

African Heritage Month Information Network

Nova Scotia – Canada

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CELEBRATE AFRICAN HERITAGE MONTH 2017

Sharing the History and Culture of African Nova Scotians

This year's African Heritage Month theme, *Passing the Torch...African Nova Scotians and the next 150 years*, will honour past and present legacies of African Nova Scotians while looking forward to future greatness. The theme embraces African Nova Scotians' resilience in the face of adversity over the generations as it highlights their successes and the bright path forward as Canada celebrates 150 years of confederation.

The province of Nova Scotia has over 50 historic African Nova Scotian communities, dating back over 200 years. Annually we celebrate the history, heritage and contributions of African Nova Scotians during the month of February and beyond. Our 2017 theme also aligns with the global observance of the United Nations International Decade for People of African Descent from 2015-2024 which focuses on three pillars: Recognition, Justice, and Development.

Each year in February, the African Heritage Month Information Network (AHMIN) produces an educational poster that is distributed and displayed across the province in community gathering centers, schools, churches, government offices and businesses. Those interested in a copy of the poster can visit www.bccns.com/ahmposter to order in advance.

The AHMIN also facilitates African Heritage Month events and proclamations across the province of Nova Scotia. A full listing of community activities and events are available online at <http://www.ansa.novascotia.ca/african-heritage-month>. Below are some highlights:

Jan. 24	10 am	Provincial African Heritage Month Launch – Province House / Red Room
Jan. 26	7 pm	Halifax Region Proclamation - Halifax North Memorial Public Library
Jan. 26	1 pm	Southwest Region Proclamation (Digby – Yarmouth) - Digby Heritage Centre
Jan. 27	12 pm	Cape Breton Region Proclamation – CBRM City Hall
Jan. 28	7 pm	Cape Breton African Heritage Month Gala (10th Anniversary) - Membertou Trade and Convention Centre
Jan. 30	11:45 am	Amherst Region Proclamation - Community Credit Union Innovation Center Ratchford St.
Jan. 30	11:30 am	Town and County of Antigonish – Saint Francis Xavier University – McKay Room
Jan. 31	11:45 am	New Glasgow Region Proclamation – Town Council Chambers
Feb. 3	7:30 pm	Valley Region Proclamation – Acadia Athletics Complex
Feb. 5	11 am	Town of Guysborough – Town Council Chambers
Feb. 6	12 pm	Town of Truro – Truro, City Hall
Feb 10	10am	Town, Municipality of Shelburne – Black Loyalists Heritage Centre
Feb 10	2pm	Town of Annapolis Royal - Council Chambers Annapolis Royal Town Hall
Feb. 16	7 pm	African Nova Scotia Music Association & TD Musical showcase – Halifax Central Library, Paul O'Regan Hall
Feb. 21	10 am	Municipality of Annapolis AHM Session of Council - Inglewood Community Centre, 26 Bay Road, Inglewood (near Bridgetown)
Feb. 25	6 pm	African Nova Scotia Music Association Awards – Spatz Theatre, 5440 Spring Garden Rd.

African Heritage Month in Canada

The commemoration of African Heritage Month can be traced back to 1926 when Harvard-educated Black historian, Carter G. Woodson, founded Negro History Week to recognize the achievements of African Americans. Woodson purposefully chose February for the birthdays of Frederick Douglas and Abraham Lincoln, both key figures in the emancipation of enslaved Blacks. In 1976, as part of the American Bicentennial celebrations, Negro History Week was expanded to Black History Month.

The vast contributions of African-Canadians to Canadian society have been acknowledged informally since the early 1950s. However, Nova Scotia, particularly the Halifax Region, has been a leader in the promotion and awareness of African Heritage Month. Highlights of the development of Black History Month in Canada through the efforts of Nova Scotian trailblazers include the following:

- 1985 - First “official” Opening Night for Black History Month (January 29) at the North Branch Library.
- 1987 - First meeting of the Black History Month Association
- 1988 - First Black History Month in Nova Scotia
- 1996 - Black History Month renamed to African Heritage Month in Nova Scotia

It is important to note that Nova Scotia and the Black History Month Association set the path for Canada in the recognition of African Heritage Month. Further, the significance of this influence as one of national proportion in the following occurrences compels recognition:

- December, 1995 - The House of Commons officially recognized February as Black History Month following a motion introduced by the first Black Canadian woman elected to Parliament, the Honourable Jean Augustine.
- February, 2008 - Nova Scotia Senator Donald Oliver, Q.C., the first Black man appointed to the Senate, introduced a motion to have the Senate officially declare February as Black History Month. The motion received unanimous approval.
- March, 2008 - The adoption of Senator Oliver’s motion was the final parliamentary procedure needed for Canada’s permanent recognition of Black History Month.

About The African Heritage Month Information Network

The African Heritage Month Information Network is a partnership between African Nova Scotian Affairs, The Black Cultural Society / Centre (Organizational Lead), African Nova Scotian Music Association, African Nova Scotian North-Central Network, African Heritage Month Southwest Network, Africville Heritage Trust, Black Educators Association, Black History Month Association, Cumberland African Nova Scotian Association, and Valley African Nova Scotian Development Association, the Halifax Regional Municipality’s African Nova Scotian Integration Office, and the Guysborough, Antigonish Strait African Regional Network.

For More Information, Contact:

Black Cultural Centre for Nova Scotia
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