

Oscar Peterson

Jazz pianist, composer & educator. Oscar Peterson is one of Canada's most honoured musicians. He is widely regarded as one of the greatest jazz pianists of all time.



Born August 15, 1925 in Montréal, Quebec. He was renowned for his remarkable speed and dexterity, meticulous and ornate technique, and dazzling, swinging style. He earned the nicknames "the brown bomber of boogie-woogie" and "master of swing."

A prolific recording artist, he typically released several albums a year from the 1950s until his death. He also appeared on more than 200 albums by other artists, including Ella Fitzgerald, Dizzy Gillespie, Billie Holiday and Louis Armstrong, who called him "the man with four hands." His sensitivity in these supporting roles, as well as his acclaimed compositions such as *Canadiana Suite* and "Hymn to Freedom," was overshadowed by his stunning virtuosity as a soloist.

Also a noted jazz educator and advocate for racial equality, Peterson won a Juno Award and eight Grammy Awards, including one for lifetime achievement. The first recipient of the Governor General's Performing Arts Award for Lifetime Achievement, he was inducted into the Canadian Music Hall of Fame and the International Jazz Hall of Fame.

He was also made an Officer and then Companion of the Order of Canada, and an Officer in the Order of Arts and Letters in France, among many other honours. The popularity of his records established Peterson as the first jazz star that Canada could truly call its own. His exposure on CBC Radio and his two tours of Western Canada in 1946 also contributed to his growing fame. By 1947, he was headlining Montreal's Alberta Lounge with his own trio. It consisted of Austin "Ozzie" Roberts on bass and Clarence Jones on drums. (Guitarist Ben Johnson occasionally subbed in for Jones.) The trio was heard on Montreal radio station CFCF in broadcasts from the lounge. The other recorded document of Peterson's Montreal years is the soundtrack for Norman McLaren's innovative and award-winning National Film Board short, *Begone Dull Care* (1949). *Night Train* (1962), recorded with his trio, proved to be one of Peterson's most commercially successful albums. *Canadiana Suite* (1964) was one of his most acclaimed.

Listen to
Oscar Peterson's
Night Train here



MLK



His life and legacy

DR KING IS BORN IN ATLANTA, GEORGIA



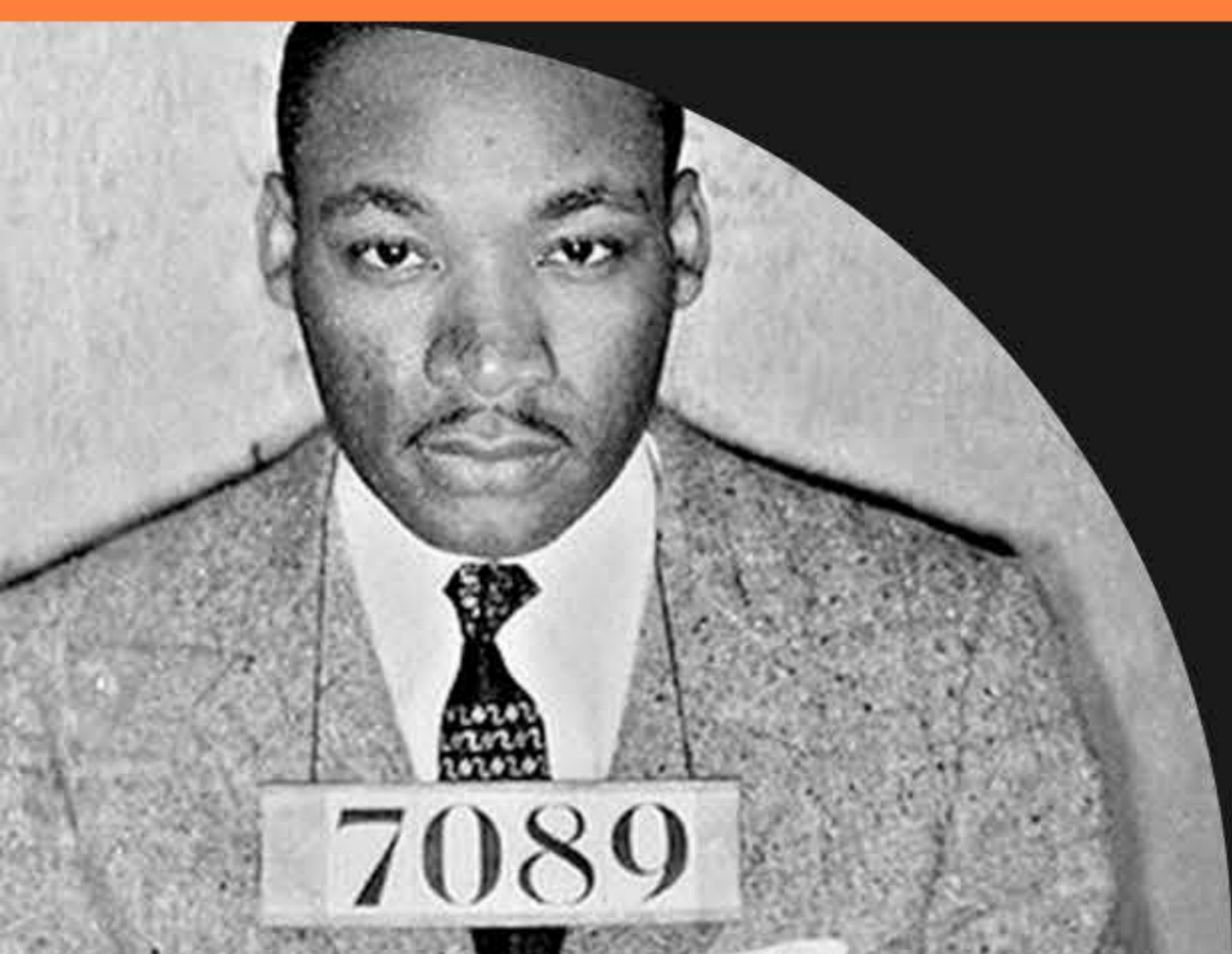
Martin Luther King was born on January 15, 1929, in the heart of the American South. It was the peak of segregation, a system of White supremacy which stripped Black Americans of basic civil and political rights. Blacks were forced to live, work, eat, and rest apart from Whites Americans.

THE FIGHT FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

Beginning in 1955, King took a leading role in organizing a coalition of Black churches and civil organizations dedicated to ending segregation. As the leader of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, King directed major campaigns of boycotts and protest in the southern United States in the 1950's and 60's.



"A COURAGEOUS CONFRONTATION OF EVIL BY THE POWER OF LOVE"



King advocated a strategy of principled "nonviolent resistance." While he never shrunk from his commitment to nonviolence, King's movement was anything but passive, actively resisting the domination of Black Americans through organized non-compliance and harsh criticism of unjust laws.

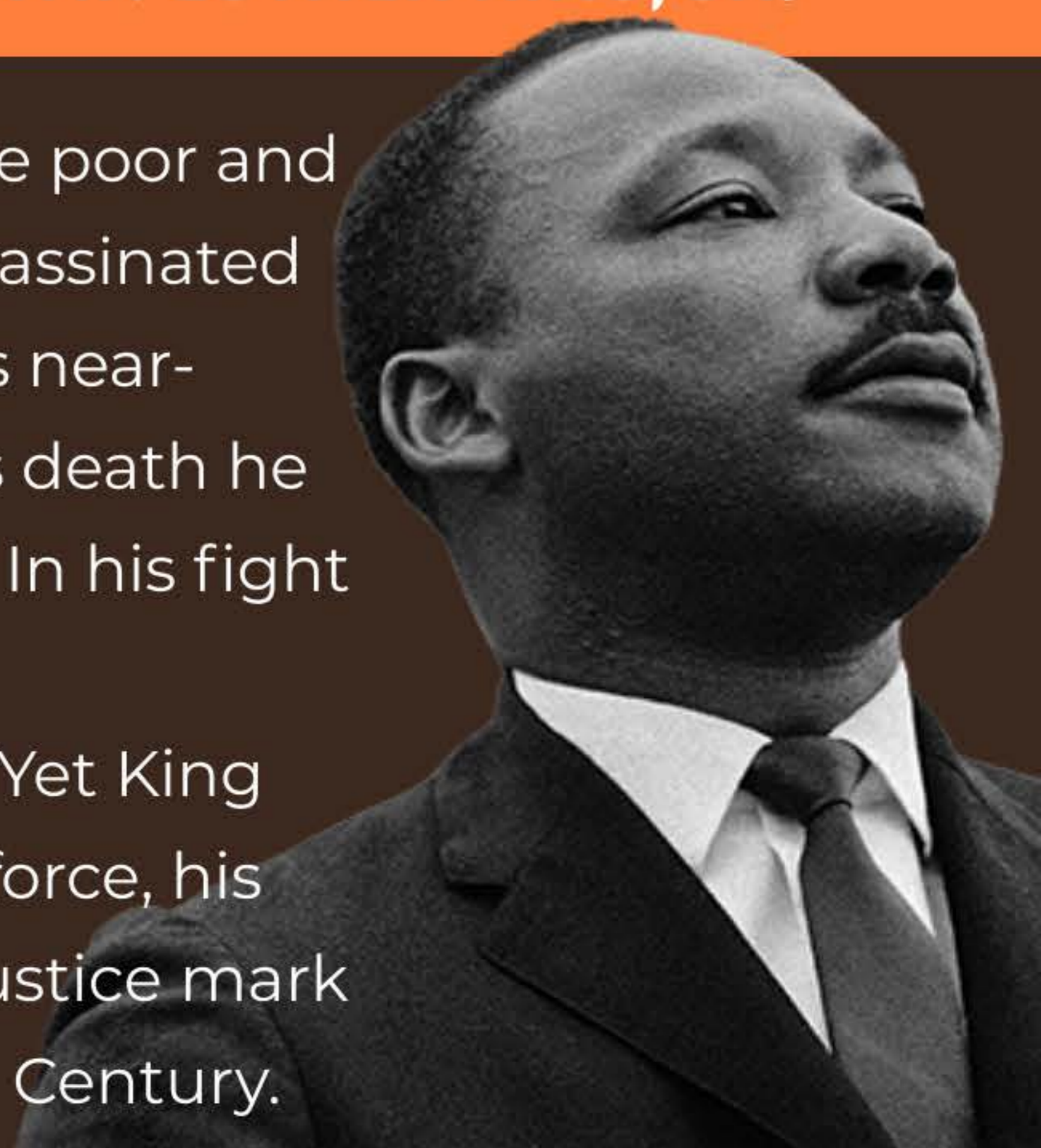
"I HAVE A DREAM TODAY"

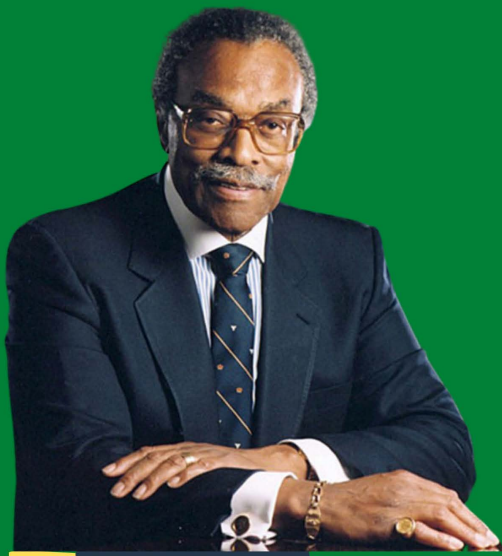
The highlight of the Civil Rights movement was its 1963 March on Washington, which saw 250,000 people gather in the US Capital in support of Civil Rights. King's moving vision of racial equality, vividly articulated in his "I have a dream" speech, had a major impact in the passing of the Civil Rights Act in 1964, which officially ended segregation in the United States.



THE DEATH AND LEGACY OF DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

In the late 60's King fought for the rights of the poor and opposed the Vietnam War. In 1968, he was assassinated by a racist at the age of 39. While today King is near-universally revered as a hero, at the time of his death he was perhaps the most hated man in America. In his fight for Black rights, King faced police brutality, imprisonment, slander, and eventually death. Yet King never gave up the fight. His legacy, his moral force, his strong faith, and his tireless commitment to justice mark MLK as one of the greatest figures of the 20th Century.





Lincoln Alexander

Alexander was the first Black Canadian member of Parliament (1968), Cabinet minister (1979) and lieutenant-governor (Ontario, 1985). In recognition of his many important accomplishments, January 21st has been celebrated as *Lincoln Alexander Day* across Canada since 2015.

In 1942, Alexander joined the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF), a branch of the armed forces that often restricted non-Whites from entering service. Because Alexander had poor eyesight, he was not eligible for combat. He trained instead as a wireless operator, and served with the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan in Portage la Prairie, Manitoba. When he was honourably discharged in 1945, he held the rank of corporal.

After the Second World War, Lincoln Alexander turned to higher education. He earned a BA from McMaster University in 1949, followed by a degree from Osgoode Hall Law School in 1953 (see Osgoode Hall). Alexander first practised law at a small firm in Hamilton before starting his own firm. In 1965, he was appointed Queen's Counsel, an honorary title that recognizes a lawyer's contribution to the legal profession.

Alexander's ambitions began to shift from law to politics. In his memoir, *Go to School, You're a Little Black Boy* (2006), Alexander mentions a 1960 tour through some 23 African nations that had significant impact on his point of view: "The experience was an eye-opener for me, not only as a lawyer, but also as a human being, because I began to realize what Black people could do. I saw that, unlike the Hollywood version, these Africans were men and women of significant talents. I became conscious of my Blackness. I had come from a White world. Now we were in Africa, and I realized we are people of skill and creativity. I was a Black man and I was a somebody. I started standing tall."

In 1965, Alexander entered politics, running as Conservative member of Parliament (MP) for Hamilton West, but was defeated by less than 2,500 votes. Three years later, on 25 June 1968, he won the seat, making him the first Black Canadian to sit in the House of Commons. He was re-elected four times, serving a total of 12 years. On 20 September 1985, Lincoln Alexander was sworn in as Ontario's 24th lieutenant-governor, the first Black Canadian to be appointed to a viceregal position in Canada (see Lieutenant-Governors of Ontario). As lieutenant-governor, Alexander was able to take an active role in the multicultural affairs of Ontario. Alexander's mandate was to fight racism, advance the cause of youth and advocate for seniors.

In 1991, when his term of office was up, Alexander accepted a post as chancellor of the University of Guelph, where he served an unprecedented five terms. After he was succeeded by Pamela Wallin in 2007, he was named chancellor emeritus.

In 2000, Alexander was appointed chair of the Canadian Race Relations Foundation, an organization dedicated to ending racism and racial discrimination in Canada.

Charlie Roach

Born in Trinidad and Tobago and came to Canada in 1955 to study theology at the University of Saskatchewan.

Charlie was a lawyer an artist, poet and musician.



He soon became politicized by the American Civil Rights Movement, causing him to the study of law at the University of Toronto. He was called to the bar in 1963.

While working as a staff lawyer with the City of Toronto, Charlie became more involved in activism organizing and participating in marches and demonstrations for equal rights for African Canadians.

With the spate of shootings of unarmed Black men by the police in the 1970s and 1980s, Charlie Roach along with Dudley Laws, Akua Benjamin, Lennox Farrell, Numvoyo and Brian Hyman, Akilah and Dari Meade, and others founded the Black Action Defence Committee (BADC).

He owned and operated a club called Little Trinidad. It was a place for Torontonians from the Southern Caribbean to engage in their Caribbean culture through steel band, calypso, folk arts, drama and dance. He organized events and exhibits to create awareness of Caribbean artists. His desire to celebrate the cultural contributions of people of Caribbean descent led him and others to organize the first Caribana parade as part of country-wide celebrations of Canada's 100th birthday in 1967. This Caribbean cultural celebration was so successful that the organizers were asked to make it an annual event. Charlie became a founding member and the first chair of the Caribana festival, which has grown into the largest festival of its kind in North America.

**I'M
CARRIE
BEST!**



**JOURNALIST & HUMAN RIGHTS
ACTIVIST**



I fought segregation by creating one of the first newspapers to be owned and published by Black Canadians!

I used radio and journalism to oppose racism and stand up for Black women!



Charmaine Hooper

Soccer player (born 15 January 1968 in Georgetown, Guyana). Charmaine Hooper debuted with the Canadian women's soccer team in 1986 and was a two-time NCAA first-team All-American while playing at North Carolina State University



She represented Canada at three FIFA Women's World Cups (1995, 1999, 2003) and won two silver medals for Canada at the CONCACAF Women's Championships (1991, 1994). She also helped lead Canada to its first-ever CONCACAF gold in 1998.

She was named a member of the All-Time Canada XI women's team and has been inducted into both the Soccer Hall of Fame and Museum and Canada's Sports Hall of Fame.

She was named Canadian Player of the Year in 1994, 1995, 2002 and 2003 and was the first player to have 100 caps for the women's national team. She also played professionally in the US, Europe and Japan.

Hooper was one of the original six members of the Canadian women's national team that formed in 1986. During her 20-year career, she laced up for Canada 129 times and scored 71 goals, making her Canada's all-time leading goal scorer (a record since surpassed by Christine Sinclair). Hooper made her debut for Team Canada as an 18-year-old against Team USA on 7 July 1986. She went on to represent Canada at three FIFA Women's World Cups (Sweden 1995, USA 1999, USA 2003). At the 1995 and 1999 World Cups, Hooper was recognized by the FIFA Women's World Cup Technical Study Group as one of Canada's outstanding players. After the 2003 World Cup, the group noted that Hooper is an "inspirational leader, commanding in defence and dangerous at set pieces."

Robert Sutherland

In 1855, Sutherland became British North America's first known Black lawyer, practising first in Berlin, Ontario (now Kitchener) and then moving to Walkerton, where he practised for more than 20 years.



Born in Jamaica in 1830, he began his studies at Queen's in 1849, just eight years after the university was founded. He was a stellar student, winning 14 academic awards.

After contracting pneumonia, Sutherland died without heirs in 1878, leaving his entire estate to Queen's University.

The university had lost most of its endowment as the result of bank collapse a few years earlier. Sutherland's bequest, the largest donation any single person had yet made to the university, was used to launch a fundraising campaign that helped save Queen's from being annexed by the University of Toronto.

In 2009, Queen's Board of Trustees approved the renaming of the Policy Studies Building as Robert Sutherland Hall. The building houses a number of departments and institutes dedicated to the study of politics and governmental issues.

The university also honours Sutherland through the annual Robert Sutherland Prize awarded to a graduating and self-defined student of colour who shows leadership in fostering diversity, the Robert Sutherland Award for Excellence in Debating and other awards bearing his name. Let us celebrate Robert Sutherland for making history as the first university student and graduate of colour in Canada, as well as its first Black lawyer.

A POLITICIAN BREAKING BARRIERS FOR BLACK CANADIANS!



**I'M ROSEMARY
BROWN!**

I was the first Black Canadian woman to be elected to a provincial legislature!



I used my position to fight for housing, work, and human rights for all!



Barbara Howard

Athlete, educator and community leader. Barbara Howard was the first black female athlete to represent Canada in international competition,

In 1948, when most ethnic minorities were barred from teaching, Barbara Howard became the first person of colour to be hired as an educator by the Vancouver School Board, teaching physical education at Lord Strathcona Elementary School.

In 1938, in grade 11, Howard ran a 100-yard sprint in 11.2 seconds to qualify for the British Empire Games, a time that beat the Games' record by a tenth of a second. But despite winning silver and bronze medals in relays at the Games, she came sixth in the 100-yard dash. Her next chance would have been the 1940 Summer Olympics in Tokyo, but the Second World War derailed the Olympics for the next decade and ended Howard's running career.

Howard earned a Bachelor of Education at UBC in 1959 and she took a new path in education. Howard taught at Hastings, Henry Hudson, Lord Strathcona and Trafalgar elementary schools in a career spanning more than forty years.

At Trafalgar, Howard worked with brilliant, but underperforming kids. In a 2010 Burnaby Now interview, she recalls being told to do "anything" to keep the children stimulated. She had them plan day-trips, sent them to work with their fathers, and had them film movies. Her strategy seems to have worked; like Dr. Patricia Hoy of the UBC School of Music, many were later successful, earning advanced degrees. "The child," Howard argued, "is more important than the curriculum." In 2010, Howard was recognized by the Vancouver Park Board with a Remarkable Women Award for "her passionate dedication to inspire others to make a positive difference in their community." She was inducted into both the Burnaby Sports Hall of Fame and the BC Sports Hall of Fame, and in 2013, received the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal. In 2015, she was welcomed as one of "The Legends" in the Canada Sports Hall of Fame. Howard passed away on January 26, 2017 at the age of 96.

Mary Shadd

Shadd was born on October 9, 1823 and died on June 5, 1893. Wilmington, Delaware, United States and died on June 5, 1893 in Washington, D.C., United States.



The Canadian Encyclopedia

Shadd was the FIRST Black female to publish a newspaper in Canada. She was the founder and editor of *The Provincial Freeman*. She gave Black people a voice and stood up for women's rights.

Shadd was known as an American-Canadian anti-slavery activist, journalist, publisher, lawyer, and teacher.



Shadd and her family helped free Blacks from slavery by setting up their home as a "safe house" on the Underground Railroad.

After settling in Sandwich (now Windsor), Canada, West in 1851 Shadd opened up a racially integrated school with the financial support from the American Missionary Association. Due to a public dispute against Henry and Mary Bibb in *Voice of the Fugitive* Shadd end up losing the school funding because of her opposing views about segregated schools for Blacks. Shadd worked as a school teacher during the American Civil War, began works as a recruitment agent for the Union Army, and in 1883 she became one of the first Black women to obtain a law degree at Howard University. Shadd's legacy of leadership and editorial work will never be forgotten knowing that she was recognized as a Person of National Historic Significance by the Government of Canada in 1994.

"Self-Reliance Is the True Road to Independence"

May Shadd be an inspiration to those who wish to pursue a career in journalism and activism.

Portia White

Portia was born June 24, 1911 in Truro, Nova Scotia and died February 13, 1968 in Toronto, Ontario.

Portia was considered one of the best classical singers of the 20th century. She was the first Black Canadian concert singer to win international fame.

Portia was eager to become a professional singer and started her career in the church choir at just 6 years of age.



Portia was a school teacher, and known for having an exceptionally rare and natural contralto voice which was said to be "a gift from heaven."



The Canadian Encyclopedia

Although Portia never made any studio recordings her voice was heard in many concert recitals in Canada and on her father's radio show.

After competing in the Halifax Music Festival and winning the Helen Kennedy Silver Cup three times Portia went to study with Ernesto Vinci at the Halifax Conservatory of Music in 1939.

Portia made her formal debut at the age of 30 on November 7, 1941 the same year she resigned as a teacher to continue her singing career. Even though she had difficulties with bookings because of her race she was the first Canadian to perform at New York's Town Hall on March 13, 1944.

In 1945, Portia signed with Columbia Concerts Inc. and toured in North, Central and South America until she experienced vocal and management problems. In 1948, she toured some more and then moved to Toronto in 1952 where she taught vocal lessons. Portia's final public performance was in July 1967.

Viola Desmond

Viola was born July 6, 1914 in Halifax, Nova Scotia and died on February 7, 1965 in New York, New York.

Viola was a thriving entrepreneur and civil rights activist, an exemplary for young Black women.

Inspired by her parent's respect and hard work within the Black community Viola opened a beauty school, the *Desmond School of Beauty Culture*.



Viola Desmond appeared on Canada's first vertical, \$10 bill which was released on November 19, 2018.



The Canadian Encyclopedia

The evening of November 8, 1946 after Viola's car broke down on her way to a meeting marked a pivotal experience of discrimination. Viola entered the Roseland Theatre in Nova Scotia requesting and paying for what she thought was a ticket for the main floor, only to be denied due to the colour of her skin. Shortly after Mrs. Desmond decided to sit on the main floor anyway she was approached by the manager Henry MacNeil who stated that the theatre had the "right to refuse admission to anyone who objected." Viola explained that she tried to exchange the ticket and pay the difference, but was rejected. When Viola refused to leave her seat a police officer dragged her out of the theatre causing bodily harm and she was sent to jail for the night. Viola was brought to court and charged \$26 for allegedly not paying the one cent ticket tax that she was more than willing and offered to pay. With no lawyer to represent her which she was entitled to and not informed of it was a long battle for Viola, but at the end victory was served.

Afua (Ava Pamela) Cooper

Educator, historian, performance artist and poet. Born November 8, 1957 in the Whithorn district of Westmoreland, Jamaica



Considered one of the most influential and pioneering voices in the Canadian dub poetry and spoken word movement. Her poems are published in numerous regional, national and international journals and anthologies.

Afua Cooper also has CDs of her performances that make her work well known to the global community.

In addition to her notoriety as a performance artist, she is an internationally-ranked historian. She has taught Caribbean cultural studies, history, women's studies and Black studies at Ryerson and York universities, at the University of Toronto and at Dalhousie University.

Afua Cooper is one of nine children – five sisters and three brothers. Her parents are Ruth Campbell Cooper and Edward Cooper. In 1966, she moved from Westmoreland to Kingston to live with her aunt, Elfreda Campbell. She attended St. Michael's All-Age School in Rae Town. Cooper then attended Camperdown High School (East Kingston) from the age of 12 where she was a founding member of the African Studies Club. Graduating in 1975, Afua Cooper was by then a Rastafarian, and she spent the year living with dub poet Mutabaraka and his wife, Yvonne Peters. In 1979–80, she went to teach at Vauxhall Secondary School, after earning a teaching diploma from Excelsior Community College. She later moved to Canada in December 1980 during a period of great political unrest throughout Jamaica

Carrie Best

Carrie was born on March 4, 1903 in New Glasgow, Nova Scotia and died on July 24, 2001 in her birth city.



The Canadian Encyclopedia

Carrie Best is known for her ambitious and outstanding work as a human rights activist, author, journalist, publisher and broadcaster.

In 1946, Carrie co-founded The Clarion, one of the first newspapers to be owned and published by Black Canadians in Nova, Scotia.



The Clarion reported on sports, news, social events, and civil and Black rights like the story of Viola Desmond.

In December 1941, Carrie and her son Calbert payed a visit to the Roseland Theatre in New Gaslow after hearing about a group of teenage girls being forcefully removed from the theatre for attempting to sit in the "white only" section.

After a couple of attempts arguing with the owner Norman Mason against the racist policy and simply being ignored Carrie decided that she and her son would challenge the policy themselves only to be thrown out of the theatre by the police. Both were convicted and fined for disturbing the peace a cause for a civil lawsuit that highlighted racial discrimination.

Carrie filed for assault and battery, breach of contract, and damage to her jacket. The case was rejected and the thought of discrimination wasn't even considered, and Carrie was ordered to pay the defendant's costs. This event only drove Carrie to continue making headlines.

John Ware

John Ware was born in 1845-50 in South Carolina, United States and passed away September 11, 1905 near Brooks, Alberta.



Hot Docs

John Ware is known as a Canadian legendary cowboy who was a successful rancher that demonstrated great physical strength and excellent horsemanship. He was also respected as one of the top cowboys from the West even against the odds of widespread anti-racism and discrimination.

During Black History Month in February 2012, Canada Post issued a stamp in honour of John Ware. He also has a Junior High school and two creeks named after him.



It was told that John Ware because of his strength and ability with cattle and horses he could walk over the backs of penned steers with no fear. In addition, he could wrestle a steer (bullock) to the ground head-on, train untamed broncos, hold a horse on its back to be shod with horseshoes, and lift and throw an 18-month old steer on its back for branding.

Near the end of the American Civil War in 1865 John Ware became a free man. Ware made his way to the west and eventually found work on a ranch close to Fort Worth, Texas. Unfortunately, Ware was unable to read or write so many details of his life, particularly those of when he was young are unknown. The accountable sources of John's life were written by friends years after he died. As a free man Ware kept travelling west and sharpened his skills as a cowboy. In the late 1870s, he drove herds of Texas cattle to the ranges in Montana. In 1882, he assisted in bringing 3,000 head of cattle from the United States to the southwest of Calgary. In the mid-1880s, Ware managed a horse herd on Quorn Ranch on Sheep Creek known as Sheep River now. Spring of 1884 and 1885, Ware joined in two large roundups of searching for cattle and before the second round he registered his own brand "four nines (9999)" and he later re-registered it as three nines in 1898. John Ware, the courageous man he was started his own ranch two years later.