



**MEDIA RELEASE
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Smiths Falls announces new names for swans – Colonel and Esther

Smiths Falls – The Town of Smiths Falls’ new mute swans now have new names to go with their new home in Smiths Falls – Colonel and Esther.

The names Colonel and Esther have special significance for the Town of Smiths Falls: Colonel refers to Colonel John By, the military engineer who supervised construction of the Rideau Canal, while Esther refers to By’s second wife, Esther By (née March).

“Finding the names Colonel and Esther was a real community effort,” said Art Manhire, Director of Community Services for the Town of Smiths Falls. “There were so many great names brought forward by the community, and it was nice to see such a positive response to our request for feedback. We are sad to see the Duke and Duchess go, but look forward to welcoming Colonel and Esther to the community.”

It was on April 28 that the Town announced that Smiths Falls’ male swan, “The Duke,” had fallen ill and been euthanized. Two new mute swans were quickly purchased, and the Town launched a community campaign through Speak Up Smiths Falls to help find names for the new swans.

The Speak Up Smiths Falls’ two-week campaign was successful, with more than 75 names brought forward by the public for consideration. A committee made up of representatives from Town Council, the Smiths Falls & District Chamber, the Downtown Business Association, and a member of the business community made their selection of the new name last week.

Colonel and Esther were moved to their new home in Victoria Basin on May 13 and settled in quickly.

“It’s wonderful to once again see the swans swimming in the basin and enjoying the Rideau Canal,” said Manhire. “Colonel and Esther are now part of our community’s legacy, please join me in welcoming them to the Town of Smiths Falls.”

Residents are reminded not to feed the swans, and to keep pets on leash so they are not frightened from their nesting spot.

About Colonel John By and Esther March

Lieutenant Colonel John By arrived in Canada in 1826 after being handed the responsibility of supervising the construction of a navigable canal between Kingston and Ottawa. By’s wife at the time was Esther March By, and between them they had two children, Esther By Ashburnham and Harriet Martha By.

By spent six years working on the construction of the 202-kilometre canal that exists today as the Rideau Canal, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Bytown (Ottawa) was named in his honour and his legacy continues to be celebrated in Canada today.

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