

2SLGBTQIA+
BLACK
INDIGENOUS
PEOPLE OF COLOUR
Voices in History

**BLACK
WOMEN'S
COLLECTIVE**

LE CENTRE CANADIEN DE LA
DIVERSITÉ DES GENRES
+ DE LA **SEXUALITÉ**



THE CANADIAN CENTRE FOR
**GENDER+SEXUAL
DIVERSITY**



Content Warning:

Police Brutality, Violence, Racism, Sexism, Homophobia

Document written and created by Emma N. Awe

Contact information: emma.nicole.awe@gmail.com

The Founders

The Black Women's Collective (BWC) in Toronto started in 1986 and was active until 1989. The tight-knit group was composed of around a dozen members that worked to address the racism and sexism they faced as Black women. The BWC also challenged homophobia and welcomed many Black women who were part of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community into the group. This intersectional approach put them at the forefront of activism in Toronto.



Some of the founding members were:

Carol Ann Allain
Linda Carty
Grace Channer
Dionne Falconer
Carol Camper
Faith Nolan
Angela Robertson
Leleti Tamu Russell

Intersectionality

The Black Women's Collective represented a unique space for Black 2SLGBTQIA+ women to find community and take action without having to suppress or negotiate their identities. The BWC was committed to addressing the intersections of race, class, sexuality, gender in politics. Many members of the BWC were part of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community and advocated for their representation within Black women's and Black liberation movements.

Membership Criteria:

1. The collective is open to any Black woman, lesbian or straight, who wishes to work to carry out the aims of the collective and candidates should be aware and respect that members of the **BWC** are both lesbian and heterosexual.
2. Candidates should believe, understand and practice the aims and objectives of **BWC**.
3. Candidate should have some political understanding or be prepared to undertake political study through collective meetings, reading and workshops.
4. **BWC** members may be expelled because of basic disagreement/violation of the mandate, responsibilities, duties and rules of the **BWC**.
5. All members will be notified in advance and every effort will be made before action is taken.
6. Members can appeal to the membership committee and collective for reinstatement.
7. Failure to live up to manifesto **BWC** means a failure to renew annual membership.

The images pictured left and below are excerpts from *The Black Women's Collective's Constitution* (March 1988). [See the full document online at RiseUp! Feminist Archives.](#)

In the excerpts of the BWC Constitution pictured right, there is specific consideration of 2SLGBTQIA+ members of the collective. In the discussion of "lesbian oppression/homophobia/heterosexism," the BWC worked to describe the added discrimination faced by Black women in the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.

Lesbian Oppression/Homophobia /Heterosexism

Lesbian oppression and the resulting homophobia in the society is based on the belief and myth that sexual intercourse should only take place between men and women and under no other circumstances. More than a belief or myth it is an established rule used to control sexuality, in order to control society and most importantly to control the production of wealth. Heterosexuality is enforced in the society as the "natural way to be" so that men and women can keep producing labourers for production. Lesbians are seen as a threat to this since it is assumed that they do not want to produce children. Lesbians are also seen as a threat because by their lesbian orientation they challenge to an extreme degree the stereotype of women as weak and dependent on men and they therefore challenge one of the underlying principles of economic exploitation, the sexual division of labour. Sanctions are therefore applied against lesbians by both church and state which allow lesbians to be physically attacked, hated and feared through invoking "god's order" in the case of church and a denial of civil right in the case of state.

Lesbians lose jobs and housing if they do not act straight, they are not accorded benefits which they pay for such as medical insurance or pensions when they live as couples. The everyday act of walking down the street as lovers which is a freedom for straight people is prohibited for lesbians since they are likely to meet with violence from the state as well as ordinary people.

Civil right for lesbians and gays must be struggled for - "not the church, not the state" women/people can be gay or straight.

Aims & Objectives

The Aims and Objectives of the Toronto Black Women's Collective

1. to participate politically in the struggle to end the oppressions of sexism, racism, racialism, homophobia, ageism, class exploitation, capitalism and imperialism
2. to work to eradicate ideas and practices of sexism, sexual stereotyping, class exploitation, white supremacy, homophobia and imperialism
3. to plan and hold protests, educationals, events and campaigns against such oppressions
4. to work in solidarity with other progressive women's groups and progressive groups in the struggle to end these oppressions
5. to encourage other Black women to become active in the struggle for women's liberation, Black liberation and the liberation of all oppressed and exploited working peoples
6. to produce propaganda for spreading the word in these efforts
7. to advocate and work toward changing the power relations in the society in which we live, recognizing that gaining power does not mean exchanging places with the establishment but striving toward an equal and just society for all human beings on the planet

This image is an excerpt from *The Black Women's Collective Constitution* (March 1988).
[See the full document online at RiseUp! Feminist Archives.](#)

The BWC focused on a variety of important social justice issues, and in addition to actively trying to change Canadian society, they also acted as an important place of community for Black women. BWC members, Leleti Tamu Russell, Dionne Falconer, and Angela Robertson have since reflected upon their time with the collective as one of growth and friendship.

FALCONER:

"The collective, for me, was also friendship. Friendship, love, caring. Some of the women from the collective have been my friends for most of my life."

ROBERTSON:

"The BWC really encouraged me to continue to be a noisemaker."

TAMU RUSSELL:

"At that age, it's about finding place and contributing to the struggle. I was doing things I'd never done before - learn how to give a speech at a rally, learn how to get ready to picket. These are things that I was learning: concrete survival skills about struggle."

Calls to Action

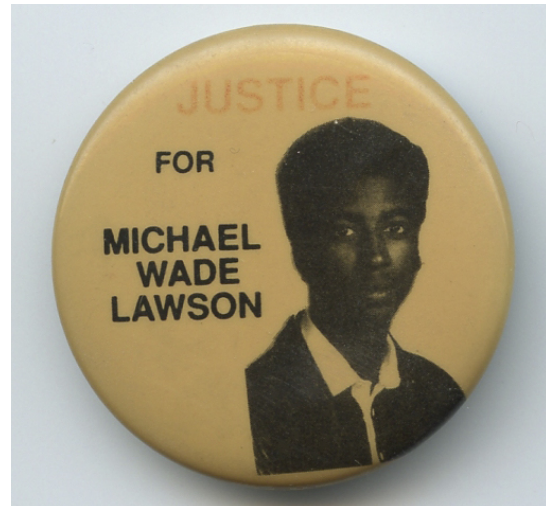
In 1989, the BWC collaborated with the Coalition of Visible Minority Women and the Toronto Chapter of the Congress of Black Women to focus International Women's Day (IWD) activities on the theme of "women and poverty." Their joint proposal submitted to the March 8th Coalition of IWD focused on issues such as shelter, daycare, housing, and welfare affecting women in poverty.

In a speech delivered on International Women's Day, BWC member, Angela Robertson, highlighted the BWC's focus on intersectional feminism...

ROBERTSON: "This is a great moment of challenge for the women's movement in this city and this country. We stand at a major cross-road between crisis and opportunity. There are many things which divide this movement. Over the last several years, racism in particular has hindered the critical progress of the movement. What it has shown is that we cannot move unless all women move together. In order to do so we must build a truly representative movement. **Poor women! Working class women! Native women! Black women! South Asian women! Chinese women! Latina women! White women! Lesbians!** — We must rise up. Now is the time to rise up and overturn this oppressive system. Now is the time to rise up and unite toward social equality."

The BWC stood against police brutality and condemned the illegal shootings of Black folks in Canada alongside other Black Liberation groups, such as the Black Action Defence Committee (BADC).

The BWC formed the Women's Coalition Against Racism and Police Violence in order to address the police shootings of Sophia Cook, Lester Donaldson, and Michael Wade Lawson in the 1980s.



This image is from [RiseUp! Feminist Archives](#).

In 1989, they also helped organize a march for Sophia Cook—a 23-year-old victim of police brutality in Bramlea. For members of the BWC, Sophia Cook's death was a signal that all Black peoples are threatened by police violence. BWC member, Leleti Tamu Russell reflected on this moment...

TAMU RUSSELL: "Here is something else. Because so far all the shootings have been Black brothers, and we were always there for that but there was never a woman shot in this kind of situation."

In February 1989, the BWC delivered a speech about police violence in Canada at the Rally Against Racism, shown on the following page...

FEB. 25TH. 1989

Statement of the Black Women's Collective to the Rally Against Racism,
Feb 25. 1989.

Over the past several months the Black Community in Toronto has been under open attack from the police, police administration and indeed city and provincial government officials. We say that we have been under open attack because two of our people have been brutally murdered, numerous in our community have been harassed and brutalised by the police, aspersions cast on the character of our community, our young women and men have been systematically criminalised through excessive and unwarranted surveillance and more recently through the racist use of biased police statistics.

The community's efforts to speak out against these attacks have been subjected to a campaign designed to discredit and disinform. The police force has put all of its resources toward further attack on Black people in Metro instead of cleaning up their own dirty house of racism. But their denials of racism have only resulted in the exposure of their racism. As in the case of June Rowlands, the head of the police commission who targetted Black youth with the crime of being Black.

Our community is under seige. No government official has spoken out categorically against these attacks. They have allowed the police to call the shots; they have allowed the police to declare that they will withhold protection for the Black community and they have even called on the police to provide racist statistics. They have in fact taken away our civil rights.

We call on the Premier of this province, David Peterson to lift the seige. We are citizens of this province like all other citizens and he and his government must act in our behalf.

We demand

- That the premier of Ontario issue a categorical statement deploring racism, and police harassment, and police brutality in this province. That Premier David Peterson also make clear his government's specific intentions to clean up racism in the police forces and the civil service.

- That an independent civilian complaints commission be set up to look into charges of racism in the police force, police brutality and police killings in Ontario.

- That Mandatory Anti-racist education be instituted in the police force and all civil services in Ontario.

- That the Solicitor General order Peel police to stop wearing buttons in support of police officers charged with the criminal offence of manslaughter in the death of Wade Lawson.

- That a public apology be issued by the North York Police department regarding their issuing of racist statistics on crime.

- That the personnel officer of the Metro Toronto Police Force be fired immediately for his remarks that hiring Blacks would lower the standards of the force. (Frankly we think that it would raise the standards quite a bit)

Our Lives Newspaper

The BWC also published *Our Lives: Canada's First Black Women's Newspaper*. The newspaper created a forum for Black women to write about and discuss issues related to their specific experiences.

The newspaper advanced the BWC's calls for societal reform and the end to issues such as police violence and systemic racism, while also focusing on socio-cultural issues such as the role of women, education, and representation.

Issue 3, Volume 1 (1986) of *Our Lives* featured a variety of articles related to children and family. For instance, in the article excerpt pictured right, they discuss racism and sexism as presented in children's books, and urge readers to consider the impact of language and content on children's self-image.

September/October 86
Our Lives

Both in school and out, young children are exposed to racist and sexist attitudes. These attitudes - expressed over and over in books and in other media - gradually distort their perceptions until stereotypes and myths about minorities and women are accepted as reality. It is difficult for a librarian or teacher to convince children to question society's attitudes. But if a child can be shown how to detect racism and sexism in a book, the child can proceed to transfer the perception to wider areas. The following ten guidelines are offered as a starting point in evaluating children's books from this perspective.

CHECK THE ILLUSTRATIONS

Look for Stereotypes

A stereotype is an oversimplified generalisation about a particular group, race or sex, which usually carries derogatory implications. Some infamous (overt) stereotypes of Blacks are the happy-go-lucky, watermelon-eating Sambo and the fat, eye-rolling 'mammy'; of Chicanos, the sombrero-wearing peon or fiesta-loving, macho bandito; of Asian-Americans, the inscrutable, slant-eyed 'oriental'; of Native Americans, the naked savage or 'primitive brave' and his 'squaw'; of Puerto Ricans, the switchblade-toting teenage gang member; of women, the completely domesticated mother, the demure, doll-loving little girl or the wicked step mother. While you may not always find stereotypes in the blatant forms described, look for variations which in any way demean or ridicule characters because of their race or sex.

Look for Tokenism

If there are racial minority characters in the illustrations, do they look just like whites except for being tinted or colored in? Do all minority faces look stereotypically alike, or are they depicted as genuine individuals with distinctive features?

Who's doing what?

Do the illustrations depict minorities in subservient and passive roles or in leadership and action roles? Are males the active 'doers' and the females inactive observers?

CHECK THE STORY LINE

Liberation movements have led publishers to weed out many insulting passages, particularly from stories with Black themes and from books depicting female characters; however, racist and sexist attitudes still find expression in less obvious ways. The following checklist suggest some of the subtle (covert) forms of bias to watch for.

Standard for Success

Does it take 'white' behaviour standards for a minority person to 'get ahead'? Is 'making it' in the dominant white society projected as the only ideal? To gain acceptance and approval, do persons of color have to exhibit extraordinary qualities - excell in sports, get 'A's', etc? In friendships between white and non-white children, is it the child of color

who does most of the understanding and forgiving?

Resolution of Problems

How are problems presented, conceived and resolved in the story? Are minority people considered to be 'the problem'? Are the oppressions faced by minorities and women represented as related to social injustice? Are the reasons for poverty and oppression explained, or are they accepted as inevitable? Does the story line encourage passive acceptance or active resistance? Is a particular problem that is faced by a racial minority or a female resolved through the benevolent intervention of a white person or a male?

Role of Women

Are the achievements of girls and women based on their own initiative and intelligence, or are they due to their good looks or to their relationship with boys? Are sex roles incidental or critical to characterisation and plot? Could the same story be told if the sex roles were reversed?

LOOK AT THE LIFESTYLES

Are minority persons and their setting depicted in such a way that they contrast unfavourably with the unstated norm of white middle class suburbia? If the minority group in question is depicted as 'different', are negative value judgements implied? Are minorities depicted exclusively in ghettos, barrios or migrant camps? If the illustrations and text attempt to depict another culture, do they go beyond oversimplifications and offer genuine insights into another lifestyle? Look for inaccuracy and inappropriateness in the depiction of other cultures. Watch for instances of the 'quaint-natives-in-costume' syndrome (most noticeably in areas like clothing and custom, but extending to behaviour and personality traits as well).

WEIGH THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN PEOPLE

Do the whites in the story possess the power, take the leadership and make the important decisions? Do racial minorities and females of all races function in essentially supporting roles?

How are family relationships depicted? In Black families, is the mother always dominant? In Hispanic families, are there always lots of children? If the family is separated, are societal conditions - unemployment, poverty, for example - cited among reasons for the separation?

NOTE THE HEROES

For many years, books showed only 'safe' minority heroes - those who avoided serious conflict with the white establishment of their time. Minority groups today are insisting on the right to define their own heroes (of both sexes) based on their own concepts and struggles for justice.

When minority heroes do appear, are they admired for the same qualities that have made white heroes famous or because what they have done benefitted white people? Ask this question: "Whose interest is a particular hero really serving?"

CONSIDER THE EFFECTS ON A CHILD'S SELF-IMAGE

Are norms established which limit any child's aspirations and self-concepts? What effect can it have on image when she reads that boys perform all of the brave and important deeds? Black children to be continually bombarded with images of the color white as the ultimate in beauty, cleanliness, virtue, etc and the color black as evil, dirty, menacing, etc? Does the book counteract or reinforce this positive association with the color white and negative association with black?

What about a girl's self-esteem if she is not 'fair' of skin and slim of body?

In a particular story, is there one or more persons with whom a minority child can readily identify to a positive and constructive end?

CONSIDER THE AUTHOR'S OR ILLUSTRATOR'S BACKGROUND

Analyse the biographical material on the jacket flap or the back of the book. If a story deals with a minority theme, what qualifies the author and illustrator to deal with the subject? If the author and illustrator are not members of the minority being written about, is there anything in their background that would specifically recommend them as the creators of this book?

CHECK OUT THE AUTHOR'S PERSPECTIVE

No author can be wholly objective. All authors write out of cultural as well as a personal context. Children's books in the past have traditionally come from authors who were white and who were members of the middle class, with one result being that a single ethnocentric perspective had dominated children's literature in the United States. With any book in question, read carefully to determine whether the direction of the author's perspective substantially weakens or strengthens the value of his/her written work. Is the perspective patriarchal or feminist? Is it solely Eurocentric, or do minority cultural perspectives also receive respect?

WATCH FOR LOADED WORDS

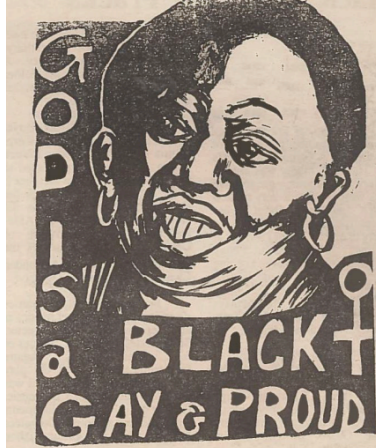
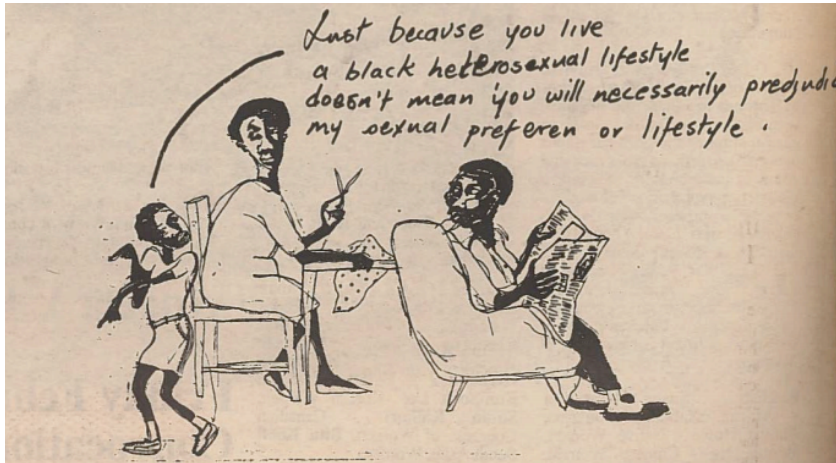
A word is loaded when it has insulting overtones. Examples of loaded adjectives (usually racist) are 'savage', 'primitive', 'conniving', 'lazy', 'superstitious', 'treacherous', 'wily', 'crafty', 'inscrutable', 'docile' and 'backward'.

Look for sexist language and adjectives that exclude or ridicule women. Look for the use

cont'd pg. 4

This image is an excerpt from *The Black Women's Collective's* newspaper, *Our Lives: Canada's First Black Women's Newspaper*, Volume 1 Issue 2 (Sept./Oct. 1986).
[See the original document in full online at RiseUp! Feminist Archives.](http://www.riseup!feministarchives.com)

Our Lives claimed space and power for Black women, while also challenging dominant narratives about Black womanhood. Pictured below are clippings that mention Black women in the 2SLGBTQIA+ community as well as some pages that highlight the herstory of Black women.



OUR LIVES Women in our Herstory

Source: The Black Woman in Canada by Rella Braithwaite

Marie Joseph Angeltique
Enslaved in Lower Canada, she ran away from a slave owner burning down fifty buildings in her wake in Montreal in 1733. She was later recaptured, beaten, dragged through the city and burnt at the stake because of her bid for freedom.

Harriet Tubman
This famous abolitionist escaped from slavery herself returning time and again to lead some three hundred of our enslaved ancestors to freedom in Canada. She was known to threaten with death anyone who gave up hope on the way to freedom. Helping the cause of emancipation, she later served as a spy, a scout, a soldier and a nurse when war broke out between the north and the south. In Canada she lived in St Catherine's, Ontario.



Mary Ann Shadd
Born a freed woman in Delaware in 1823, she moved to Canada in the early 1850s. A committed abolitionist, Shadd advocated for fugitives from slavery to flee to Canada. Settling in Windsor and later in Toronto, she owned and edited the newspaper, the *Provincial Freeman*, from 1853 to 1857, promoting the anti-slavery campaign. She also ran a small school in Windsor.

Annapolis Royal Rose Fortune
Born around 1774 she came to Annapolis Valley with her parents as slaves of the Devosne family. She became a policewoman and baggagemaster in Annapolis Royal around 1825. Her husband transferred to the Lewis Transfer. In her day she was to be found caring her transfer wagon full of luggage and goods to and from the docks of ships along the wharf of that seaport town.

Roseetta Amos Richardson
Born in Toronto in 1837, her mother and grandmother had escaped to Canada via the Underground Railroad. She and her husband owned and operated the first soul food restaurant in 1891 on York Street near Richmond. Later she was the first Black person to operate a lunch canteen at the CNE.

Tilly Mays
Founding member of the Coloured Women's Club, she was born in Montreal in the 1870s. The Coloured Women's

Club was a benevolent club



Tilly Mays
formed around the turn of the century when soldiers were returning home from the Boer War. The women of the club worked with the poor, sick and injured in hospitals and soup kitchens.

Christina Jenkins
Born in Chatham, Ontario in 1897, she was co-publisher and editor in 1923 of the London newspaper *The Dawn of Tomorrow*. The newspaper was the voice of Black people in Southern Ontario like its forerunner *The Provincial Freeman*. At its peak in the fifties it had a wide circulation not only in Canada but around the world. The paper is still published periodically by her descendants in London, Ontario where she lived for over sixty years. Jenkins was also a staunch community activist and held positions on the executive of the Women's Council of Churches. She was also mother to nine children.



Carrie Best
A civil rights activist, journalist and commentator, she was born in New Glasgow, Nova Scotia in 1903. She wrote articles on



racial discrimination in Nova Scotia and championed the cause of Black rights. In 1949, her own newspaper the *Negro Citizen*

began publishing nation wide. Dr Best is known all over the country and in Black communities as strong fighting woman even now in her 86th year.

Violet Blackman
Coming to Canada in 1921, she was born in Jamaica. Now in her eighties, Violet Blackman was a founding member of the Universal Negro (African) Improvement Association in Toronto in the early thirties. A Garveyite, she believed in the advancement of Black people and helped to build the Negro Credit Union. She still attends community meetings bringing her years of struggle and her wisdom to the issues.



Viola Desmond
A Halifax beauty queen, in 1947 she attended the Roseland theatre in New Glasgow Nova Scotia where the Jim Crow law required Blacks to sit in the balcony and whites in the main section. She bought a ticket for upstairs but was refused. She in turn refused to leave the downstairs section and was assaulted by a policeman and the theatre's manager. She was arrested, charged with not paying the correct tax of one cent and jailed for twelve hours. She was later tried and convicted with defrauding the federal government of one cent!! Fighting back Viola took her case to the Supreme Court which later reversed the decision.



Betty Riley
The first Black woman to produce a Black television series, 'Black 'n' Canada', Born in Montreal her family dates back to 1871 here. Her work in the media and her concern over the lack of Black images in the media led to her many endeavours in the service of the community, including a Black community radio workshop training youth and work at the Neame Community Centre in media arts.

Kay Livingston
A school teacher, she was responsible for establishing a Black Heritage Program long before any Board of Education did so in Toronto. In the fifties, sixties, and seventies, she worked actively in Black community organisations such as the Home Service Association, the UNIA, the Toronto United Negro Association, the Toronto Negro Credit Union and the B.M.E. church where she began a program called Student Sundays which motivated Black youth in their academic aspirations.

Marie Hamilton
A teacher for fifty years in rural Nova Scotia she is a member of the National Anti-Poverty Association. Born in Blackville, Nova Scotia she taught school when there were no roads or modern day schoolrooms. Using her wit and her wisdoms she made her way through the harsh racist times, firmly believing that education for both Black and white children would make a better world one day. Two years ago, Marie Hamilton received an honorary doctorate from Mount St Vincent University marking her great contribution to education in Nova Scotia. She still tutors at the North End Public Library in Halifax and is an active public speaker.

Pearline Oliver
Was born and raised in Guysborough County, Nova Scotia, she is a community leader and activist. She led the struggle in the 1940s for the first Black church in Nova Scotia. Recently she researched and presented the written history of Black Churches in Nova Scotia at the Black Cultural Centre there.



Grace Trotman
She arrived in 1920 from Liberia, graduated from the Royal Conservatory of Music for 45 years taught music lessons to more than 1,000 children. She was choir leader and organist at the British Methodist Episcopal Church and in the thirties established a camp for Black children. She is probably responsible for inspiring many of the contemporary Black women singers in Toronto, many of whom passed under her tutelage.

Subscribe
OUR LIVES
the cutting edge

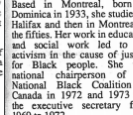
ing 1989



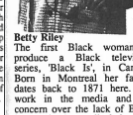
Kathleen Searles
A feminist, in 1970 she became the first Ombudswoman for the Status of Women. A socialist, she is the highest calibre she once introduced a private member's bill to establish collective bargaining rights for tenants, and, supported rent control. As a civil right activist she strongly objected to scapegoating immigrants for the failing economy. Brown came to Canada from Jamaica in 1951.



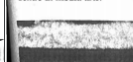
Gwen Johnson
Based in Montreal, born in Dominica in 1933, she studied in Halifax and then in Montreal in the fifties. Her work in education and social work led to her activism in the cause of justice for Black people. She was national chairperson of the National Black Coalition of Canada in 1972 and 1973 and the executive secretary from 1969 to 1972.



Dorothy Willis
Her great-grandmother came to Canada via the underground railroad. That history was not wasted on Gwen Johnson. In 1968, she and her husband opened Third World Books & Craft Store. The store now on Bathurst Street was and is a safe harbour for Black people in search of their heritage and history. It is also where many political discussions take place. Gwen and Lenny being themselves storehouses of Black history and struggle. Gwen is also an active and longtime member of the Universal Negro (African) Improvement Association.



Betty Riley
The first Black woman to produce a Black television series, 'Black 'n' Canada', Born in Montreal her family dates back to 1871 here. Her work in the media and her concern over the lack of Black images in the media led to her many endeavours in the service of the community, including a Black community radio workshop training youth and work at the Neame Community Centre in media arts.



Rosemary Brown
Until her retirement in 1986, she was the only Black woman to sit in the Canadian legislature, provincial or federal. As the member of parliament for Vancouver-Burrard, Brown was first elected to the British

Kathleen Searles
A feminist, in 1970 she became the first Ombudswoman for the Status of Women. A socialist, she is the highest calibre she once introduced a private member's bill to establish collective bargaining rights for tenants, and, supported rent control. As a civil right activist she strongly objected to scapegoating immigrants for the failing economy. Brown came to Canada from Jamaica in 1951.



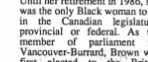
Rella Braithwaite
A community activist, a journalist and historian for many years she was the Black history columnist for *Contrast* the Black community newspaper. She has written the only biography of Black women in Canada which she published in 1976.



Eva Smith
Coming to Canada from Jamaica on the domestic worker scheme in the 1950s, she became an activist in the cause for domestic worker rights and Black rights in Toronto. A pioneer of the Jamaican Canadian Association of Toronto, Smith also counselled and tutored Black youth through that organization for many years. Every year a scholarship is given in her honour to outstanding Black youth.



Lois DeShield
Founder of Immigrant Women's Job Placement Centre, DeShield began her activism in Hamilton, Ontario, against racist programming on children's television. A stalwart of the Black Education Project she's fought many a battle in the struggle against racism.

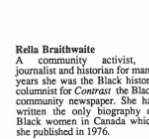


Marlene Green
Founding member and ideologue of the Black Education Project, Green came to Canada from Dominica in the sixties. The Black Education Project 1969-1979, through its advocacy on behalf of Black children wrought a radical change in the thinking and policy of educators in the Toronto school system. Prior to the work of Green and others there were no race relation departments, heritage programs or mechanisms for dealing with systematic racism in the schools. Veteran of African Liberation struggle for self determination in the Caribbean, Green now works in Southern Africa.

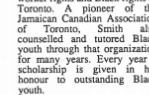
Fran Endicott
The first Black woman trustee of the Toronto Board of Education, from 1981 to 1988, Endicott was central to the progressive changes at the Board toward Heritage Languages, questions of streaming, equal access and opportunity for innercity and Black children.

Rosemary Brown
Until her retirement in 1986, she was the only Black woman to sit in the Canadian legislature, provincial or federal. As the member of parliament for Vancouver-Burrard, Brown was first elected to the British

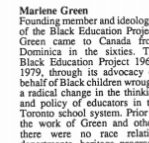
Margaret Gittens
A long time activist, Gittens came to Canada in the sixties. Her major contribution has been in the area of tenants rights where she has worked for the past ten years. A veteran of African liberation support organising and activist on immigration problems faced by Black people, she is also a member of the Coalition of Visible Minority Women and the Congress of Black Women.



Anne Cools
Prominent in the Sir George Williams University uprising (1970) where Black students occupied the computer centre protesting against racism, Cools later became the first Black woman senator in the Canadian Parliament in 1982. She founded and worked for many years at Women in Transition, a shelter for battered women in Toronto. Her community activism led to her involvement in electoral politics and she gave David Crombie, the previous Minister of Multiculturalism a run for his money in the riding of Rosedale in 1981.



Vera Cudjoe
Founder of Black Theatre Canada some 14 years ago, she was born in Trinidad coming to Canada via England. Through good times and mostly bad financial times, she has kept the theatre going with the deepest conviction that the work of Black writers actors and artists must have a place for expression.



Marlene Green
Founding member and ideologue of the Black Education Project, Green came to Canada from Dominica in the sixties. The Black Education Project 1969-1979, through its advocacy on behalf of Black children wrought a radical change in the thinking and policy of educators in the Toronto school system. Prior to the work of Green and others there were no race relation departments, heritage programs or mechanisms for dealing with systematic racism in the schools. Veteran of African Liberation struggle for self determination in the Caribbean, Green now works in Southern Africa.



Fran Endicott
The first Black woman trustee of the Toronto Board of Education, from 1981 to 1988, Endicott was central to the progressive changes at the Board toward Heritage Languages, questions of streaming, equal access and opportunity for innercity and Black children.

Rosemary Brown
Until her retirement in 1986, she was the only Black woman to sit in the Canadian legislature, provincial or federal. As the member of parliament for Vancouver-Burrard, Brown was first elected to the British

OUR LIVES 5

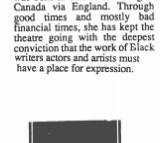
Margaret Gittens
A long time activist, Gittens came to Canada in the sixties. Her major contribution has been in the area of tenants rights where she has worked for the past ten years. A veteran of African liberation support organising and activist on immigration problems faced by Black people, she is also a member of the Coalition of Visible Minority Women and the Congress of Black Women.



Anne Cools
Prominent in the Sir George Williams University uprising (1970) where Black students occupied the computer centre protesting against racism, Cools later became the first Black woman senator in the Canadian Parliament in 1982. She founded and worked for many years at Women in Transition, a shelter for battered women in Toronto. Her community activism led to her involvement in electoral politics and she gave David Crombie, the previous Minister of Multiculturalism a run for his money in the riding of Rosedale in 1981.



Vera Cudjoe
Founder of Black Theatre Canada some 14 years ago, she was born in Trinidad coming to Canada via England. Through good times and mostly bad financial times, she has kept the theatre going with the deepest conviction that the work of Black writers actors and artists must have a place for expression.



Marlene Green
Founding member and ideologue of the Black Education Project, Green came to Canada from Dominica in the sixties. The Black Education Project 1969-1979, through its advocacy on behalf of Black children wrought a radical change in the thinking and policy of educators in the Toronto school system. Prior to the work of Green and others there were no race relation departments, heritage programs or mechanisms for dealing with systematic racism in the schools. Veteran of African Liberation struggle for self determination in the Caribbean, Green now works in Southern Africa.



Fran Endicott
The first Black woman trustee of the Toronto Board of Education, from 1981 to 1988, Endicott was central to the progressive changes at the Board toward Heritage Languages, questions of streaming, equal access and opportunity for innercity and Black children.

Rosemary Brown
Until her retirement in 1986, she was the only Black woman to sit in the Canadian legislature, provincial or federal. As the member of parliament for Vancouver-Burrard, Brown was first elected to the British

Sources

Dryden, Omisoore H. "Má-ka Juk Yuh: A Genealogy of Black Queer Liveability in Toronto." In *Queering Urban Justice: Queer of Colour Formations in Toronto* edited by Jin Haritaworn, Ghaida Moussa, and Syrus Marcus Ware, with Río Rodríguez. Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 2018.

Jackson, Peter. "Constructions of Criminality: Police-Community Relations in Toronto." *Antipode* 26, no.3 (1994): 216-235.

Long Time Comin'. Directed by Dionne Brand. National Film Board, 1993.

Our Dance of Revolution. Directed by Philip Pike. Toronto: Roaring River Films, 2019.

Rise Up! A Digital Archive of Feminist Activism. "Black Women's Collective (BWC)." <https://riseupfeministarchive.ca/activism/organizations/black-womens-collective/>

Rise Up! A Digital Archive of Feminist Activism. "Congress of Black Women of Canada (CBWC) / Congrès des femmes noires du Canada." <https://riseupfeministarchive.ca/activism/organizations/congress-of-black-women-of-canada-cbwc/>

Rise Up! A Digital Archive of Feminist Activism. "Our Lives: Canada's First Black Women's Newspaper." <https://riseupfeministarchive.ca/publications/our-lives-canadas-first-black-womens-newspaper/>

Ryerson University. "Dudley Laws (1934-2011)." The Akua Benjamin Project. <https://www.ryerson.ca/akua-benjamin-project/who-are-we-celebrating/dudley-laws/>

Sisters in the Struggle. Directed by Dionne Brand and Ginny Stikeman. National Film Board, 1991.

