

THE
WEST END
SEX
WORKERS
MEMORIAL

DEDICATED TO A
DIVERSE COMMUNITY
OF SEX WORKERS

A woman with blonde hair, wearing glasses, a red dress, and red heels, is leaning against a tall, black, ornate monument. She is holding a small white card in her left hand and touching the monument with her right hand. The monument has a spherical top and a base with inscriptions. The background is white.

DEDICATED TO
DIVERSE COMMUNITY
OF SEX WORKERS

PEOPLE WHOSE LIVES
AND WORKS
FROM MID-20TH
CENTURY TO PRESENT
IN MEMORY OF
ONGOING STRUGGLE
FOR EQUALITY

TODAY
WE COMMEMORATE
HONOUR THE

THE WEST END
SEX
WORKERS
MEMORIAL

DEDICATED TO A
DIVERSE COMMUNITY
OF SEX WORKERS

PEOPLE WHO LIVED
AND WORKED HERE
FROM MID-1960s - 1984

TODAY, WE
COMMEMORATE AND
HONOUR THEIR LIVES

Photo: Bill M. Powers,
Sept. 16, 2016

SEP 16, 2016 • City of Vancouver unveiled Canada's first-ever monument to commemorate the lives of sex workers. The event drew over 100 people. Speakers included City Councillors Elizabeth Ball and Adriane Carr, Canadian MP Jenny Kwan and Vancouver Mayor (1993-2002) Philip Owen. Vancouver Police Superintendent Michelle Davy offered her apology for police actions against sex workers during the 1980s. Only three other such monuments exist around the globe—in Amsterdam, the Netherlands; Hamburg, Germany; and Sydney, Australia.

A large group of people, mostly older adults, are seated on the ground in a park-like setting, listening to a speaker. The speaker, a woman in a light-colored dress, stands on the left, holding a microphone. The audience is diverse in age and appearance, with many wearing hats and casual clothing. The background features lush green trees and a modern building with large windows. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting a sunny day.

2010 • Their research project published results which found that fines collected from sex workers under Vancouver's Street Activities Bylaw in 1982-83 totalled \$28,000, until the city bylaw was declared unconstitutional by Canada's Supreme Court. The committee requested that \$28,000 be used to fund a permanent memorial. The City agreed and Jamie Lee worked with City planners to make it happen.

2015 • Former sex workers, Fraser Doke, Gina Gonzales and Stephanie Blaze spoke at a public consultation on the proposed memorial held at St Paul's Anglican Church. For Jamie Lee, the memorial's location at Jervis and Pendrell Sts. marked a convergence of the old sex-worker strolls, in front of St Paul's church, who offered support and refuge in times of conflict.

ALLIANCE FOR THE SAFETY OF PROSTITUTES

A black and white photograph of a group of people, mostly women, holding a large banner that reads "ASP ALLIANCE FOR THE SAFETY OF PROSTITUTES". One woman in the foreground holds a smaller sign that says "STOP GIVING FREE DOLLARS FOR THE SEX INDUSTRY WOMEN WOULD BE LOOKED INSIDE".

ASP's aims were to:
educate the public;
set up a safety
system; publish a
monthly list of descriptions of violent, abusive customers;
provide advocacy for court, child custody and welfare
rights; and fight for prostitution to be decriminalized.

DEC 1981 • Supreme Court of Canada (SCC) ruled in two Vancouver cases (*Whitter & Galjot*) that “soliciting” not only means “pressing and persistent” (*Hutt* 1978) but, that “pressing and persistent” means repeatedly soliciting the same person.



The West End Sex Workers Memorial is located in front of St Paul's Anglican Church at 1130 Jervis St., Vancouver, BC.

Historic St Paul's Anglican Church was built in 1889, and was moved to its current location in 1898. It was rebuilt in 1905 along with a rectory and a parish hall which were renovated in 1929 and 1959. In 1973, the land behind owned by the church was developed into a high-rise apartment building for seniors. In the 1980s, St Paul's developed a strong and sympathetic ministry towards persons living with AIDS, and was embraced by the lesbian and gay community.

Learn more: triple-x.org/about/westendmemorial.html

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ASSOCIATION OF B.C.

associations for the purpose of reporting street crimes and nuisances associated with the sex trade, to be used to pressure politicians. In Vancouver, "Concerned Residents of the West End" (CROWE) was formed for this reason.

APR 1982 • Vancouver City Council passed a Street Activities Bylaw to address residents' complaints. Fines from \$350 to \$2,000 were imposed for attempting to buy or sell sex. Similar anti-loitering bylaws had also been passed in Calgary, Halifax, Montreal, and Niagara Falls. City of Vancouver collected \$28,000 in fines over six months.

JAN 1983 • SCC ruled that all city bylaws used to prohibit sex workers from "loitering" were unconstitutional and against the law (*Westendorp*).

APR 1983 • Two City of Vancouver councillors put forward a "Street Prostitution" resolution asking the federal government for a new criminal law to prohibit public soliciting to sell sex. ASP marched along Broadway and up to City Hall to protest the resolution, handing out leaflets and chanting "Hookers unite! Fight for your rights." Carrying a sign that said, "Harcourt is our pimp," referring to the City's fines, ASP member, Michelle made a speech. (Mike Harcourt was Vancouver's mayor.) ASP also submitted a brief to City Council outlining their objections.

MAY 1984 • CROWE started a "Shame the Johns" campaign that included photographing vehicles, writing down licence plate numbers and posting this information around the neighbourhood. The campaign escalated to picketing and verbal altercations. ASP marched down Davie St. to protest "Shame the Johns."



JUN 1984 • CROWE submitted 40 affidavits: complaints of loitering, littering, fights, noise and public sex. The BC Attorney General filed for an injunction that named 30 people as "public nuisances." Copies of the injunction application were posted on lamp posts. ASP organized a large, noisy sex-worker protest, proclaiming themselves a "public nuisance." Sex workers later retreated from the West End to east of Granville St. in hopes of a truce.

JUN 20, 1984 • 12 members of ASP took sanctuary in Anglican Christ Church Cathedral and stayed four days. The Archbishop welcomed them and invited Sally deQuadros to address the congregation.

JUL 1984 • BC court granted BC Attorney General's injunction. Police served the injunction to stop soliciting to more than 300 Vancouver sex workers. Sex workers convicted of breaking the court order for "crooking a finger, stopping guys in cars, waving a car down or hitch-hiking" could serve up to two years in jail.

1984 • Holly Dale's and Janis Cole's documentary about Vancouver's sex trade debuted. "Hookers on Davie" featured several ASP members. Meanwhile, division grew between Rape Relief and ASP. ASP left.

DEC 1985 • Federal government passed a new law: "communicating for the purpose of prostitution in a public place."

JAN 1986 • Demonstrations against the new law erupted across Canada. ASP protested by organizing "wave-ins" of motorists. ASP disbanded a while after.



JAMIE LEE HAMILTON (Sept. 20, 1955 – Dec. 23, 2019)

Jamie grew up in a home that was a haven and meeting place for all sorts of social justice activists. Jamie's mother was from the Rocky Boy Band, Montana, and a founder of Vancouver's Aboriginal Friendship Centre. Jamie's father was a foundry worker and labour activist. Jamie left home at 16, surviving on the streets in the sex trade. Jamie soon became Jamie Lee. In 1969, she was the first youth in Canada to be treated for gender dysphoria. She opted for surgery in 1983.

1996 • Jamie Lee ran for Vancouver City Council with Committee of Progressive Electors, but quit the party when they vetoed discussion of her proposal to license sex workers as street vendors. Jamie Lee advocated for a legal sex industry and city-run brothels.

SEP 1997 • Jamie Lee opened "Gramma's House" funded by private donations, but the donor backed out.

JAN 1998 • Jamie Lee held up a City Council meeting for several hours in an attempt to get an unscheduled hearing. Mayor Owen was outraged by her intrusion, but agreed to a meeting where the two agreed Hamilton would make a presentation at the next Council meeting. Then, Hamilton pitched a tent on the City Hall lawn and camped there for over a week. At the Feb. 4 Council meeting, Jamie Lee demanded an emergency grant of \$30,000 to operate her nine-bed safe-house for sex-trade workers on East Hastings St.

City Council denied Hamilton's request. City of Vancouver did not have a budget process for handing out emergency grants. When Hamilton's tent then went missing from City Hall lawn, Jamie Lee filed a complaint to Vancouver Police that, "Mayor Philip Owen stole my tent."

WINTER 1998 • Hamilton dumped 67 pairs of high-heel shoes on the steps of City Hall, one pair for every woman missing from the Downtown Eastside, to protest police inaction and draw public attention to the issue.

AUG 1999 • Vancouver Police and the Attorney General of BC posted a \$100,000 reward for information about any of the missing women.

2000 • Hamilton made another attempt at Gramma's House and opened a drop-in space with rooms for rent by the hour on Pandora St. near the Eastside stroll, which she called "Pandora's Box." The Vancouver Police shut it down in August and charged Hamilton with keeping a common bawdy-house. Hamilton had hoped to challenge bawdy-house laws under Canada's *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, but those charges eventually were stayed.

2013 • Supreme Court ruled in *Bedford v. R.* that Canada's bawdy-house laws did violate the Charter. Chief Justice Beverley McLachlin: "A law that prevents street prostitutes from resorting to a safe haven such as Gramma's House while a suspected serial killer prowls the streets is a law that has lost sight of its purpose."

DEC 23, 2019 • Jamie Lee Hamilton died from cancer at age 64. Her service was held at St Paul's Church.



Jamie Lee Hamilton on Vancouver City Hall steps with 67 pairs of high heel shoes, Winter 1998. Photo: *The Georgia Straight*