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## NEWS

# 'IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT THE BOOKS'

### TODAY'S LIBRARY SHOULD BE "BUSY" NOT QUIET, SAYS RETIRING CHIEF LIBRARIAN

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Geoffrey Cannon, the Halton Hills Public Library's chief librarian, will retire in June.

Having served over 30 years as a professional librarian at the library, the last three as chief librarian, Cannon's career at the HHPL started as a student page.

"I was 15 and my father brought me the Herald or the Independent and said, 'they're looking for people to work at the library, you're going to work there,'" Cannon said. So he submitted his application.

"I liked working at the library, the people were great and I liked to read," he said, adding he doesn't consider himself a voracious reader.

During his hiring interview, Cannon said he remembers being asked why he wanted to work at the library.

His answer: "I wanted to buy a stereo."

But by the time Cannon had finished his undergrad, he enjoyed the work enough to pursue a master's degree in Library Science.

"When I graduated they were expanding here, and I got hired on as a reference librarian," he said. "I had the privilege to work under Walter Lewis, he was in charge of lots of the information technology side of things at HHPL."

Under Lewis, Cannon said he was introduced to a range of digital possibilities.

"We started digitizing the local history collections and we were doing all these cool things, and then



Bryan Myers/Torstar

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**- Geoffrey Cannon, Halton Hills Public Library's chief librarian**

a light bulb went on," Cannon said. "The books are going to be here, but it's not just about the books."

That mindset has carried the Halton Hills Public Library to where it is today.

"We used to talk about how much our circulation increased," Cannon said. "Now I look more at how many people are coming in our doors." Cannon said there are residents who don't see the value in libraries, but that the Halton Hills town council saw the importance. "I've been thinking more about the library as social infrastructure," Cannon said. "We need to continue to advocate for that. You may not use us because you can afford Netflix and Amazon but there are those, even in our community, that can't." But the library's efforts go beyond the physi-

cal locations.

"It's not just about these walls, but a lot of us are thinking about how we take this library out into the community," Cannon said.

The library does a variety of outreach from virtual reality demonstrations to lending tablets and Wi-Fi hotspots.

"I love breaking the stereotypes that people have of their library from when they grew up," Cannon said. "The library can be a place of reflection, but I don't want it to be a quiet place. I want it to be busy."

In retirement, Cannon said he plans to continue volunteering in the community, cooking, traveling, and relaxing with his partner Sharon and their dogs.

The library board is currently conducting the search for a new chief librarian.

## legal matters | ESTATES & TRUSTS

### Q: CHALLENGING A WILL BECAUSE OF "UNDUE INFLUENCE?"



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**A:** The basic purpose of a Will is to allow individuals to set out their final wishes and instructions as to how their affairs should be handled after they pass away. Therefore, the Court will not set aside a Will lightly.

Often when a Will is challenged "undue influence" is one of the primary grounds. Although it may seem obvious to the Will challenger that the testator was influenced by an ill-intentioned friend or relative, because a Will challenge takes place after the testator has passed away, the testator is unable to say what really happened.

Understandably then, the threshold for establishing a Will was the product of undue influence is high. In *Banton v. Banton* the Superior Court of Ontario stated it must be "...established on the balance of probabilities that the influence imposed by some other person on the deceased was so great and overpowering that the document reflects the will of the former and not that of the deceased."

Although the facts of each case are unique, there are certain indicators of undue influence which have been noted in the case law, including:

- The testator is depending on the beneficiary for emotional and physical needs;
- The testator is socially isolated;
- The testator has experienced recent bereavement; and
- The testator has made a new will not consistent with prior Wills.

Simply showing there was opportunity or motive to unduly influence a testator, however, is not sufficient to prove undue influence.

Considering the high threshold and evidentiary hurdles for challenging a Will, those considering a Will challenge should evaluate their options by consulting with a lawyer experienced in estate litigation.

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