



BLACK HISTORY MONTH: PROMINENT BLACK CANADIANS



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INQUIRE!

What have prominent Black Canadians contributed to the nation of Canada?

“William Hall, the Midwives of the African Nova Scotian Communities, Black Strathcona, the Coloured Corps, Lincoln Alexander Day, the Coloured Hockey League, Nova Scotia Home for Coloured Children. Many of us have never heard or read about these events, people and places. However, these stories are deeply embedded in Canadian history and identity. Black History Month is an opportunity for all of us to learn about, honour, and celebrate the contributions people of African, Black and Caribbean descent have made. Their contributions have enriched Canadian history and the global community.

We often learn about Black history through an American perspective. Many believe that slavery was an American experience; however, slavery existed in Canada. When we think of the Civil Rights movement, we envision Martin Luther King Jr., Rosa Parks and Ella Baker. However, in 1946, Viola Desmond refused to give up her segregated Whites-only section at the movie theatre in New Glasgow, N.S. She was arrested and fined for her actions. Nine years later, Rosa Parks was arrested for refusing to give up her seat to a White passenger. Canada also had civil rights activists who fought against segregation and other forms of racism. Black History Month is an opportunity for us to learn about and share our Canadian heritage. It is also an opportunity for us to reflect on what it means to live in a world with diverse identities, voices and stories.” — February 2020, [article](#) from OCSB.

“Black history is not just for Black people – Black history is Canadian history.”

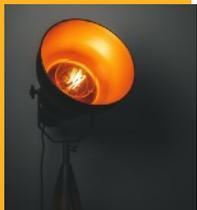
– JEAN AUGUSTINE



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For a montage of prominent Black Canadians and their accomplishments, view the [Heritage minute](#) that honours Black History Month...



SPOTLIGHT ON HARRY JEROME



Harry Jerome was born in September, 1940 and moved to the Vancouver area in 1951. At the age of 19, he became the first native Canadian to hold, officially, a world track record. He won the bronze medal in 1964 at the Tokyo Games when he finished the 100m dash in 10.25 seconds. At the time of this accomplishment, he was employed as a teacher at Richmond High. In his track and field career, he was in eight international competitions, representing Canada in three Olympics. He set seven world records, and was named British Columbia's Athlete of the Century in 1971. All of these accomplishments came during a

time, when it was very difficult to be Black in Canada. After his retirement from sport, Harry Jerome went on to promote amateur and youth sport through national and provincial programs. Furthermore, Harry Jerome advocated for better funding support for Canadian athletes, and for greater representation of athletes of colour in Canadian media. Throughout his life, he was the recipient of numerous honours and awards, including the Order of Canada. Harry Jerome passed away at the young age of 42, in December, 1982. — [The Canadian Encyclopedia](#)

Global TV has a 2020 [video](#) to honour Harry Jerome and his accomplishments. NFB has several age-differentiated videos on Harry Jerome, a ten minute [video](#) for elementary students and a longer [video](#) for secondary students, which may be streamed in classrooms.

For more information: Canada.ca provides biographies for a list of noteworthy Black Canadians. Also the Huffington Post has an [article](#) summarizing information on select Black Canadian heroes.

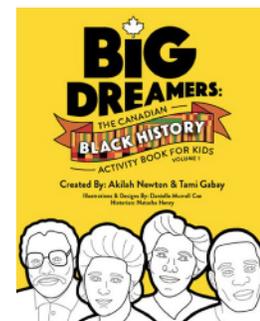
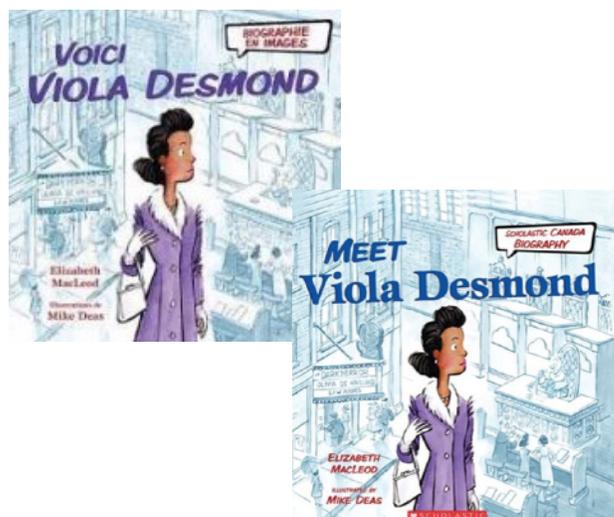
SPOTLIGHT ON VIOLA DESMOND



Viola Irene Desmond was born in July, 1914 in Nova Scotia. She was a Canadian civil rights activist and businesswoman who mentored young Black women in her Desmond School of Beauty Culture. In 1946, she challenged racial segregation at a cinema in New Glasgow, Nova Scotia by refusing to leave a whites-only area of the Roseland Theatre. Her act of defiance inspired Blacks in Nova Scotia and the rest of Canada. In December 2016, the Bank of Canada announced that Viola Desmond would be the first Canadian woman to be featured by herself on the face of a banknote, the \$10 note which was released in November, 2018. Viola Desmond was named a National Historic Person by the Canadian government in 2018.

CURIO.CA

One video example in the curio collection is the 3 minute story of [Viola Desmond](#), one of Canada's most famous civil rights icons, and the face of the \$10 bill (appropriate for grades K-3). This can be shown in conjunction with an [article](#) in *The Canadian Reader* about Viola Desmond (with accompanying literacy lesson ideas). (appropriate for grades 3-5).



LOCAL EVENTS

Vancouver
Artgallery

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Acting on the Vancouver Art Gallery's statement in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement in the summer of 2020, the VAG's exhibit, *Where do we go from here?*, was developed as an opportunity to consider the Gallery's collecting and exhibition history. This exhibition both acknowledges the under representation of African diasporic artists in the collection and exhibitions, which have historically privileged European art traditions, and reimagines how the next 90 years of programming can better represent Canada's art landscape.

DESMOND COLE IN CONVERSATION PODCAST



Award-winning journalist Desmond Cole's *The Skin We're In: A Year of Black Resistance and Power* has been a revealing work on racial profiling, anti-blackness and Indigenous injustice in Canada. Originally recorded on February 19, 2020, Cole was joined by Vancouver Arts curator and activist Barbara Chirinos for a lively discussion on Black activism and resilience.



RICHMOND
SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 38

While we have done our best to provide material that is appropriate for students, each classroom and teacher is different, and previewing all resources is essential! These resources are meant to be helpful and not prescriptive.