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CITY HALL

Russell Street officially renamed Ursula Franklin Street

By **Francine Kopun** City Hall Bureau

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A street bearing the name of one of early Toronto's most infamous supporters of slavery will be renamed after a pioneering scientist and feminist.

The Toronto East York Community Council voted unanimously on Thursday to change the name of Russell Street, named after slave owner Peter Russell, an official of Upper Canada who fought against abolition, to Ursula Franklin.

The council has final say in the matter; it does not have to go to full city council for approval.

Franklin was a research physicist and metallurgist in U of T's faculty of engineering and taught at the university for more than 40 years. She died in 2016 at the age of 94.

"I think she would be really pleased, and we're all pleased," said Franklin's daughter Monica Franklin, who spoke in support of the motion.

Russell is part of the city's anti Black-racism curriculum. There are two other streets in the city named after him: Russell Hill Road and Peter Street.

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Streets named after Peter Russell ☆

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A motion by Coun. Kristyn Wong-Tam (Ward 13 Toronto Centre) was also approved at the meeting, asking the manager of the city's anti-Black racism unit to work with the U of T to identify opportunities for promoting Black history and Black historical figures for honourific and permanent naming.

Michael Valpy, a senior fellow at the Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy, University of Toronto, initiated the change.

"I hope what's become apparent is that there should be a campaign to look at other streets where the history of the person who holds the street name is questionable," he said.



Francine Kopun is a Toronto-based reporter covering city hall and municipal politics. Follow her on Twitter: [@KopunF](#)