

Bench honours slain realtor Susan Ryan

By DAVID PATERSON

Staff

MN Nov. 13, 2013

It was an act of violence that shocked Mississauga. On the morning of Nov. 9, 2008, Susan Ryan, a prominent realtor and community activist, was shot to death as she made breakfast in the kitchen of her townhouse.

She was hit by four bullets fired from a .22-calibre rifle at close range. The man holding the gun was her husband, retired Toronto police officer Larry Ryan, who is now serving

15 years in prison for second-degree murder.

On Saturday morning, exactly five years to the day since she died, Ryan's friends, family and colleagues gathered on a breezy section of Port Credit waterfront to unveil a memorial bench in her honour.

The bench is situated at the edge



Susan Ryan

of J.J. Plaus Park, looking southwards over the stretch of water where the Credit River meets Lake Ontario, in a location much loved by Ryan in life.

"This is the resurrection of the spirit of our beloved Susan," Angela Wong-Liao, chair of the memorial fundraising committee, told the crowd at the unveiling. Wong-Liao, a longtime friend of Ryan's, spoke of a woman who was tireless in supporting her community.

In a dark irony, among the causes

the 57-year-old Ryan was most passionate about were Interim Place women's shelter and Victims Services of Peel.

"I witnessed how much she
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Susan Ryan's brother Steve Elkerton (left), half-sister Lynda McAuley and uncle Alfred Harris help unveil a bench in her memory.

Staff photo by David Paterson

Memorial based in Port Credit

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contributed to the city of Mississauga. She loved the city of Mississauga, especially Interim Place and Victims Services of Peel. She gave and asked nothing in return. This is what she was and we want to be here to remember our beloved Susan."

The memorial's location in Port Credit was an area often visited by Ryan, who loved boating and the lake. At the unveiling, Stephen Elkerton, Ryan's brother, said the memorial would give her friends and the wider community somewhere to go to spend a few minutes with his sister.

"It's hard for me to think of her as being dead, and for everybody here she is still alive in their memories."

Susan Woods, who helped coordinate the fundraising effort for the memorial, said the bench would ensure Ryan's memory was "forever ingrained" on the community and hoped it would bring peace to those who used the park.

"I hope that they look at her name and wonder who she was, if they don't know already," said Woods. "And that they find some tranquility in sitting here and enjoying the view."