only because of their beauty, but because they are the lungs of a city. We have so much pollution we need more of them."

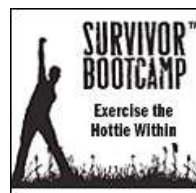
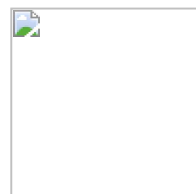
Karmel is credited as the driving force behind a movement to save the trees along the Cambie Heritage Boulevard. The movement began in 1989 after the city announced plans to build an above-ground rapid transit system along Cambie.

Karmel, joined by a group of local residents, organized rallies to protest the proposal. Their rallying cry became "No SkyTrain on Cambie." The group lobbied city council to declare the boulevard a designated heritage landscape and gathered more than 6,000 signatures on petitions in support of its cause. In 1993 the group made a presentation to council. Its efforts were successful and Cambie Boulevard was proclaimed the first designated heritage landscape in the city. In 1994 the group formed the Cambie Heritage Boulevard Society and Karmel was elected president.

In 1996 Karmel was honoured with a City of Vancouver Heritage Award for her work saving the boulevard. She had no idea the protest

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airport and Richmond goes straight along Cambie, forcing Karmel and her daughter Lorraine Fralin once again to fight to save the trees on the heritage boulevard. "We have to be the stewards," said Karmel. "This is our history."

Clive Justice, one of the founders of the B.C. Society of Landscape Architects and long-time lover of trees, said the honorary membership was created to recognize people who aren't landscape architects but who have contributed greatly to the "living environment" of the city. "Ethel is an artist who has worked hard to save and protect the landscape of Vancouver," said Justice. "And I figured she made the grade and should be recognized for that."

Karmel was one of three honourees nominated by Justice to be recognized with an award. Don Luxton, director of Heritage Vancouver, was recognized for his work in helping to preserve the architectural heritage of Vancouver. He worked on the Cambie Street Corridor Analysis Assessment and Statement of Significance, which was completed before construction started on the new rapid transit system. Clarice Fraser, a long-time employee with the B.C. Society of Landscape Architects, was recognized for what Justice called years of dedicated service.

"The contributions of these people often get lost," he said. "We don't have any money to give them, but we can make sure they're recognized. The status of the society is growing and it's people like this who will help keep it going."

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