

Aquatic centre named for former MLA

Riverview complex to be named after Pat Crossman

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Compact and alert in a purple jumpsuit, five-month-old Gillian Davidson effortlessly upstaged Premier Bernard Lord yesterday.

While reporters cooed over the jowly infant, Lord stood nearby waiting to be interviewed. The premier's assistant tried to herd the media in the premier's direction.

"We're competing with a baby — forget it," Lord joked.

Gillian was one of Lord's guests of honour at Riverview Town Hall, where he dedicated the expansion of Riverview's aquatic centre to the baby's late grandmother, former MLA Pat Crossman.

Gillian's mom Alison Davidson, and her aunt Alexandra Lafford — Crossman's daughters — beamed as the premier announced that the centre will bear Crossman's name.

"This would have been very, very special to her," said Lafford.

"She would have been embarrassed by it, though, I think."

Alison Davidson's first comment about her mother was in the present tense, but she quickly corrected herself.

She said the centre had been a pet project of Crossman's for some time, and she would have been pleased to see it finally happen. She was always behind efforts to improve children's lives,

MLA would be 'quite humbled' by honour

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Davidson said.

"She'd be quite humbled to know it was named after her. She's probably looking down on us, shaking her head and saying, 'Why did they do that?'" Davidson said with a smile.

Lord said Riverview MLA Bruce Fitch introduced the idea of dedicating the aquatic centre to Crossman's memory. When asked what she would have thought about the announcement, he echoed Davidson's thoughts.

"She probably would have disagreed to dedicate the aquatic centre to her name — that's the kind of person Pat was. Very modest, humble, hardworking for the people around her — but she deserved it," Lord said.

"We still miss her today."

Patricia Owen Crossman died on Dec. 30, 2002 after a nine-year bout with cancer. She

was 62.

She served as the Conservative MLA for Riverview from 1999 until her death, and was a 24-year veteran school board trustee and a longtime volunteer.

The aquatic centre will be expanded and modernized to incorporate better changing room facilities, including a family change room. The pool deck area will be renovated to add a viewing area for parents. As well, there will be a new reception area along with a first aid training room.

The province is contributing \$225,000 toward the \$875,000 project.

The Community Partnership Fund, which will help finance part of the Riverview Aquatic Centre's renovation bill, is intended to pay portions of the capital costs for new or expanded recreation, sports, culture, heritage and other community priorities.

At least 80 per cent of the \$10-million initiative will be spent on wellness-based projects.