

Thank you for your interest in the Town of Ladysmith's **Public Art – Call for Poetry**.

The purpose of the Public Art Committee is to assist the Town of Ladysmith with providing advice and recommendations to Council on specific Public Art projects.

## **CALL FOR POETRY**

We are seeking a poem written by a resident of Ladysmith, surrounding area, or Stz'uminus First Nation. The poem should be themed around Mayor Kathleen 'Kay' Grouhel, aka "Concrete Kay" and her key role in the vision for much of Ladysmith's defining amenities, most notably Transfer Beach.

The council has approved the installation of a historical interpretive sign with a short biography of Kathleen Grouhel and her contributions to the Town as well as placement of the title or standalone line that will be stamped onto concrete planters at Transfer Beach. The poem will recognize the contributions Ms. Grouhel made to the Town of Ladysmith. Transforming ordinary elements and Town history into a piece of public art is an effective method of placemaking.

## **ABOUT THE POEM**

The theme of the poem must reflect Mayor Kathleen 'Kay' Grouhel and her key role in the vision for many of Ladysmith's defining amenities, most notably Transfer Beach and First Avenues many planters.

- Proponents may choose the style and format of the poem. The poem will be required to have an impactful title or standalone line that is able to stand alone and be pulled from the poem, as it will be stamped onto a concrete planter located at Transfer Beach.
- The poem has a recommended maximum of 150 words.
- The poet will work with the town staff to select the title or standalone line that will be displayed on the planters.

## **KATHLEEN GROUHEL BIOGRAPHY**

At the encouragement of her husband, Kathleen 'Kay' Grouhel ran for office and was elected Ladysmith's first female mayor in 1964. During her term as Mayor, Kay also became the first female president of the Union of BC Municipalities in its 70-year history.

She had a distinguished career as mayor of Ladysmith for twelve years, played an integral role in the vision of Transfer Beach, and achieved other accomplishments, including:

- the building of the fire hall and public works buildings.
- acquiring the Town's first new fire truck in years.
- the planting of Dogwood trees along the highway (since removed); and
- the redesign of the sidewalks downtown to improve appearance and increase pedestrian safety.

This last initiative earned her the nickname of "Concrete Kay."

## **Poetry Competition Terms of Reference**

1. The Public Art Committee along with selected community members will coordinate with the Grouhel family to select the winning poem for the Mayor Kathleen Grouhel project.
2. The selected poet will receive an honorarium of \$500.
3. The title or standalone line of the poem will be stamped onto two concrete planters at the Kathleen Grouhel shelter location at Transfer Beach.
4. The complete poem will be displayed on a panel at the Kathleen Grouhel shelter located at Transfer Beach.
5. The Town of Ladysmith may publish the selected poetry in the local media. The poem will be displayed on the municipal website <https://www.ladysmith.ca/parks-recreation-culture/culture/public-art>

**Application:**

Interested participants are required to:

1. Complete the entry form.
2. Submit your poem, **ATTN: Community Public Art Program – Mayor Kathleen Grouhel Project** via email to [bid@ladysmith.ca](mailto:bid@ladysmith.ca).

All submissions must be received by 4pm PST on March 31, 2025. For questions or more information, please email [bid@ladysmith.ca](mailto:bid@ladysmith.ca).

**THE FINE PRINT**

**Prizes:**

One honorarium of \$500 will be awarded to the Poet whose poem is chosen by the Public Art Committee.

**Copyright:**

Writer/Poet maintains copyright of their poem.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

- A. 2025 Entry Form
- B. Summary of Mayor Kathleen Grouhel – provide by the Town of Ladysmith Historical Society
- C. Site Plan
- D. Planter Placement





MAYOR KATHLEEN (KAY) GROUHEL  
(1965 - 1976)

- One of seven children, Kathleen (Kay) Grouhel (nee Rawlick) grew up on a farm in the small Former Ladysmith Mayor Kathleen (Kay) Grouhel will be honoured with a historical interpretive sign and poem embedded into concrete along the pathway leading to Transfer Beach.
- Grouhel was the first woman to lead Ladysmith as mayor. She was elected in 1964, defeating incumbent mayor Len Ryan who held the position for 17 years. Grouhel was instrumental in the creation of Transfer Beach Park, leading negotiations with Canadian Collieries and Canadian Pacific to purchase the land at lower prices.
- She is credited with passing zoning and sewage improvement bylaws that moved the outflow of sewage away from Transfer Beach. Another notable accomplishment was her work to revitalize downtown Ladysmith by planting dogwood trees along the highway and improving the safety of the sidewalks for pedestrians. Her work around developing sidewalks earned her the nickname 'Concrete Kay'.
- She was also the first female president of the Union of BC Municipalities during her term as mayor.
- Her other accomplishments include the building of the fire hall and public works buildings, acquiring the cities first new fire truck in years, the planting of dogwood trees along the highway through town and the redesign of the sidewalks downtown to improve appearance and increase pedestrian safety. This last gave her the nickname of "Concrete Kay". During her term as mayor Kay also became the first woman president of the Union of BC Municipalities in its 70 year history.
- Grouhel served as mayor until 1976. She passed away in 2010 at Victoria General Hospital following complications from a stroke.
- Her son, Brian Grouhel, says that the new poem and sign are a great step in acknowledging his mother's legacy. "It's nice to see there's recognition being given for what she's done for the town," he said. "It's going to be quite nice." Brian remembered his mother as being a hard worker who could rally the community together to get work done for Ladysmith. "She was always independent. She'd set herself goals then she'd go and do them. When she was mayor she'd find goals she wanted, whether it was starting up the sewage plant, revitalizing downtown, or doing the beach. She'd figure out a way to go and accomplish that," he said.
- Council voted to include \$8,000 in the 2022-2026 Financial Plan for the installation of the sign and poem.

ATTACHMENT C



ATTACHMENT A

