



BLACK HISTORY MONTH

2022



BLACK HISTORY MONTH



EDI COMMUNITY ALLIANCE
FEBRUARY 2022

WHAT IS BLACK HISTORY MONTH?

Every February, people across Canada participate in Black History Month events and festivities that honour the legacy of Black Canadians and their communities.

The 2022 theme for Black History Month is: “February and Forever: Celebrating Black History today and every day,” which focuses on recognizing the daily contributions that Black Canadians make to Canada.

No matter where you live, we invite all Canadians to learn more about these communities, and how they continue to help shape the story of Canada.



The Black Health Education Collaborative

HISTORIC PERSPECTIVE



OVERVIEW

Since 1996, the Government of Canada's annual Black History Month campaign encourages all Canadians to learn more about Black history in Canada. This timeline includes some highlights of significant events that have contributed to the story of Black Canadians and their communities, and the impact that they have made to all parts of society well before the land we live on was even called Canada.



Members of the
Black Legal Action Centre

Significant events in
Black Canadian
History

OVERVIEW

1600S

1700S

1800S

1900S

PRESENT

1600S



Illustration of Mathieu Da Costa

First person of African
heritage known in
Canada

- **1608:** Mathieu Da Costa was the first Black person recorded on Canadian soil. He was a free man who was hired by Europeans to act as a translator as he spoke English, French, Dutch, Portuguese, and Pidgin Basque.
- **1628:** Olivier Le Jeune was recorded as the first enslaved African to live in Canada (i.e. New France).
- **1689:** Following complaints about labour shortages in New France, King Louis XIV of France gave permission for the colonists to enslave Pawnee Native Americans and Africans.

OVERVIEW

1600S

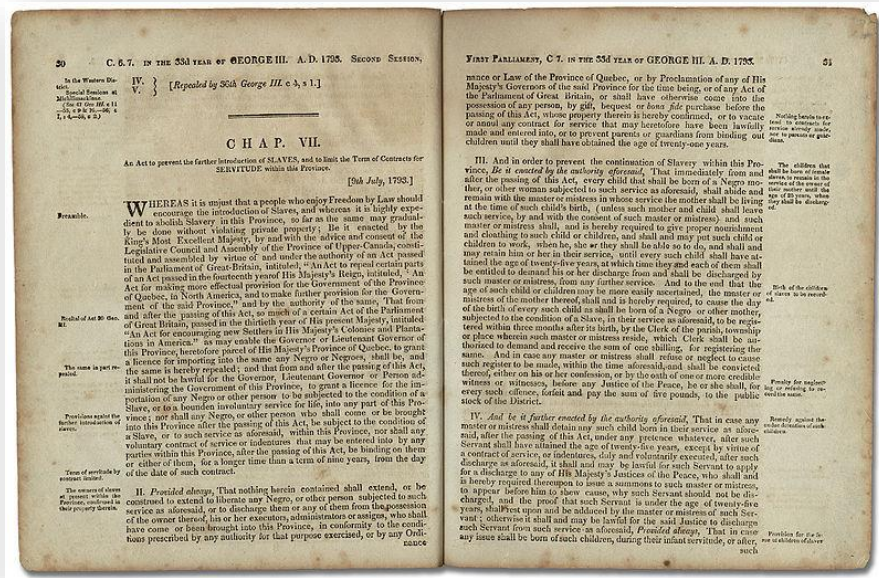
1700S

1800S

1900S

PRESENT

1700S



An Act to Prevent the further Introduction of Slaves and to limit the Term of Contracts for Servitude

Slavery and the Anti-Slavery Movement

- **1709:** Louis XIV Formally Authorizes Slavery in New France. Though there were fewer slave owners in New France, it was only openly questioned by a few colonists.
- **1775-1783:** During the War of American Independence, the British offered land, freedom and rights to enslaved Africans who joined the British.
- **1793:** The anti-slavery movement was emboldened by Chloe Cooley. Having heard of Ms. Cooley's case, John Graves Simcoe, Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada, introduced An Act to Prevent the further Introduction of Slaves and to limit the Term of Contracts for Servitude.
- **1799:** The laws enacted as a citizens' petition asking the government to abolish slavery, prompted a series of anti-slavery measures. This contributed to a decline of African enslavement in Canada and made Canada a destination for those seeking freedom.

OVERVIEW

1600S

1700S

1800S

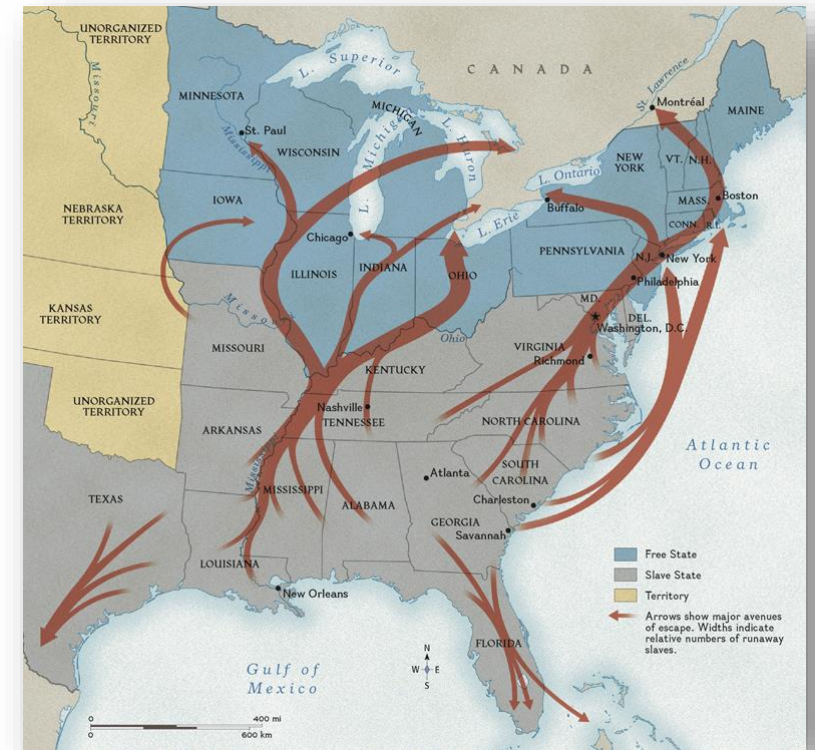
1900S

PRESENT

1800S

- **War of 1812:** Thousands of Black volunteers fought for the British during the War of 1812, fearing American conquest and the return to slavery. The British promise of freedom and land united many escaped slavery under the British flag.
- **1815 – 1865:** Tens of thousands of African-Americans sought refuge in Upper and Lower Canada via the legendary Underground Railroad.
- **1833:** the *Act on the Abolition of Slavery in the British Empire*, abolished enslavement in most British colonies, including Canada.
- **1853:** The Provincial Freeman newspaper was founded in order to promote Black emigration to Canada. The paper publicized the successes of Black persons living in freedom in Canada.
- **1866:** Mifflin Gibbs was elected to the Victoria Town Council in 1866, the first Black politician in Canada.

The Act on the
Abolition of the Slave
Trade in the British
Empire.



Map of the Underground Railroad in the United States

OVERVIEW

1600S

1700S

1800S

1900S

PRESENT

1900S

- **1939:** The Canadian military accepted Blacks into the Regular Army and officer corps where hundreds of Black Canadians served alongside Whites in Canada and Europe.
- **1944:** Ontario was the first province to respond to social change when it passed the Racial Discrimination Act of 1944. This legislation effectively prohibited the publication and display of any symbol, sign, or notice that expressed ethnic, racial, or religious discrimination.
- **1962:** Immigration policies that had discriminated against people of African and Caribbean descent were abolished or reformed.
- **1963:** Leonard Braithwaite became the first African-Canadian in a provincial legislature when he was elected as the Liberal member for Etobicoke, Ontario in 1963.



Black Women in Motion

Unique Canadian
Identities



1900S

OVERVIEW

1600S

1700S

1800S

PRESENT

P R E S E N T

CBC hosted a panel discussion with members of the African Heritage Club at Kitchener-Waterloo Collegiate and Vocational School in Kitchener, ON. The students, Zahra van Gaalen, Jaleel Debs, Imani van Gaalen and Layla Hashi, concluded the following:

- Everyone should contribute to Black History Month.
- More focus on celebrating the accomplishments of Black people, the things that are going on in our community, and Black joy.
- To keep talking about Black history and bringing it up so that everyone can be educated.



Inner City Outreach

What's next?

OVERVIEW

1600S

1700S

1800S

1900S

PRESENT



A R T



BENNY BING

- Born in Nigeria and Immigrated to Toronto, ON
- Self-taught contemporary artist
- Places emphasis on the positive representation of Black women and shaping the way his audience view's identity and ethnicity
- The CBC named him an “influential Black Canadian who is expanding and redefining black representation.”



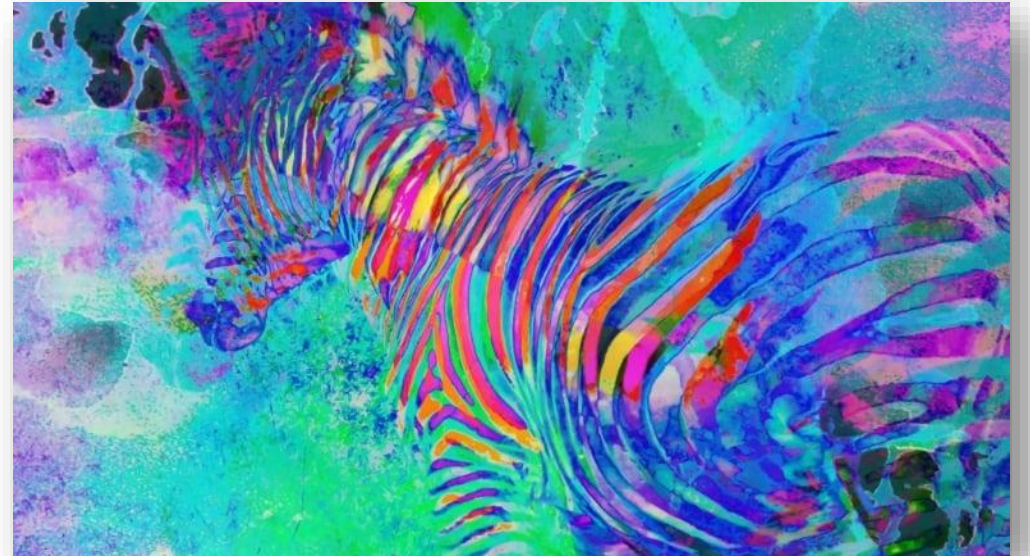
LAURENA FINÉUS

- Caribbean-Canadian based in Ottawa, ON
- Visual artist who specializes in painting dense landscapes with vibrant, layered colours
- Explores the representation of Haiti, as well as centering her lived experiences.



JOAN BUTTERFIELD

- She has dedicated much of her career to mentoring new Black Canadian artists and providing opportunities for them to show their work publicly.
- More than 30-year career, 300 exhibitions, and 8,000 works of art.



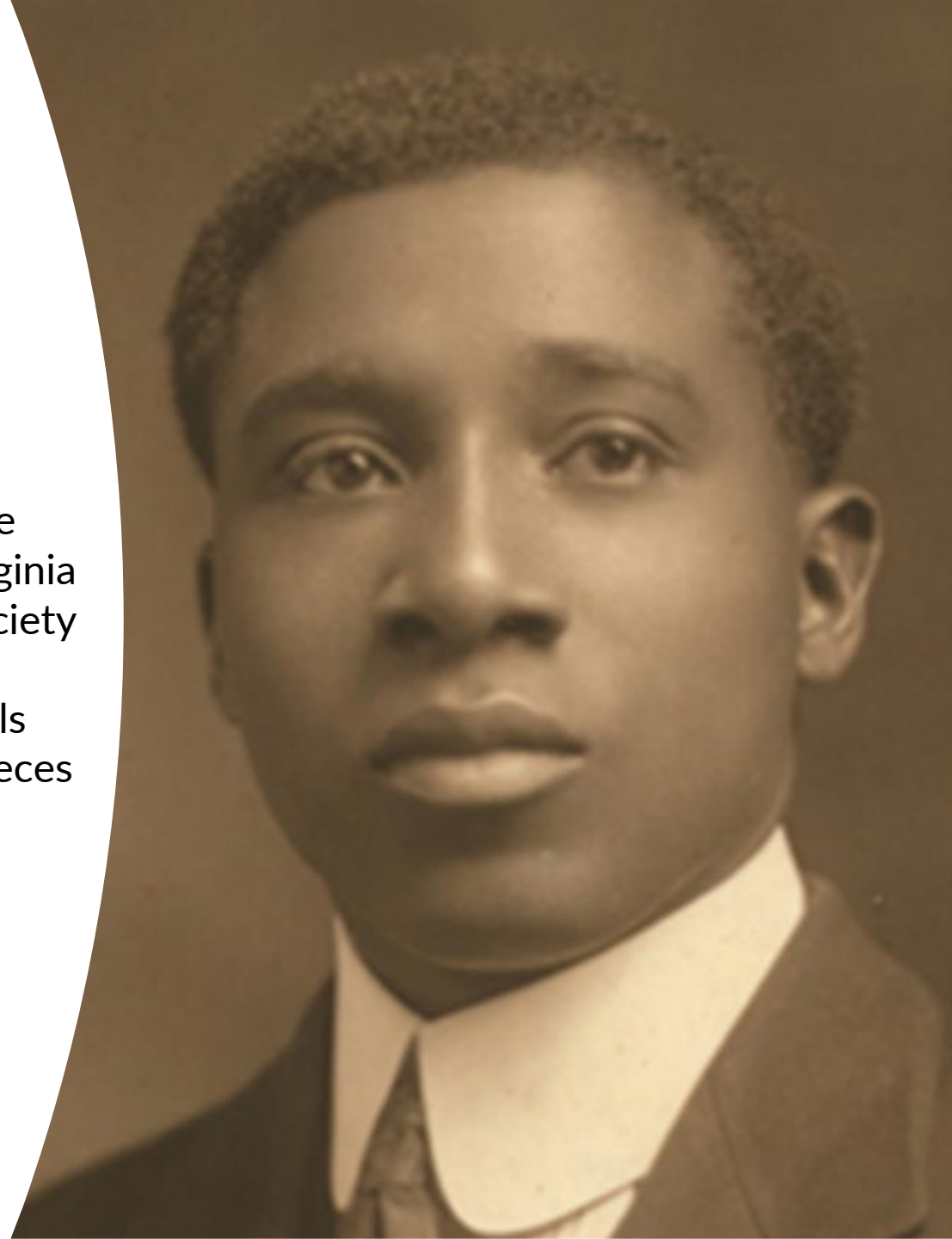


MUSIC



ROBERT NATHANIEL DETT

- Niagara Falls, ON
- Studied piano from an early age and went on to become the first black director of music at the Hampton Institute in Virginia
- Became the first Black composers involved in American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP)
- Became known for incorporating African-American spirituals into his traditionally based classical 'European Romantic' pieces



OSCAR PETERSON

- Montreal, QC
- Revered as a legendary jazz pianist, winning eight Grammys.
- One of the first Black artists to gain fame in the white-dominated music industry of the '50s and was a spokesman for minority rights.
- He was deemed the most famous Canadian in the world by former Prime Minister Jean Chretien in the 1960s.



P O R T I A W H I T E

- Truro, NS
- Canadian contralto, known for becoming the first Black Canadian concert singer to achieve international fame
- Trained at the Halifax Conservatory of Music
- Made her national and international debuts in the 1940s receiving critical acclaim
- She retired in Toronto to teach music
- A major final public appearance was a special command performance for Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip
- White was declared a person of national historic significance by the Government of Canada.





F I L M A N D E N T E R T A I N M E N T



DEBORAH COX

- Toronto, ON
- Grammy Award nominated, multi-platinum R&B /Pop recording artist and actress
- Began her career as a background singer for Celine Dion
- Went on to record six award winning and critically acclaimed albums
- Has performed at Broadway Theatre and the Asolo Repertory Theatre
- Committed to LGBT rights, Human Rights, and Equality.



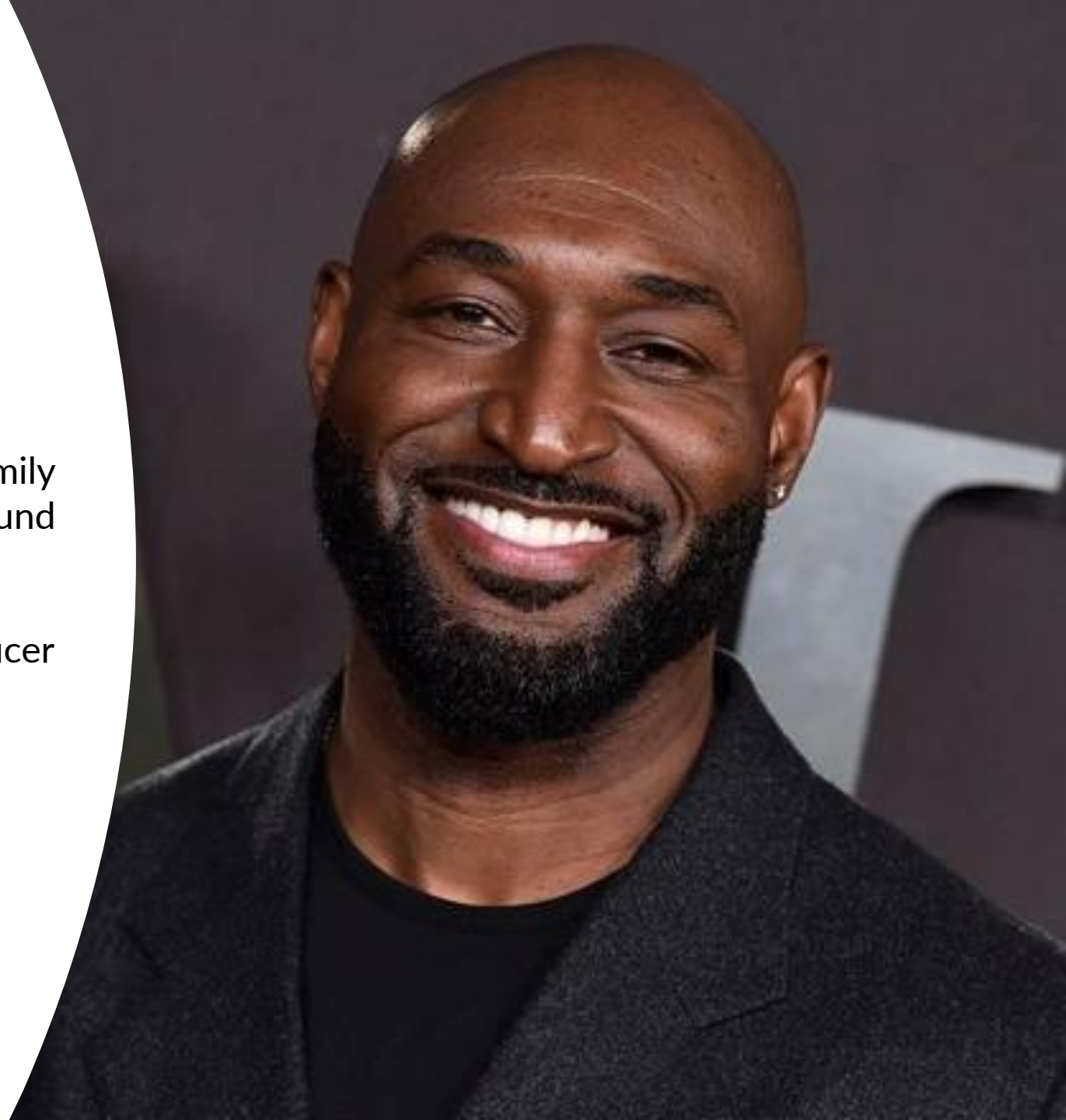
ENUKA OKUMA

- Vancouver, BC
- Five-time Gemini Award-nominee, a 2013 Canadian Screen Award nominee for best supporting actress in a drama program or series
- Has appeared in over 45 television shows



ADRIAN HOLMES

- Born in Wrexham, United Kingdom with family from Barbados, Holmes grew up in and around Vancouver, BC.
- Over 100 film and television credits
- Has made breakthrough debuts as a co-producer





S P O R T S



JOHN "ARMY" HOWARD

- Winnipeg, MB
- Became the first Black Olympian to represent Canada at Stockholm 1912
- Won bronze at 1919 Inter-Allied Games for the 100m bronze.
- Two of his grandchildren became Olympians themselves



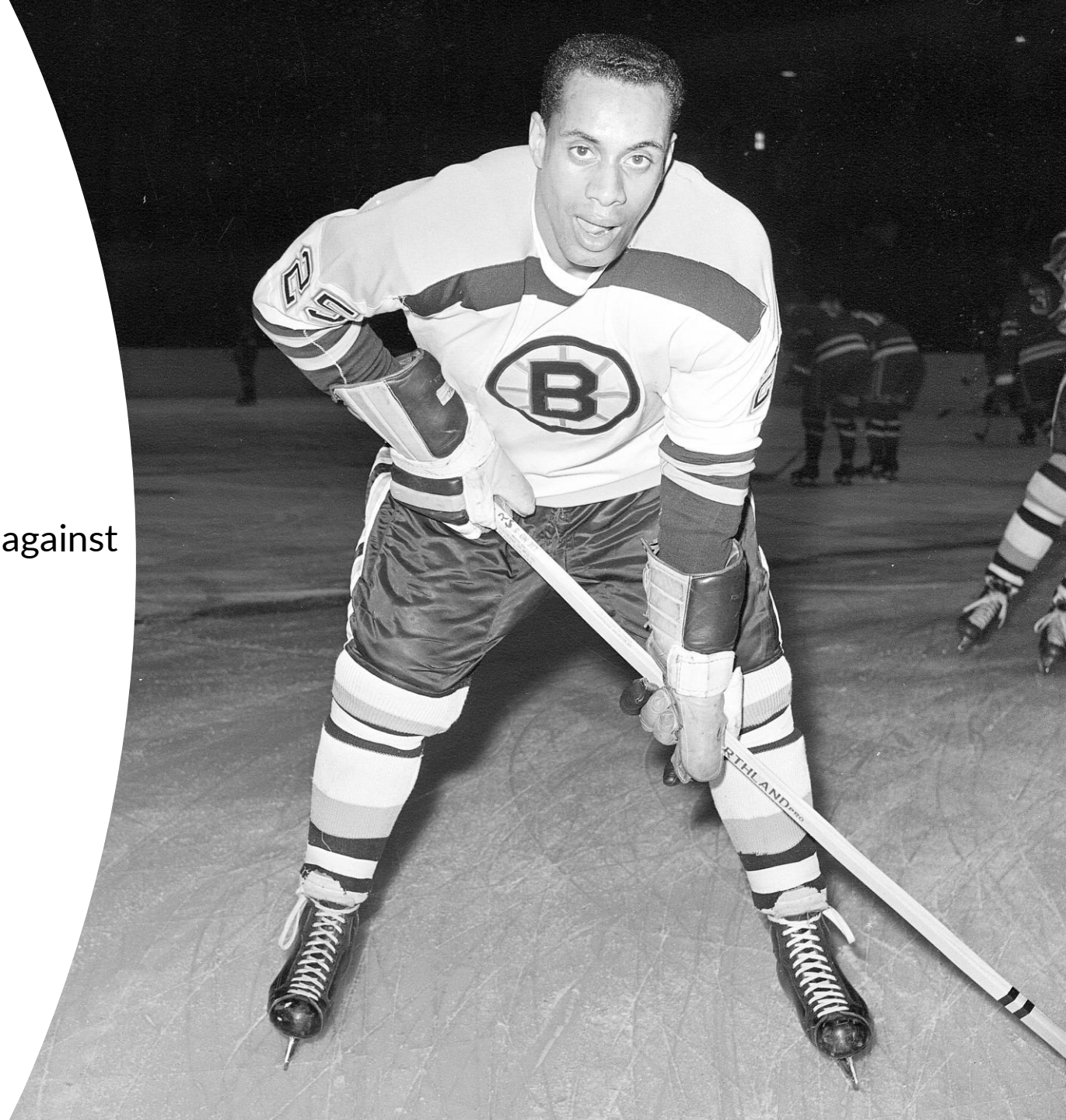
PHYLICIA GEORGE

- Scarborough, Toronto
- Track and field athlete and bobsledder.
- Won Bronze at PyeongChang 2018 in bobsledding with pilot Kaillie Humphries.
- Became the first Black woman from Canada to have competed at the summer and winter Olympic Games



WILLIE O'REE

- Fredericton, NB
- NHL debut with the Boston Bruins in a game against the Montreal Canadiens on January 18, 1958
- the first Black person to enter the NHL



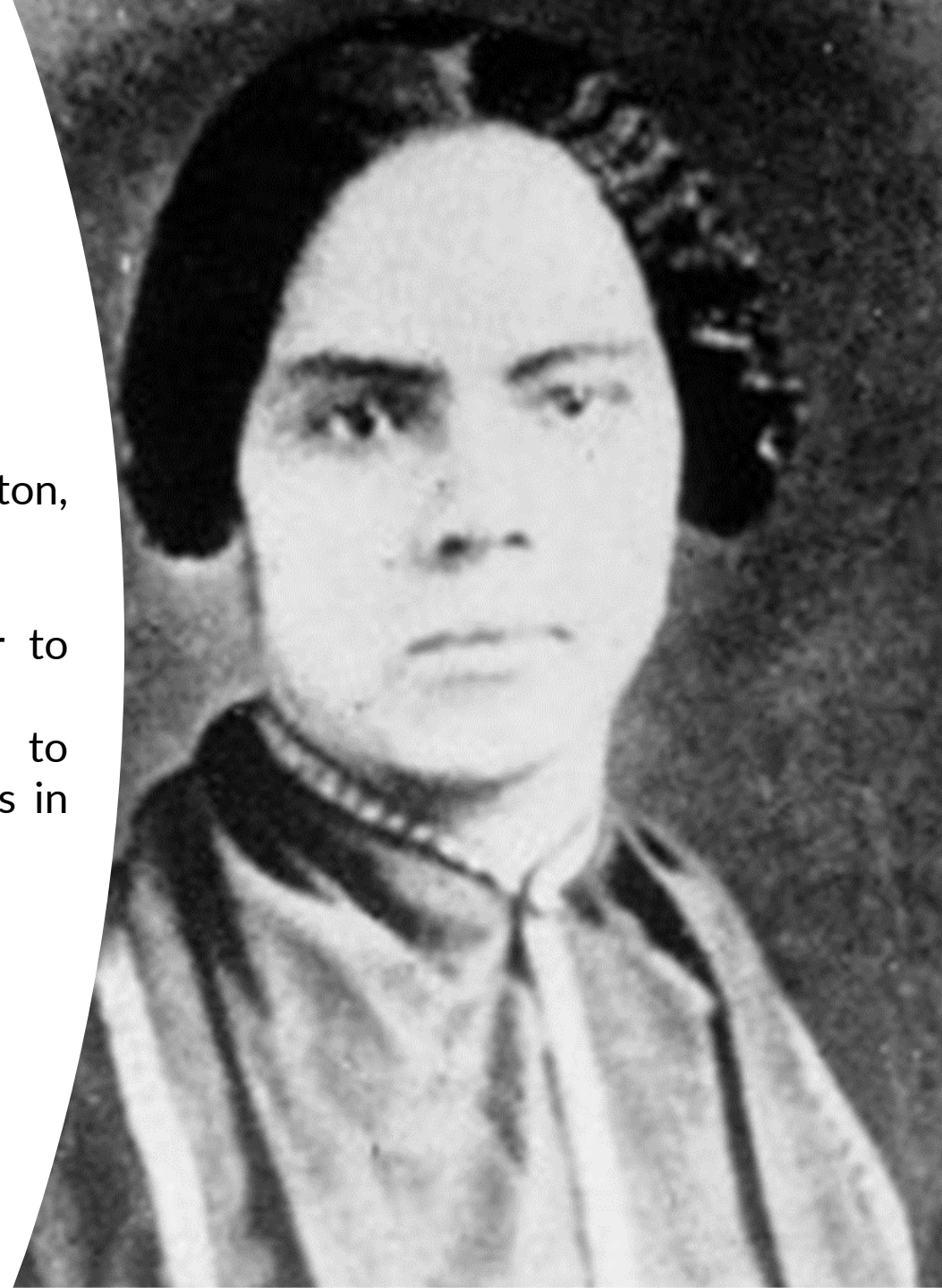


B U S I N E S S



MARY ANN SHADD CARY

- Born in Wilmington, Delaware, and immigrated to North Buxton, Ontario
- Educator, publisher and abolitionist
- Founded the *The Provincial Freeman* newspaper in order to promote Black emigration to Canada.
- Shadd became the first Black woman in North America to publish a newspaper, and one of the first female journalists in Canada.



ANDRIA BARRETT

- Brampton, ON
- Founder of The Diversity Agency, a Toronto-based full-service talent booking agency that represents speakers from diverse backgrounds.
- Serves on boards including the Culinary Tourism Alliance
- Volunteered for organizations like the Sickle Cell Awareness Group of Ontario
- Running for MPP in Brampton South in the 2022 Ontario provincial election



ARMEL BEAUDRY

- Born and raised in Douala, Cameroon
- Armel moved to Canada to study software engineering at the University of Ottawa
- He has worked with international companies like Nokia in designing and building enterprise software
- Beaudry is the founder of Trebble FM, a platform to help media organizations create, distribute and monetize interactive newscasts





POLITICS



J E A N A U G U S T I N E

- Born in Saint George's, Grenada and immigrated to Toronto, ON
- Became the first Black woman to be elected to parliament in Canada during the 1993 federal election
- Became the first Black woman in cabinet, taking on the role of minister of state for multiculturalism and the status of women.
- Was instrumental in championing legislation to recognize February as Black History Month, a motion that passed unanimously in 1995.



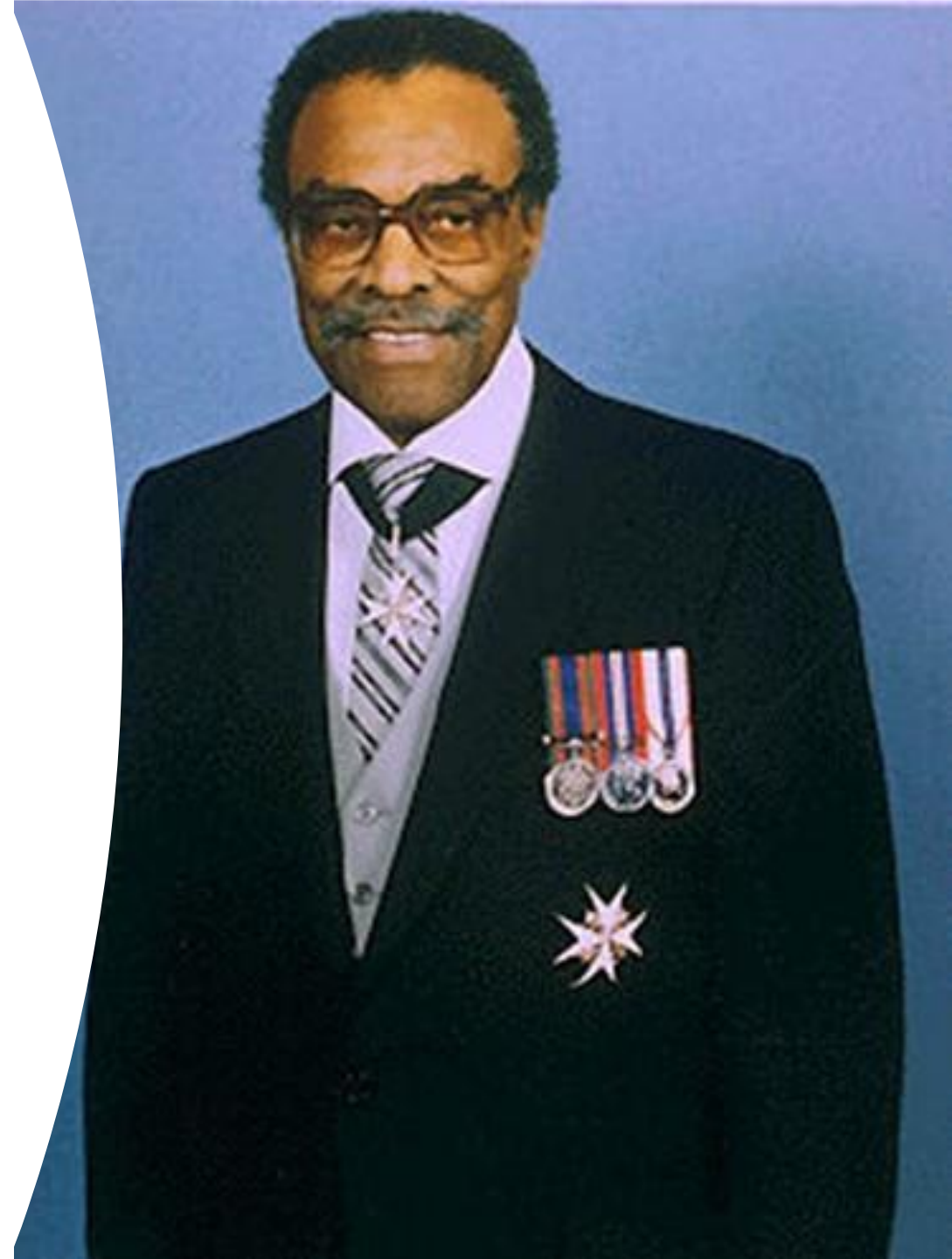
MICHAËLLE JEAN

- Born in Haiti and fled with her family to Quebec
- CBC journalist that became the first Black reporter to be featured on French television network news in Canada and went on to host her own current affairs show
- The first Black person to serve as Canada's Governor General
- After her appointment as Governor General, Jean used her office to emphasize freedom as a central part of the Canadian identity



L I N C O L N A L E X A N D E R

- Toronto, ON
- The first Black Canadian Member of Parliament in the House of Commons
- The first Black federal Cabinet Minister (as federal Minister of Labour)
- The first Black Chair of the Worker's Compensation Board of Ontario
- The 24th Lieutenant Governor of Ontario
- He was the first person to serve five terms as Chancellor of the University of Guelph
- A governor of the Canadian Unity Council
- As Lieutenant Governor, Alexander's mandate focused on youth and education. For his contributions to Canadian politics, the Right Honourable Lincoln Alexander was appointed to the Order of Canada at the rank of Companion.



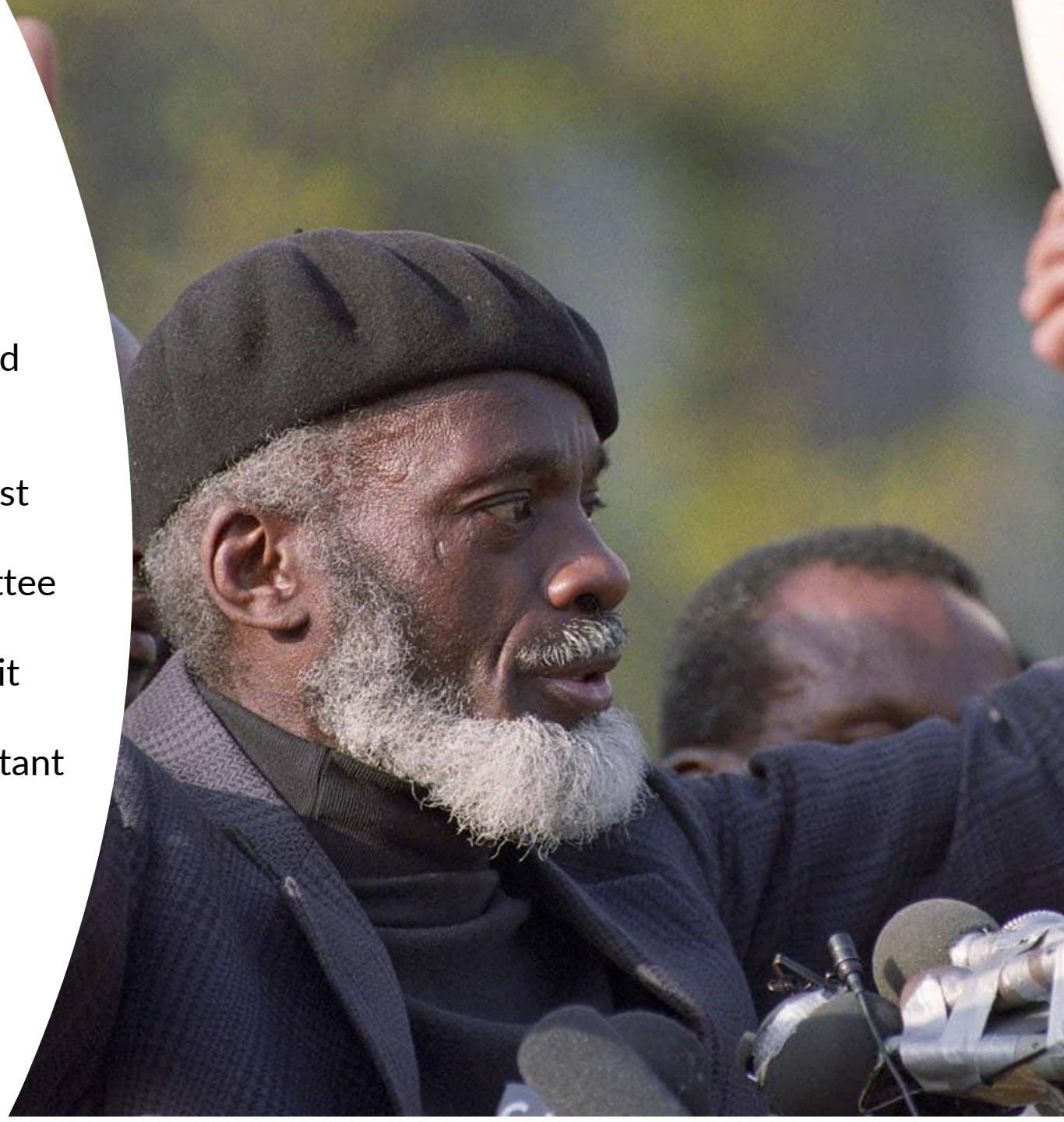


A C T I V I S M



DUDLEY LAWS

- Saint Thomas, Jamaica, emigrated to the United Kingdom, and later Toronto, ON
- A welder, mechanic, and taxi driver
- A Black Canadian activist who spoke out against the Metropolitan Toronto Police Force
- Co-founded the Black Action Defence Committee
- His call for action led to police reform and the creation of Ontario's Special Investigations Unit
- He was also an advocate for immigrants and refugees and worked as an immigration consultant



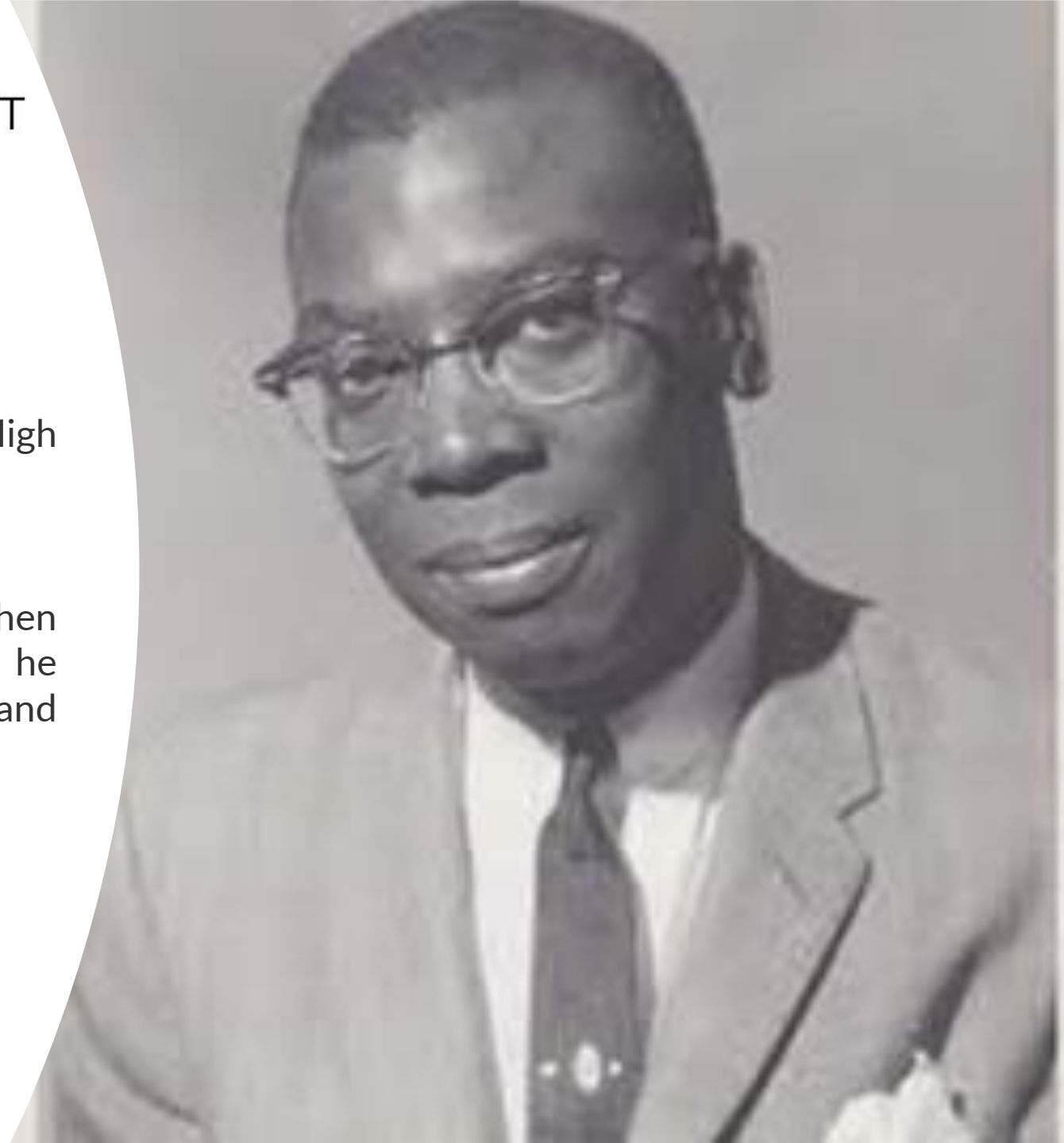
CAMERON DAVIS

- York Region, ON
- Activist, YouTuber and teenager shares videos on his social profiles about his experiences traveling throughout the world, cooking new recipes, and dealing with racism as a Black person in Canada.
- Has traveled to more than 45 countries
- Advocates for change for youth in the York Region of Ontario through his organization BYRYOUTH.
- Black York Region Youth, a Youth Led Organization fighting for change in York Region



JAMES CALBERT BEST

- New Glasgow, NS
- A Canadian diplomat, he was the High Commissioner to Trinidad and Tobago
- Canada's first Black assistant deputy minister
- First Black high commissioner.
- Assistant Deputy Minister at the then Department of Employment and Immigration, he worked closely with the Deputy Minister and Minister to reform immigration laws





M E D I C A L



ANDERSON RUFFIN ABBOTT

- Toronto, ON
- Canada's first Black physician
- Served as one of only eight Black surgeons in the Union Army during the American Civil War.
- He was distinguished by being appointed aide-de-camp of the New York Commanding Officers Dept., the highest military honour bestowed to that time on a Black person in North America.



BERNICE REDMON

- Toronto, ON
- Earned her nursing diploma in Virginia after being refused entry to Canadian nursing schools
- She went on to become the first Black woman appointed to the Victorian Order of Nurses in Canada
- As a result of the pressure put on the provincial Ministry of Health and nursing schools by advocacy groups, Black women were finally admitted for training and gradually employed in hospitals across Ontario by the late 1940s and early 1950s.



BLACK HEALTH ED COLLABORATIVE

- Transforming Medical and Health Professional Education To Improve The Health Of Black Communities Across Canada
- A community of scholars and practitioners
- Our mission is to address anti-Black racism and the interlocking systems that impact the health and wellbeing of Black communities across Canada.



Dr. OmiSoore Dryden

Co-Lead



Dr. Onye Nnorom

Co-Lead



Prof. Sume Ndumbe-Eyoh

Executive Director



Dr. Delia Douglas

Steering Committee Member



Dr. Barbara Hamilton-Hinch

Steering Committee Member



Dr. Gaynor Watson-Creed

Steering Committee Member



BLACK JOY

***Black joy means embracing and
appreciating Blackness in its
authenticity and fullness.***



BLACK FUTURES

Responsibility, Awareness, and Sharing

BLACK HISTORY

MORE
THAN
ONE
MONTH



EDI COMMUNITY ALLIANCE

A collaboration of:



For more information or to join, contact: edialliance@welchllp.com

Sources

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Government of Canada: February is Black History Month

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