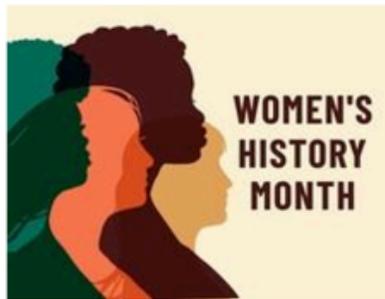




February 2025
Newsletter –
Celebrating
Black History
Month



Celebrating Women's International Month

A walk through Black history: York researcher's tour looks at early life in Toronto

Edited by Ashley Goodfellow Craig | February 14, 2025



Spend an afternoon taking one of **Natasha Henry-Dixon's** self-guided walking tours of downtown Toronto and you get a glimpse into what it was like to be Black in Upper Canada and the old Town of York centuries ago.

Brought in Bondage: Black People Enslaved in the Town of York exposes participants to the unique experiences of people of African descent who arrived in early Toronto in the late 1700s through forced migration enslaved by white Loyalist settlers.



Natasha Henry-Dixon

Fast forward to the mid-1850s, and a second walking tour, **Tracing Mary Ann Shadd Cary's Footsteps in Mid-19th Century Black Toronto**, offers a glimpse of the Toronto encountered by Shadd Cary, a Black newspaper publisher and abolitionist who lived among a community of Black people working hard and advocating for racial equality.

"These tours are a meaningful way to locate Black people, enslaved and free, firmly within the landscape of Canada's largest urban centre," says Henry-Dixon, a Black historian and assistant professor in York's Department of History. "The walking tours are a way of making this history more readily available."

Born and raised in Toronto, Henry-Dixon wondered how long Black people had been in Toronto. How did they get here? What did they do? She has spent many of her adult years trying to answer those questions for herself and others, pouring over archives, diaries, financial ledgers and letters to close a gap in the knowledge about slavery in Upper Canada and Black experiences in Ontario.

Henry-Dixon's research reveals that although many don't associate Canada with slavery, the enslavement of Black people existed here and continued for 200 years until it was abolished across the British Empire by the Slavery Abolition Act 1833.

Through her research project, **One Too Many: Black Enslavement in Upper Canada, 1760-1834**, she has uncovered the existence of 624 Black men, women and children who were enslaved in Colonial Ontario. It's a way to establish Black presence in early Toronto, and to humanize these early residents and help shed light on their experiences and contributions.

For example, to stop by 363-365 Adelaide St. E. near Sherbourne Street is to visit the former site of Jarvis House, the sprawling home to William Jarvis, provincial secretary of Upper Canada in the late 1790s, and his wife Hannah and their children. The two-acre property also featured slave quarters built to house the six Black people they held in bondage.

On the site of 37 King St. E., now home to the King Edward Hotel, there was a log hut that served as a local jail, where Black people enslaved in the town were imprisoned for defying the orders of their enslavers, or for running away.

Years later, but not far away at what is now the area of Church and King streets, is the St. James Cathedral, where in the mid-1800s Rev. Henry Grasett led an integrated congregation, marked Emancipation Day services each year, and oversaw the marriages and baptisms of the many Black people who attended his church.



Keepers of the Flame: Interrupting Attacks on Equity, Diversity, Inclusion & Anti-racism

- Nancy Simms, EdD. February 19, 2025

Efforts to create equitable and inclusive societies rooted in Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Anti-racism (EDIA) face strong resistance from those who see them as threats to traditional values and power structures. This opposition is evident in protests, the dismantling of EDIA departments, and the unjust dismissal of EDIA practitioners or individuals perceived to benefit from EDIA programs. Some organizations even attempt to weaken EDIA's impact by renaming initiatives. While the U.S. actively undermines EDIA principles, Canada also sees a concerning decline across various sectors. However, many organizations in both countries remain committed to defending and promoting EDIA programs. We must unite in this essential endeavor, as these initiatives are critical to building just and inclusive societies.

The debate over EDIA centers on critics' concerns that these principles threaten meritocracy, create division, and advance a "politically correct" agenda. Opponents claim that focusing on race, gender, and sexuality in hiring and admissions leads to reverse discrimination and tokenism, undermining genuine equality. This backlash has sparked significant resistance to human rights and equity initiatives in workplaces and educational institutions, with critics arguing that such programs foster resentment and division. Additionally, social media has become a battleground where challenges to EDIA efforts seek to discredit advocates for social justice. It is essential to explore two key issues: the impact on meritocracy and the contentious notion of reverse racism.

What is meritocracy? At its core, meritocracy is the belief that individuals achieve success, power, and influence based on their abilities and talents, suggesting that job promotions are earned solely through competence. While this idea is appealing and promises equity, extensive research reveals that meritocracy is largely a myth, obscuring the barriers many individuals face and undermining the fairness it claims to uphold ([Cooper, 2015](#); [Clarke et al., 2024](#)). A recent study by [Simms \(2024\)](#) highlights the underrepresentation of racialized faculty and administrators in Ontario colleges, using compelling data from [Statistics Canada \(2022\)](#) to challenge the validity of meritocratic ideals.

The evidence is clear: many racialized individuals hold degrees from bachelor's to doctorate levels, proving their qualifications for meaningful employment in Canada. Yet, countless skilled individuals remain overlooked. Despite being raised to believe that education and hard work ensure success, I have learned that meritocracy is often an illusion. As advocates for EDIA, we must confront the misconception that EDIA undermines meritocracy and actively push for transformative change in Canadian society, ensuring that talent is recognized and valued.

The idea of "reverse racism" is often used to undermine efforts for racial equity. It is important to state that reverse racism is a baseless myth; racialized individuals lack the systemic power to deny job opportunities to white people. This myth persists alongside the illusion of meritocracy, stemming from outdated beliefs of scientific racism and perpetuating false narratives of racial inferiority.

I am deeply grateful to all those—our dedicated "keepers of the flame"—who advocate for Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Anti-racism (EDIA). Your support is essential as we work to raise awareness about systemic barriers to equity and inclusion. The opposition we face only highlights the importance of our mission, as it indicates that our efforts are effecting real change.

WTS TORONTO AREA CHAPTER
**ANNUAL
INTERNATIONAL
WOMEN'S DAY
BREAKFAST**

MARCH 7, 2025

ONE KING WEST



WTS Toronto Area Chapter
1,978 followers, 376 followers
3d • Edited • 3 days ago

Join us on Friday, March 7th to celebrate hashtag#WD25 and the achievements of women in transportation. Connect with your peers, partners, and industry leaders, and hear from our line up of inspiring speakers who will share their experiences in the industry and discuss how we can increase momentum in addressing the systemic barriers and biases that women face, both personally and professionally.

• Register today:
<https://lnkd.in/gWrMpZ4M>

• Barbara Gray, Varni Tayalan, MBA, B.Sc., Rosemarie Powell, Angela Clayton, CPA ICD.D



Moderator:
Barbara Gray



Speaker:
Varni Tayalan



Speaker:
Rosemarie Powell



Speaker:
Angela Clayto



Join us for the inaugural HER CONSTRUCT Innovation Parlor Gala, celebrating women in construction. Powered by A Women's Work (AWW), a non-profit organization and hosted at the gorgeous 20,000 sq ft Euro Tile & Stone showroom. Enjoy an evening of inspiration and connection for the general construction and design industry.

Connect and support over 900 new students and skilled trade graduates from A Women's Work programs, and assist them in preparing for the industry and their future!

Discover the Innovation Parlor, showcasing innovations in construction and build, workforce development and health and safety. With state-of-the-art general contracting tools and products powered by the latest technologies, including virtual reality, spotlighting advancements in health and safety, workforce development, and construction and build innovations.

hash

Enjoy gourmet food, drinks and musical entertainment while networking with influential industry stakeholders, designers, tastemakers, and government policymakers. Gain valuable insights from keynote speakers as they discuss the future of construction innovation and diversity.

Join us for a memorable event celebrating progress and the people driving change in the construction industry while contributing to the success of women in the design/build trades. Support the Movement and hashtag#BreakDownBarriers!

HER CONSTRUCT Innovation Parlor Gala, March 7, 2025, 5:00 - 11:00 PM

VENUE: Euro Tile & Stone Showroom

Dress Code: Gala / Evening Wear

TO Live Presents

Meridian Arts Centre
George Weston Recital Hall, North York

WOMEN IN SONG

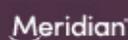
ft. Measha Brueggergossman-Lee, Tia Wood, and Zeh Bangash
Co-presented with FabCollab



MARCH 7, 2025

Buy tickets at tolive.com

Lead partners



Supported by



Karen Burke
Gospel Music, Music Education, Jazz
Vocals
Associate Professor

I, along with my colleagues in **Toronto Mass Choir** are just thrilled with **the JUNO nomination** received for our 15th album, 'Hymns Alive'. This live recording and video were a labour of love that took four years (right through the pandemic) to create. We thank God for the many musicians, arrangers, vocalists, producers, technicians and of course, our families who supported us. To God be the glory, great things He has done!

I can truly say that it IS a huge honour to be nominated. The gospel category almost didn't make it this year so we are thankful for the nod to gospel music in Canada! Woot woot!





INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

#ACCELERATEACTION

TWD GALA 2025

DINNER, LIVE ENTERTAINMENT, FASHION SHOW, SILENT AUCTION, DANCE TO FOLLOW, FEATURING DJ NILO OF CHERISH ENTERTAINMENT. FABULOUS RAFFLE PRIZES.

WHEN WOMEN RISE, FAMILIES THRIVE

MARCH 8 2025

6:00 PM

VENUE: MISSISSAUGA GRAND BANQUET & EVENT CENTRE
35 BRUNEL RD, MISSISSAUGA, ON L4Z 3E8

THIS YEAR'S EVENT WILL FEATURE



Iqra Khalid

KEYNOTE SPEAKER,
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT,
MISSISSAUGA ERIN MILLS

Dwania Peele

EMCEE
FOUNDER OF CANADIAN
SMALL BUSINESS WOMEN



Liberty Silver

THE ICONIC, TWO-TIME
JUNO AWARD WINNER,
GRAMMY AWARD WINNER

Heather Christine

AWARD-WINNING
VOCALIST, SONGWRITER,
PRODUCER AND
COMMUNITY ADVOCATE



TO GET YOUR TICKETS SCAN THE QR
CODE OR VISIT THE WEBSITE.



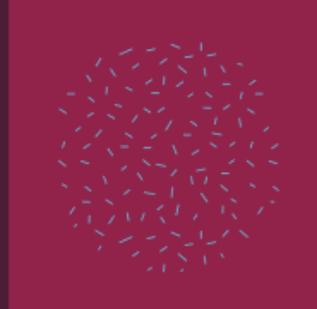
[HTTPS://WWW.ZEFFY.COM/EN/CA/TICKETING-INTERNATIONAL-WOMENS-DAY-GALA-2025](https://www.zeffy.com/en/CA/TICKETING-INTERNATIONAL-WOMENS-DAY-GALA-2025)



I am deeply grateful to have been recognized as one of 30,000 Canadians for my contributions to Canada and my community. A heartfelt thank you to MP Ryan Turnbull for presenting me with the King Charles III Coronation Medal a month ago.



Shauna Bookal



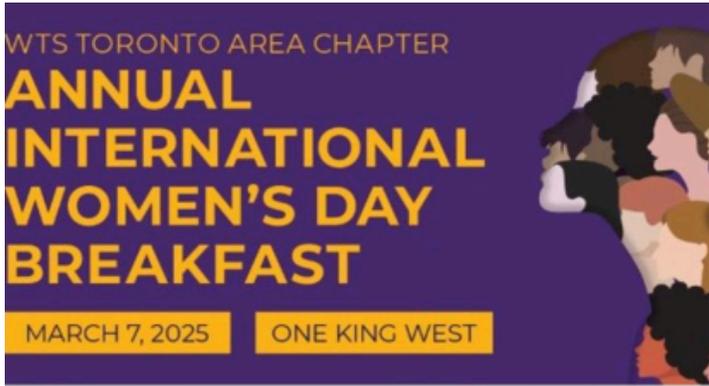
Elise Harding-Davis was invited to be a Delegate to the United Nations The

Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) from 3-6 December 2024 in New York City, USA. For in-person consultations: Advancing racial justice and equality for Africans and people of African descent The

The consultation will contribute to advancing the implementation of international human rights law obligations, particularly the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; commitments by States in the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action; and the High Commissioner's Agenda towards transformative change for racial justice and equality. It brought together civil society activists, academics, and practitioners from different African and African Descent countries. Her particular group was with the Anti-racism Secretariat.

Additionally, Elise will receive the King Charles III Coronation Medal in Ottawa on February 28th, 2025, at the Senate Buildings for her ongoing contributions to African Canadian History and social justice.





Moderator:
Barbara Gray



Speaker:
Varni Tayalan



Speaker:
Rosemarie Powell



Speaker:
Angela Clayto

WTS Toronto Area Chapter
1,978 followers
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• Register today:
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• Barbara Gray, Varni Tayalan, MBA, B.Sc., Rosemarie Powell, Angela Clayton, CPA ICD.D



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GALA

BLACK ACTION NETWORK COMMITTEE INC.
Committee of Action for the Black Community



LIVWELL
PATHWAY

MARCH 3, 2025 7PM

A virtual conversation
for the Black Community
to share their encounters
with Anti-Black Racism. **FREE EVENT.**

www.carionfenn.org

BLACK MENTAL HEALTH DAY



The **EXCLUSIVE**

A LOOK AT WHAT'S NEW THIS WEEK

www.fkbmedia.com



UNMASKING DEI: Virtual Discussion Forum

Panel #1: DEI in Corporations/Business



Fennella Bruce
Founder, Media Consultant



Laurence Anthony
Coach, Storyteller, Problem Solver, Strategist



Lavinia Latham, J.D
Social Justice Advocate, Lawyer, Workplace Investigator

Register Now

FREE EVENT

www.fkbmedia.com

Saturday, March 15 | 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM



Moderated by
Dr. Natasha Williams



This episode of **Take 5 with the Top 50 CEOs** features [Sylvia Parris-Drummond](#). This first-time award winner brings 30-plus years of experience to her role as CEO of the [Delmore “Buddy” Daye Learning Institute \(DBDLI\)](#) in the North End of Halifax. DBDLI focusses on excellence in Africentric education and research. Its activities are based on connecting with and serving African Nova Scotian communities, identifying and addressing the gaps and educational equity issues through research, publications, and educational resources.

Presented in partnership with [InCamera](#), the Take 5 video series seeks a deeper understanding of Atlantic Business Magazine’s Top 50 CEOs and how they exemplify corporate leadership excellence. In this episode, Parris-Drummond speaks to the importance of connecting with her community and how she measures her success by the success of the people around her.

Founded in 1998, Atlantic Business Magazine’s Top 50 CEO awards celebrate Atlantic Canadian leaders committed to triple bottom line results: growing their companies, leading their industries, and making Atlantic Canada a better place to live and work

“It’s About Doing Things Together” At DBDLI With CEO Sylvia Parris-Drummond
<https://youtu.be/aEWbfziTEXA>



"When Yuri Dojc, the photographer, started the exhibit in 2016, he approached the Ontario Black History Society, where I was the volunteer treasurer there at the time. Being a descendant, it was of interest to me and over a period of a couple of years I became more and more involved with it to the point of working directly with him as his producer and now curator at this particular exhibit". Dorothy Abbott

Dorothy Abbott (right) and her daughter, Arja (left), here seen in the exhibit, were originally subjects for the 'North is Freedom' project, photographed by Yuri Dojc. Abbott is a fifth generation African-Canadian who traced her ancestry to a plantation in Murfreesboro, Tenn.. Her descendants settled in Owen Sound, Ont. in 1850. (Josiah Sinanan / CBC News)

Lanre Tunji-Ajayi

A leading **advocate for Sickle Cell Disease**, co-founding the Global Alliance of Sickle Cell Disease Organizations and the Global Action Network for Sickle Cell & Other Inherited Blood Disorders (GANSID).

In Canada, she helped establish the Sickle Cell Awareness Group of Ontario (SCAGO) and the Sickle Cell Disease Association of Canada (SCDAC), driving awareness, policy change, and newborn screening initiatives. Her efforts have secured funding and improved patient care, earning her numerous prestigious awards for leadership and impact.





WINNER
BEST DIRECTOR
INSPIRATIONAL FILM
DIRECTOR TALENTS MOVIE AWARDS, LONDON



TheLife
Coach
PATRICIA BEBIA



Check out the latest updates

CIBC 2024-2025 Paid Internship Summer and Fall Program



CIBC is currently hiring for Summer Co-ops (May–August) and building its pipeline for Fall Co-ops (September–December). Students are encouraged to apply, with postings available on the CIBC Students and Graduates page. To apply, visit the CIBC website and indicate that you were a ****100 Accomplished Black Canadian Women**** recipient.

Spark the Conversation

We're back this January, and honestly, we couldn't be more excited!

This season, we're diving into real, meaningful conversations, like tackling mental health and housing insecurity, celebrating our Black SHeroes, and exploring AI trends and women in STEM. Plus, we're putting the spotlight on Black women's health, sports equity, climate action, and so much more. Oh, and in March? It's all about women crushing it in non-traditional careers.

Don't miss out—grab your spot now at 100abcwomen.ca and join the fun!



Looking to Learn More About Black Canadian History?

Step into history with us and uncover the inspiring journeys of 500 Black Canadian women who've shaped this country.

Fireside Chats on YouTube

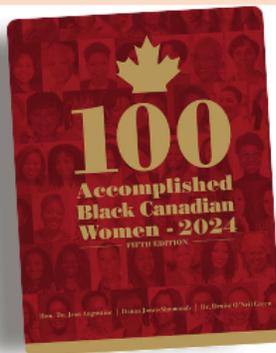
Engage with powerful conversations that bring these stories to life.

100ABCWomen Books:

Dive into the legacies of women whose accomplishments deserve to be known.

Posters:

Share their stories in schools, workplaces, and beyond to spark change and conversation.



Join 100ABCWomen for Our Upcoming Fireside Chats

Registration Link: <https://shorturl.at/vGlr1>

100 Celebrating Black Callender Women

SEASON 4
2025 FIRESIDE CHAT
EPISODE #5

**Women's International Month
With a Focus on Women in
Non-Traditional Careers**
SUNDAY, MARCH 9TH 2025
FROM 3 UNTIL 4:30 PM EST.

Women are Making Strides in Traditional Positions. They are Becoming CEOs and CG+FOs.

LIVE STREAMED FROM OUR YOUTUBE CHANNEL

MODERATOR: KATHY BROWN
PANELISTS: KATHY BROWN, KATHY BROWN, KATHY BROWN, KATHY BROWN, KATHY BROWN

VIRTUAL AND FREE
REGISTRATION LINK: [HTTPS://SHORTURL.AT/VGLR1](https://shorturl.at/vGlr1)
REVIEW THE SCHEDULE & REGISTER: [WWW.100ABCWOMEN.CA](http://www.100abcwomen.ca)

Powered by Our Sponsors: ETO, FEED, UBC BUILT, TO LEADY COMMITMENT

100 Celebrating Black Callender Women

SEASON 4
2025 FIRESIDE CHAT
EPISODE #6

STEM
SUNDAY, MARCH 16TH 2025
FROM 3 UNTIL 4:30 PM EST.

How can we encourage our children to focus on Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics?

LIVE STREAMED FROM OUR YOUTUBE CHANNEL

MODERATOR: KATHY BROWN
PANELISTS: KATHY BROWN, KATHY BROWN, KATHY BROWN, KATHY BROWN, KATHY BROWN

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REGISTRATION LINK: [HTTPS://SHORTURL.AT/VGLR1](https://shorturl.at/vGlr1)
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100 Celebrating Black Callender Women

SEASON 4
2025 FIRESIDE CHAT
EPISODE #7

**Black Women in Leadership in
Non-Profits**
SUNDAY, MARCH 23RD 2025
FROM 3 UNTIL 4:30 PM EST.

The non-profit sector's economic contribution continues to gain recognition. This race contributes to why Black women in senior leadership roles are facing greater pressures. We are being challenged when we seek the compensation we deserve and getting pushback on our leadership styles. Let's discuss how we continue to hold our seats and our wellness.

LIVE STREAMED FROM OUR YOUTUBE CHANNEL

MODERATOR: KATHY BROWN
PANELISTS: KATHY BROWN, KATHY BROWN, KATHY BROWN, KATHY BROWN, KATHY BROWN

VIRTUAL AND FREE
REGISTRATION LINK: [HTTPS://SHORTURL.AT/VGLR1](https://shorturl.at/vGlr1)
REVIEW THE SCHEDULE & REGISTER: [WWW.100ABCWOMEN.CA](http://www.100abcwomen.ca)

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Quote of the Month



"Ensure worthiness of respect by maintaining dignity"

Nalda Callender

(Nalda passed away on February 1, 2025 – Condolences to the family.)



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