

CITY

DARRELL PROKOPETZ 1958-2013

'Amazing public servant'

Ottawa man helped to develop public institutions

DON BUTLER

A 54-year-old Ottawa resident described as "an amazing public servant" has died while working in Ghana, apparently of a heart attack.

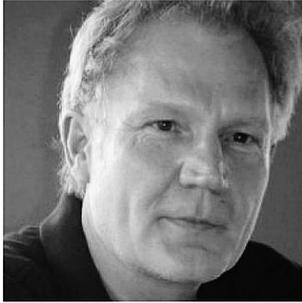
Darrell Prokopetz was a project director with the Canada School of Public Service. He had been working in Ghana as part of a CIDA program designed to strengthen that country's public sector institutions.

He was found unconscious in his bed by hotel security Jan. 30 after he failed to show up for a meeting with co-workers, a family member told The Canadian Press.

The family member, who asked not to be identified, said Prokopetz was rushed to hospital, where he died. An official autopsy report is not yet available, but "we think it's a heart attack," the relative said.

The Canada School of Public Service, where Prokopetz served as assistant director of international strategy delivery, referred questions to the foreign affairs department.

In an email Tuesday, departmental spokeswoman Amanda Reid confirmed Prokopetz's death and expressed condolences to his family



Darrell Prokopetz, who moved to Ottawa about 25 years ago, spent 34 years in the public service.

and friends. Prokopetz's wife, Monique Eady, and daughter, Mia, both live in Ottawa.

Reid said Canadian consular officials in Accra, the Ghanaian capital, are in contact with local authorities "to gather additional information and are providing consular assistance as required."

The Canada School of Public Service has been involved in CIDA's program in Ghana since 2011. Prokopetz was helping the country's Public Service Commission develop an open and transparent recruitment process based on merit, instil sound human resources management practices and improve processes for recruiting and retaining qualified employees.

Prokopetz spent his childhood in Humboldt, Sask. and lived in Saska-

toon before moving to Ottawa about 25 years ago.

According to an obituary last week in the Citizen, he spent 34 years in the public service, often representing the government of Canada abroad. He worked at one point as a finance adviser at Human Resources Development Canada and also spent two years in Washington as an economist with the World Bank.

According to relatives, friends and colleagues who posted messages on his memorial site, Prokopetz was competent and well liked, with a good sense of humour. "Darrell was an amazing public servant who embodied the concept of 'being in service,'" wrote one.

Robert Macdonald of Ottawa, who worked with Prokopetz on a project in Romania, wrote that he enjoyed Prokopetz's "humour, expertise and easygoing nature."

An Ottawa friend, Oksana McVicar, described Prokopetz as "happy, caring, full of life and energy. He was a wonderful man, with a great sense of humour and one who was admired by so many in his professional world and by his friends."

Prokopetz's family and friends gathered Saturday at the Minto Suites Hotel in Ottawa for a celebration of his life and accomplishments. In lieu of flowers, the family asked those wishing to express condolences to make donations to the Heart and Stroke Foundation.

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Briarcliffe heritage worth protecting: planning council

Briarcliffe, a low-density neighbourhood east of downtown with a smattering of modernist houses, is a heritage district worth protecting, city council's planning committee agreed Tuesday. If city council approves at a meeting in two weeks, which is a virtual certainty, the district of 23 houses near the north end of Blair Road will be the first protected heritage area from the 1960s in Ottawa — in fact, the city's heritage experts believe it will be the first of its kind in Ontario. "Briarcliffe is significant as a rare, intact example of the architecture and planning of the Modern Movement," the report recommending the designation said,

and the neighbourhood "is associated with the growth of the National Capital in the post Second World War period when the public service grew dramatically and the city expanded significantly." The houses are nearly all designed individually by architects and were set into the wooded landscape with care and deliberation, it said. The designation gives the city government power to refuse permission to demolish or significantly alter buildings in the neighbourhood. City council has refused permission to build a detached garage and addition on a home because it would compromise its defining characteristics.

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Bronson Avenue development approved with proviso that parking garage is reduced

City council's planning committee signed off on a new five-storey apartment and condo building along Bronson Avenue Tuesday, with the proviso that the builder see about shaving off enough parking from the plans so an enclosed garage doesn't loom so much over the houses next door. The project needs rezoning to allow the fifth storey, one more than zoning along Bronson allows. The strip between the Bronson Bridge and Carling Avenue has several re-development projects underway, and the city is struggling with bal-

ancing its desire for walkable neighbourhoods with the parking builders believe buyers and renters want. The building is between Holmwood and Fifth avenues, on land that slopes down sharply into the Glebe to the east. A handful of neighbours objected to the plans for a garage they'll look up at from their backyards. "Even with the highest-quality brick and the nicest possible treatment, it's going to be a very imposing feature," complained their councillor, David Chernushenko. Lloyd Phillips, the private planner working

for the builder Aspire Group, promised it'll be heavily landscaped and a lot less alarming than a blank wall would be. The building — four floors of rentals plus four condo units on top, 44 units in all — is aimed at young professionals and graduate students, a clientele likely to have cars. The alternative, an outdoor lot behind the building, would be worse for nearby residents, Phillips said. The project has planning committee approval, but he agreed to talk to Chernushenko about cutting spaces so the garage wall can be moved.

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