

Report to the Community
1994

“I often think that the nature and quality of library service is as accurate a criterion of the maturity of a community as it is possible to find.”

Dr. Murray G. Ross
President, York University,
speaking at the opening of
Bathurst Heights Regional Branch
January 23, 1962



1994 North York Public Library

Library Board

Councillor Barry Burton
Chair (January - June)

Lindley Massiah
Vice-Chair (January - June)
Chair (June - December)

Linda Abrams

Councillor Frank Di Giorgio

Councillor Denzil Minnan-Wong
(July - November)

Berenice Pepe

Harold Randall

Councillor Judy Sgro
Vice-Chair (June - November)

Nighat Sukhera

Councillor Don Yuill



Executive Staff

Josephine Bryant
*Chief Executive Officer &
Secretary - Treasurer*

Linda Mackenzie
*Director Public Services
Deputy Chief Executive Officer*

Gordon Thomson
*Director Public Services
Deputy Chief Executive Officer*

Sid Mowder
Director Administrative Services

Friends of the North York Public Library Board of Directors

Margaret Higgins, *Chair*
Gloria Thomas, *Vice-Chair*
Prudence Clunie, *Secretary*
Kathleen Hopton, *Treasurer*
Josephine Bryant, *Ex Officio*
Sheena Gailis, *Office Committee*
Judith McCabe, *Fundraising Committee*
Mary Nutley, *Social Committee*
Pat Robertson, *Programming Committee*
Diana Wedge, *Membership Committee*



From the Board Chair

“We have responded to public need.”

When I first joined the Library Board in 1988, the library was nearing the end of a long period of rapid expansion, both in the number of its branches and the breadth of its service. Liberal funding had been readily available for some years, and when the public wanted more services, the library delivered.

In the 1990s, the purse strings tightened dramatically, but still the public wanted new services as they became available. Though there was much less money, the library still delivered. In my six-year tenure here, no single accomplishment has made me prouder than the way we have responded to public need in the face of cutbacks.

This kind of resourcefulness is the result of many factors, none more than the dedication of library staff. But I must also acknowledge the willingness of City Council to let us orchestrate our own programs of restraint.

On this encouraging note, I bid farewell to the Board. I will not forget my time here, nor my fellow citizen Board members: Linda Abrams, Berenice Pepe and Nighat Sukhera, who are also departing, and Harold Randall, who will continue on. I have worked with many fine City Councillors over the years, but will recall the late Barry Burton most fondly for his support and positive approach to all things.

To the citizens of North York, I leave a final message. Your library has often been called one of the finest public library systems in Canada. It is. Be proud of it and go there often.

Lindley Massiah

Lindley Massiah
Chair, North York Public Library Board

In memoriam:

Councillor Barry Burton

“I think this job was his pride and joy. He loved the library and was very proud of the library system we have in North York.” Mayor Mel Lastman’s words, spoken shortly after Councillor Barry Burton passed away in June, rang true in the hearts of countless friends and library staff who held the 13-year Library Board veteran in high esteem.

Councillor Burton served in the east end as the Ward 12 representative for 18 years and had been Board Chair since 1991. Early in his Council career he had worked with local citizens to maintain library service at Victoria Village Community Branch, which was then threatened by budget cuts. Fittingly, plans are now in place to rename that facility’s auditorium in his honour.



From the Chief Executive Officer

*“Our city and our world
have become much smaller.”*

A respected manager who retired from this library system some time ago used to recite a maxim to her staff to help them keep things in perspective on difficult days. “Remember,” she would say, “no matter what happens, the books will come in and the books will go out.” Back then, her words rang in our heads like a mantra. Today we are almost as likely to say, “No matter what happens, the terminals go on and the terminals go off.”

Certainly the face of the public library is changing. The books are still here, and we trust that they always will be. But now the shelves seem a backdrop for banks of computers, each one bringing remote information closer than ever before.

A wealth of technology

The past year has brought a wealth of new online information products to the library. Our patrons can now access the *Toronto Free-Net* from terminals located in all of our branches to find a wide range of community information. From the *Free-Net* they can also access selected *Internet* resources. With these products, our city and our world have become much smaller.

The Environmental Bill of Rights Registry (the *EBR*) was also a 1994 addition, providing patrons with access to environmentally significant proposals, acts and policies being planned by 14 Ontario Government ministries.

Finally, a partnership with Trent University and the University of Toronto resulted in a pilot project which, if successful, will display the online catalogues of these and other academic libraries on NYPL terminals. This will broaden immensely the base of research available to our users.

Steady increases

How will this new wave of online services be received by our clientele? If our *Dial-in Access* service to the NYPL catalogue is any indication, we can expect steady increases in usage. The total number of *Dial-in Access* calls increased by over 30% in 1994, reaching 6,000 per month. As a result, the number of incoming lines was doubled from 6 to 12. We expect our new online services to experience similar growth as the public becomes more aware of the resources they provide.



This sudden influx of technology sparked the creation of an *Electronic Information Resources Group* at NYPL. This staff committee has shouldered the responsibility for sifting through ever-changing online service possibilities to determine which are required and how they will affect library service. Needless to say, this is a busy group.

Automation continues

Technology also entails automating repetitive services. Efforts have burgeoned in this area too. Building on our *Automatic Dialer for Patron Reserve Notification*, we have installed a system that allows borrowers to renew items quickly and conveniently by phone. By year-end the service was processing 300 calls daily and serving patrons 15 hours a day, seven days a week — far longer than could be offered using staffed lines.

Phone technology has also helped reduce the cost of overdue notices dramatically. In the past, staff mailed out 8,000 notices to patrons every month. Now overdue information is conveyed by an automated phone system. From the patron's point of view, the service is much more timely and frequent. Notice is received immediately after an item becomes overdue. The system tries more frequently to reach the patron than staff could and will even leave a message on an answering machine. From the library standpoint, the system frees up staff time and saves nearly \$35,000 each year in postage costs alone.

Better service, lower costs

Such efforts to improve service are doubly welcome when they also reduce operating costs. No activity better exemplified this double-edged benefit than the Business Process Re-engineering project (BPR) conducted in our System Collections Services area. The BPR project consisted of a major examination and re-organization of the traditional workflow in our Acquisitions and Cataloguing Departments. It eliminated 16.9 full-time equivalent positions, reducing technical services staffing by over 30%. In keeping with City policy, no one lost a job, as these positions will be eliminated through attrition.



The BPR project will save an estimated \$752,601 annually. But there is another mark of its success: in 1994 the Cataloguing Department catalogued 20% more titles than it did in 1993 and eliminated all backlogs. New library materials are now getting to the shelves faster than ever before.

Still a people place

Economic restraint remains a priority, but service has not been compromised.

Staff continue to show that we are a people place. *User Education Classes* were offered three times each month to teach interested patrons how to use the library. And the annual staff United Way campaign came within a hair's breadth of achieving its \$25,000 goal. Both demonstrate the concern NYPL staff show for people, a concern reflected in the quality of our day-to-day service.

The public has responded to our public service priorities by visiting our libraries in ever-greater numbers. As an illustration: despite a cost-cutting reduction in service hours by 4.4%, the library posted an increase in circulation of 4.4%.

Staff have once again made me proud. Our outgoing Library Board has worked with us like a partner for the common good. And City Council has once again been a strong supporter of our programs.

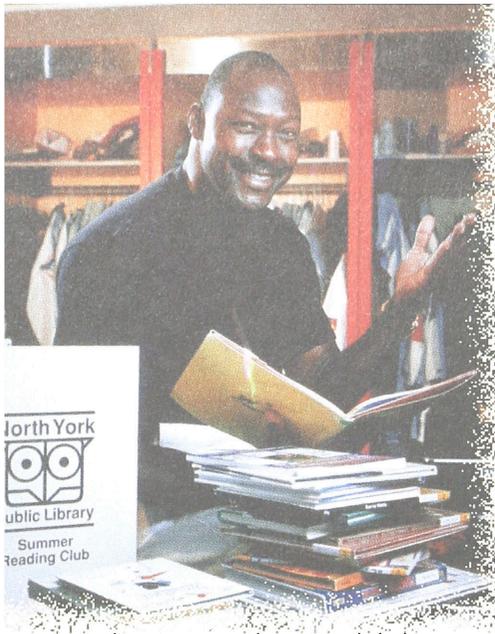
The books still go in and out. The terminals go on and off. But it is for the people who read the books or use the terminals that we are here. We will not forget that.



Josephine Bryant
Chief Executive Officer &
Secretary - Treasurer



Highlights of '94



In promoting the Summer Reading Club, NYPL welcomed a helping hand from Toronto Blue Jay pitcher-turned-pitchman Dave Stewart, whose photo graced the pages of several local newspapers.

Summer Reading Club

One of NYPL's most enduring traditions, the Summer Reading Club has introduced thousands of children to the wonders of the library. The 1994 Club attracted 3,167 participants to 19 branches during July and August. Using entertaining workbooks created around a "Globetrekkers" theme, children in two age groups, under 7 and 7-13, learned about animals from around the world while they discovered the wealth of reading material found on library shelves.



Don Mills good as new again

Built in 1961 and long a stalwart in the NYPL system, Don Mills Regional Branch now presents a more modern and inviting face to the public.

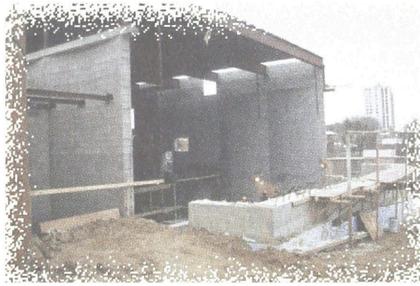
A \$1.35 million renovation completed in the spring brought new life to the Don Mills Regional Branch, NYPL's oldest satellite library. Improvements included a literacy office, an expanded entrance, an elevator, additional meeting rooms, new furnishings, new carpets and heating and ventilation systems, an addition, more lounge space for patrons, full accessibility, and a brighter, more open environment. The complete refurbishing should add 15 years to the 33-year-old building's lifespan.



York Woods Library Theatre takes shape ...and colour

Construction on the new York Woods Library Theatre was well under way by late summer.

Seeking to involve the neighbourhood in the long-awaited project, staff invited local community groups to submit panels of artwork to adorn construction hoardings surrounding the site. The 40 colourful panels followed a performing arts theme and were mounted in October to lavish praise. Architect Eberhard Zeidler, creator of the Ford Centre for the Performing Arts, was so impressed he asked that several of the panels be reproduced and incorporated into the interior design of the theatre.



Colourfully adorned by community art, the York Woods Library Theatre was taking shape by year-end on its way to a September 1995 opening.

Authors

Where would libraries be without authors? NYPL welcomed some of Canada's most popular writers at readings and workshops at several branches in 1994. June Callwood, Ken Dryden and Cynthia Holz were among the most popular. Children across the system enjoyed visits by authors and illustrators such as Michael Martchenko, Bernice Thurman Hunter, Kent Monkman, Lola Sneyd and Maryann Kovalski. Meanwhile, novelist Ann Ireland critiqued 101 short fiction manuscripts from 63 writers and conducted several successful writing workshops during her three month appointment as Writer-in-Residence.



In March, June Callwood (right) continued a tradition of outstanding authors who have read at Downsview Regional Branch, while former Montreal Canadiens goaltending great Ken Dryden (above) served as the Friends' Annual Author at the Barbara Frum Library in April.





Friends of the Library

“Inspiring for all of us.”

If 1990 is remembered as the year the Friends of the North York Public Library were inaugurated, then 1994 will stand as the year they hit their stride.

October marked the end of the first full year of operation for *Book Ends*, the Friends-operated bookstore that puts withdrawn library materials back into the hands of the public. In 1994, *Book Ends* generated nearly \$24,000 in sales — a huge achievement, given that most items are sold for 50¢ or less.



“Lots of people love to own books, but can’t or won’t pay \$30 for the latest hardcover,” said Friends Chair Margaret Higgins. “Here they get a chance to build their collections while the library gets a chance to recover costs.”

Now making up 90% of the group’s total revenue, *Book Ends* has made a major impact on the Friends’ donations to the library. In 1994 alone, the Friends donated \$26,000 to library Literacy initiatives, including sponsorship of a new Leading to Reading program for children at Fairview Regional Branch.

But the Friends are more than donors. By mounting successful social and cultural events such as the Cushion Concerts and readings by prominent Canadian authors, its 160 members have shown themselves to be astute promoters as well as effective fundraisers.

In recalling the events of 1994, Chief Executive Officer Josephine Bryant summed up the value of the Friends as follows: “This organization means a great deal to the library. Of course, the

donations are extremely important to us during difficult times. But more than this, having a group of community-minded people who are so committed to the library is inspiring for all of us. It’s hard to imagine NYPL without them.”



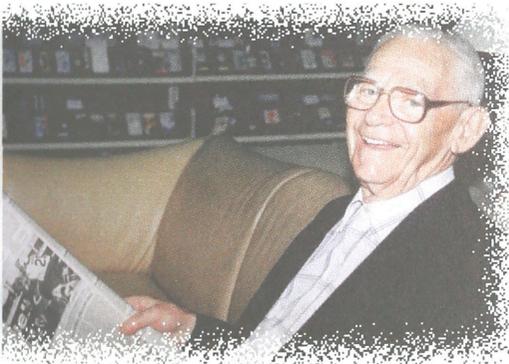
From the Users

"I come from London, England and regularly use a range of public libraries there, particularly the children's sections. I would like to say how enormously impressed I am by the North York Public Library — beautifully designed, very well stocked, open at convenient hours, excellent staff, and good extra events such as story readings. We have nothing comparable among the public libraries of London."

Adam Weinbren

"A simple word of appreciation is not really adequate to express my sentiments about the magazine section of Hillcrest Community Branch. The back issues are always arranged neatly in chronological order. Someone is doing an awfully good job and needs more than a pat on the back!"

R. Yaso



"I commend your excellent service at the Fairview Library. I find the employees most helpful and courteous. Also, your telephone follow-up recording is excellent and a great time saver. Keep it up. It is a pleasure to visit your library."

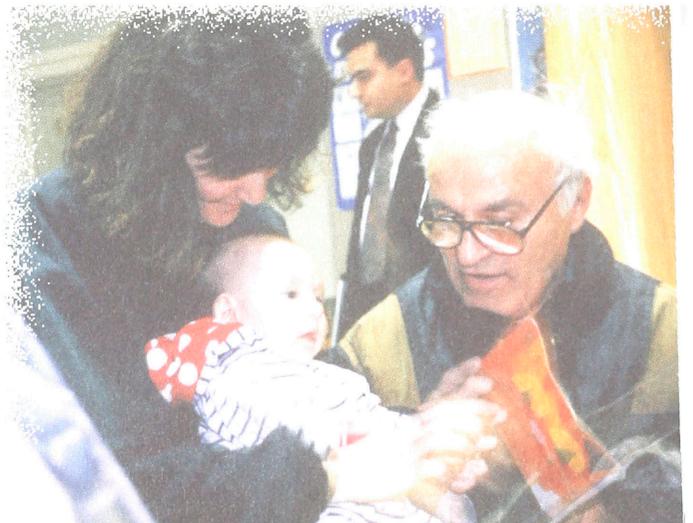
Niki Troupakis & Natasha Verris



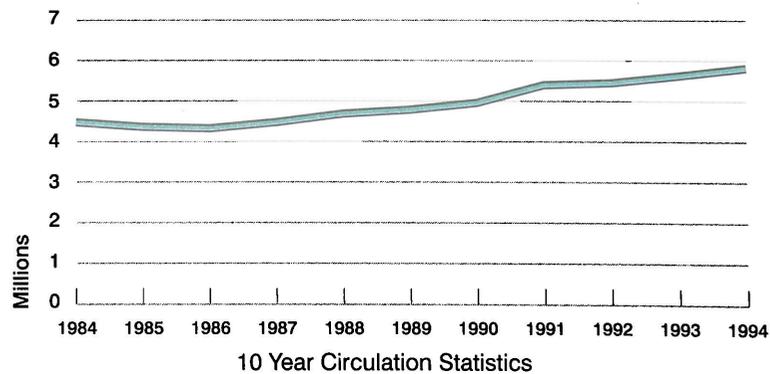
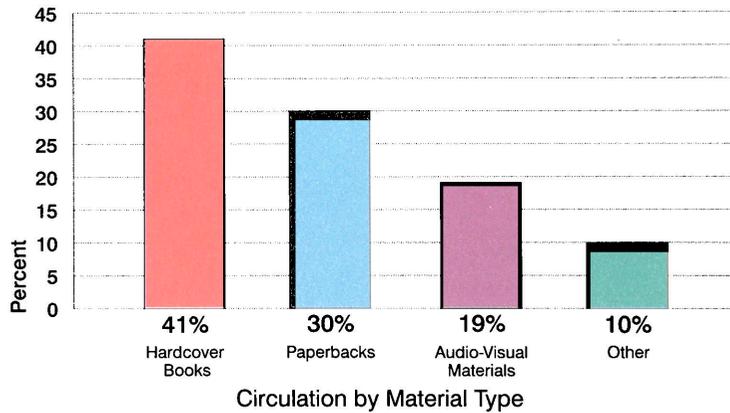
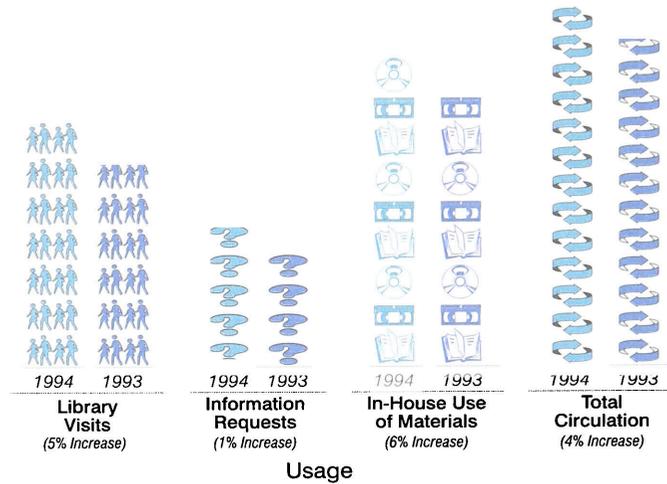
"I would like to say how enormously impressed I am by the North York Public Library..."

"I am one of the grateful recipients of your wonderful outreach services and am writing to tell you how much I appreciate the monthly delivery of books and cassettes. The library staff is helpful, understanding and friendly and they have added to my reading enjoyment by selecting books that challenge and entertain me. These books help keep me company. I write the "Disabled Today" column in *The Sunday Sun* and am disabled myself. In my April 24 column I was pleased to express my love of reading and how much I anticipate the library's monthly visits."

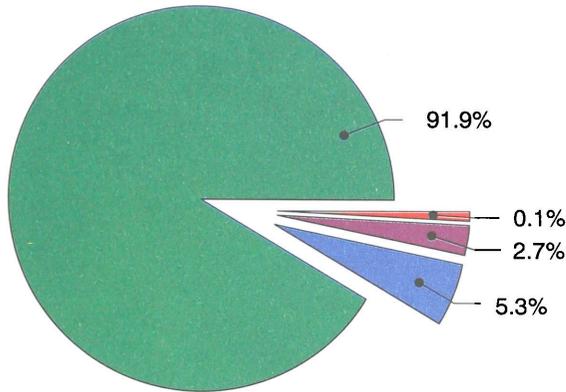
Mona Winberg



1994 Performance Highlights



Financial Report

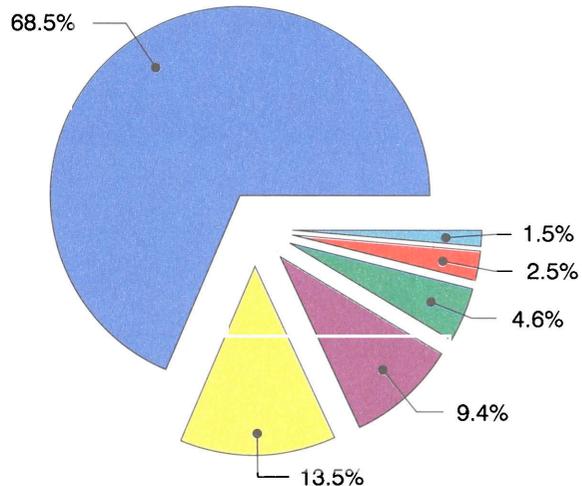


Revenue

● City of North York	\$30,103,684
● Federal & Provincial grants	1,718,722
● User charges, photocopier & room rental revenue	871,973
● Other sources	41,710
TOTAL REVENUE 1994	\$32,736,089
1993	\$33,094,084

Expenditures

● Staff costs	\$22,422,828
● Purchase of services	4,438,323
● Library materials	3,072,654
● Debt charges, taxes & appropriation to reserve	1,507,438
● Materials & supplies	807,928
● Buildings, equipment, furnishings	486,918
TOTAL EXPENDITURES 1994	\$32,736,089
1993	\$33,923,614



A full financial report is available upon request from the Finance Department.

Ahead for 1995

- Downsview Regional Branch undergoes a \$1.3 million renovation.
- The newly constructed York Woods Library Theatre re-opens in September.
- Circulation tops 6 million.
- NYPL becomes the first Canadian public library to offer a self-serve database providing full-text periodical and newspaper articles.
- York Woods Regional Branch celebrates 25 years of service; Pleasant View and Hillcrest Community Branches celebrate 20.

North York Public Library Branches

 **Amesbury Park Community Branch**
1565 Lawrence Ave. W., North York, M6L 1A8
395-5420

 **Armour Heights Community Branch**
2140 Avenue Rd., North York, M5M 4M7
395-5430

 **Barbara Frum Library**
20 Covington Rd., North York, M6A 3C1
395-5440

 **Bayview Community Branch**
2901 Bayview Ave., North York, M2K 1E6
395-5460

Black Creek Community Branch
2141 Jane St., North York, M3M 1A2
395-5470

 **Brookbanks Community Branch**
210 Brookbanks Dr., North York, M3A 2T8
395-5480

 **Centennial Community Branch**
578 Finch Ave. W., North York, M2R 1N7
395-5490

 **Central Library**
5120 Yonge St., North York, M2N 5N9
395-5700

 **Don Mills Regional Branch**
888 Lawrence Ave. E., North York, M3C 1P6
395-5710

Downsview Regional Branch
2793 Keele St., North York, M3M 2G3
395-5720

 **Executive Offices**
5120 Yonge St., North York, M2N 5N9
395-5500

 **Fairview Regional Branch**
35 Fairview Mall Dr., North York, M2J 4S4
395-5750

 **Flemingdon Park Community Branch**
29 St. Dennis Dr., North York, M3C 3J3
395-5820

 **Hillcrest Community Branch**
5801 Leslie St., North York, M2H 1J8
395-5830

 **Humber Summit Community Branch**
2990 Islington Ave., North York, M9L 2K6
395-5840

 **Jane Sheppard Community Branch**
Jane Sheppard Mall, Unit 11
2721 Jane St., North York, M3L 1S3
395-5966

 **Pleasant View Community Branch**
575 Van Horne Ave., North York, M2J 4S8
395-5940

Victoria Village Community Branch
184 Sloane Ave., North York, M4A 2C4
395-5950

Woodview Park Community Branch
16-18 Bradstock Rd., North York, M9M 1M8
395-5960

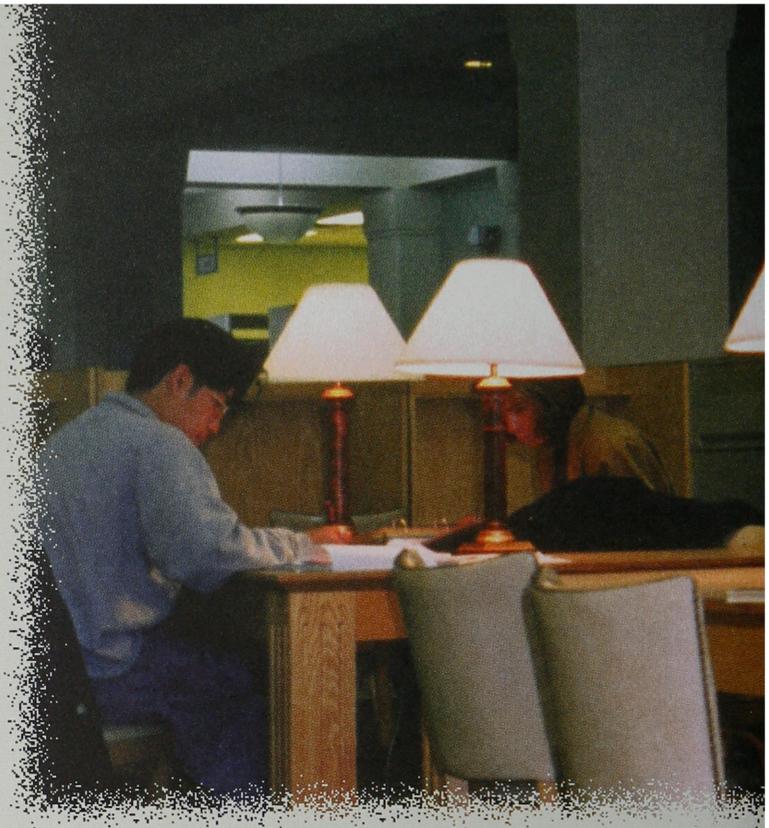
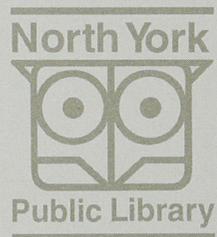
 **York Woods Regional Branch**
1785 Finch Ave. W., North York, M3N 1M6
395-5980





“Where the library and similar institutions are strong, the community in which they exist has strengths of the greatest importance to Western civilization.”

Dr. Murray G. Ross
President, York University,
speaking at the opening of
Bathurst Heights Regional Branch
January 23, 1962



...a lot more than books!

