

HISTORICAL PROFILE

Lester B. Pearson

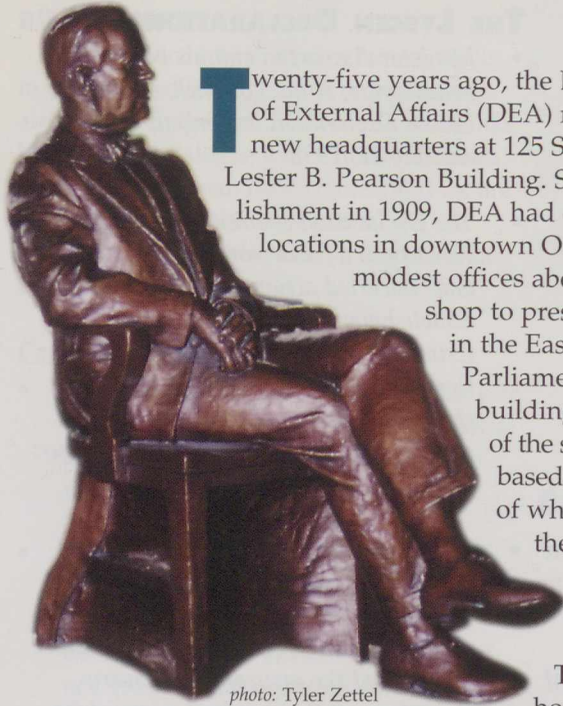


photo: Tyler Zettel

Twenty-five years ago, the Department of External Affairs (DEA) moved into its new headquarters at 125 Sussex Drive, the Lester B. Pearson Building. Since its establishment in 1909, DEA had occupied various locations in downtown Ottawa, from modest offices above a barber

shop to prestigious quarters in the East Block on Parliament Hill. The new building enabled most of the scattered Ottawa-based employees of what is now the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade to be housed in one

place for the first time in many years. Located near the confluence of the Rideau and Ottawa Rivers, the Pearson Building is literally grounded in the bedrock of the Canadian Shield.

It was entirely appropriate that the building should be named for "Mike" Pearson. Not only was he a former Prime Minister and recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize, but he had long been associated with DEA. In 1928, Mr. Pearson was one of the first recruits for the Canadian foreign service. Twenty years later, he entered politics and was named Secretary of State for External Affairs.

»As Prime Minister (1963-1968), Lester B. Pearson had approved construction on a site known as the ceremonial route, not far from the official residences of the Prime Minister and the Governor General. When the decision to name the building after Lester B. Pearson was taken, less than a week before he died in 1972, the "admiration and affection" of DEA for a long-time associate was evident in Undersecretary Ed Ritchie's private quip to him that the building might become known as "Palais Pearson or Mike's Place".

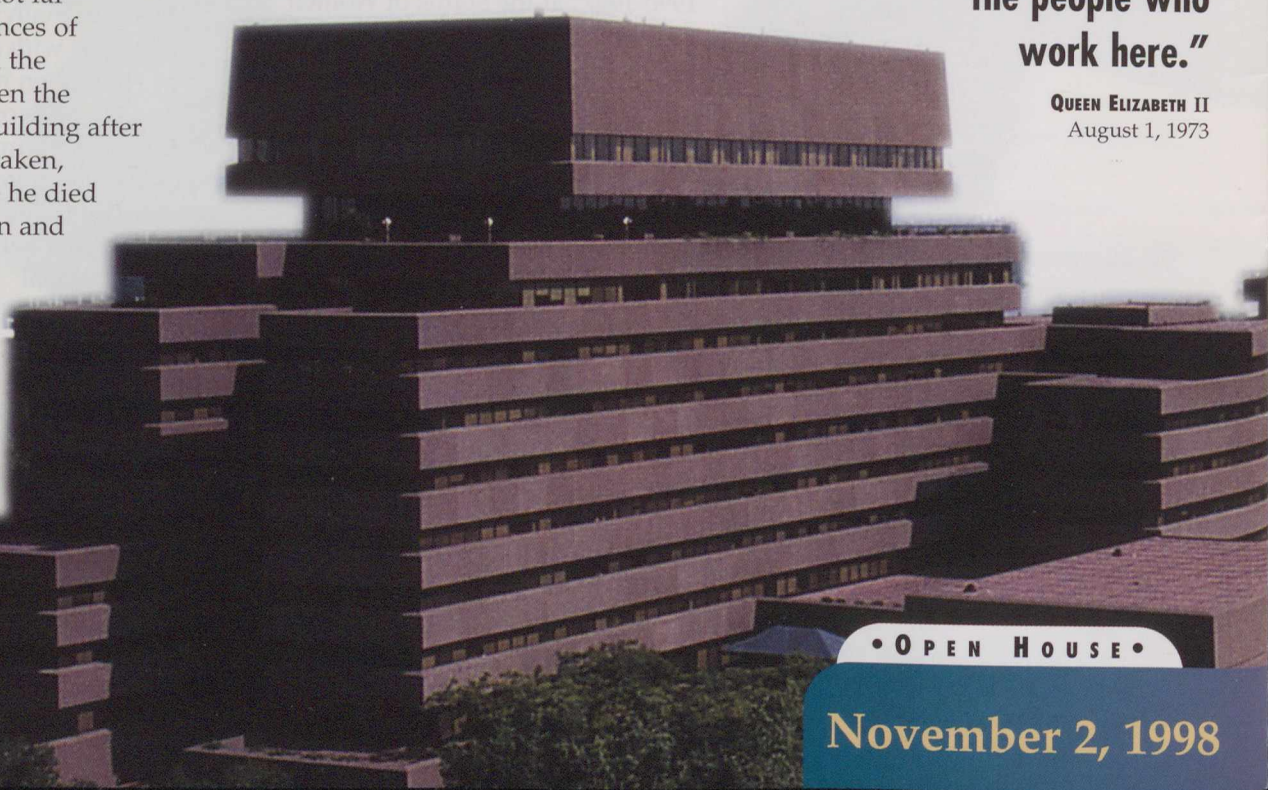
PALAIS PEARSON
OR
MIKE'S PLACE

The Lester B. Pearson Building was formally opened by Queen Elizabeth II on August 1, 1973. As the Queen remarked then, "Lester Pearson's great qualities were that he was considerate, tolerant and fair, and

he had an infectious cheerfulness and optimism. If the atmosphere of this building can come to reflect those qualities, it could not be a better inspiration for the people who work here." The 25th anniversary of the opening of the Pearson Building will be commemorated by an "Open House" on November 2, 1998, to which all are invited.

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QUEEN ELIZABETH II
August 1, 1973



• OPEN HOUSE •

November 2, 1998