

Supporting Youth, Building Communities, A Holistic Approach

Volume 13, Issue 5 April 2018

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Memories of Dr. Howard McCurdy

By Dorothy Wills; Edited by John Harewood & Ashlie Bienvenu

It was in the late sixties that I had the distinct pleasure of meeting Dr. Howard McCurdy for the first time. Shortly thereafter, I also had the pleasure of becoming his "Executive Secretary".

Here is how it happened:

Historically, The Caribbean Students and Black Professors, at Sir George Williams University, held an annual conference during which they discussed various problems in existence in the Caribbean islands. The deliberations took a different tone when absentee Caribbean Nationals sought to find solutions for such problems. However, in truth, and in fact, they had not visited the Caribbean for several years, and right here in Canada, Black People were facing a multiplicity of problems, which the same absentee Caribbean Nationals seemed to ignore. As an outgrowth of the discussions, finally realizing the impossibility of problem solving by remote control, we founded an organization which came to be known as "The Canadian Conference Committee of Black Organizations" (Triple C) with the mission of addressing particularly housing and employment, critical issues for Blacks.

In setting up this new organization, we endeavored to reach out to all existing Black Organizations across Canada. In the process, my husband, who had been a post-graduate student at the University of Windsor, told me about this Outstanding Black Professor in the Department of Biology at the same institution. We invited him to be the keynote speaker at our conference, and within minutes of the delivery of his speech, he became The National Chairperson of 46 Black Organizations across the country which formed our Triple C (The Canadian Conference Committee of Black Organizations.)

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A Word From The President



The Black Communities of Montreal and Kauffman's Complexity Catastrophes

By Dr. Clarence S. Bayne President of BCRC

EVIDENCED BASED DISCOUSES

A RELEASE FROM THE BLACK COMMUNITY RESOURCE CENTER BLACK COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP FORUM AND THE RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS COMMITTEE

This is a condition that occurs when a specie is fragmented in a large number of closed subgroups. R. Kauffman makes the observation that the specie tends to cluster around low levels of life and subsistence.

The Black community in Montreal is a fragmented set of sub-cultures that are, in many ways, closed to each other and isolated in the larger society. This is the result of immigration and country of origin, competitive rivalries based on race and place of birth, a history of Western colonial capitalism and slavery, and the economic and political arrangements and distribution of power in Canada.

The various communities tend to persist in sustaining strong regional loyalties, creating country of origin closed sub-cultures, and becoming further separated by the linguistic wars of British and French settler people's. This congruence of events and attitudes set the stage for their resulting weak representation in the social, political and economic decision making processes of the country and province, the poverty and marginalization of the many and the restricted success of a very few Blacks across the country.

Based on these observations and reviews of a number of case studies and analyses, several English speaking Black organizations in Montreal (The Black Community Forum) came together for the purpose of overcoming Kaufman's "complexity catastro-

phes". The purpose was to reduce duplication and inter-organizational conflict. As a collective, they hoped to strengthen the strategic position of the isolated and ignored English speaking Black communities in this fractured multiculturalism of at least one, but not more than two, official languages. It is interesting to note that this collectivity is based on a collaborative, rather than a formal corporate structure. It is based on the evolving principle of "collaborative unity and existential responsibility." The intent here is to avoid the hierarchical demagoguery of traditional failed national structures, and build trust through corporation and partnerships. Within that system the BCRC is a central agency with a Board of Directors that include a representative from each of the two major key community member organizations, the Black Studies Center and the Quebec Board of Black Educators. This structure and relationship has been in place for over twenty years.

Will the strategy of "collaborative unity and existential responsibility", adopted by the Black Community Forum groups, pay off in terms of increased resources from the Federal and Provincial levels of government? Will it serve to stop the decline of the English speaking Black organizations and communities? This will require co-ordinated strategies at the Provincial and municipal levels.

In general, what seems clear is that any attempt to reverse initiatives in

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If you have any comments or requests please contact Ashlie Bienvenu at editor@bcrcmontreal.com



Black Studies Centre



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the English speaking communities of Quebec, as a whole, to design and create new arrangements that make living with Bill 101 more acceptable, will be disruptive of the social harmony. Increasingly, minorities as a whole are becoming more unwilling to accept the status quo and are demanding that their cultural and spiritual "selfs" be recognized and respected. More specifically, we at BCRC posit the following proposition: It would be crazy to expect Blacks to accept any form of modern slavery. Given that position and our relatively small numbers in the population, bounded rationality suggests that we will have to form alliances with progressive White French and English speaking citizens in a collaborative effort to create a better society.

WALKING THE LORD'S HIGH-WAY

Activism is essential but not enough. Activism that chases every new event is non-productive. Activities not linked to core priorities are short term fillers. Hard grinding-stone vigilance and commitment to patient long term work is needed:

Walking on the Lord's highway requires spiritual and physical endurance. It is not a place for dancing politicians and their aspirants.

We expect the Federal government to protect our rights under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom. We expect that in all planning, policy development, governance and administration, article 27 will be respected. But we should not forget that it was a Liberal Federal government that betrayed us with the "notwithstanding clause". Now it dangles a reconciliatory medal of \$400 million before the eyes of the

Linguistic minorities. It is encouraging that they have targeted Blacks in the budget and met with Black organizations as a collective group in Montreal on March 2, 2018. Hopefully, on an empowerment scale of 0 to 5, this indicates that they are aware of the necessity to address the needs of Blacks as distinct from that of the two mainstream cultural linguistic groups.

A GLIMMER OF HOPE

The BCRC, and its members, are actively engaged working with the QCGN to try to ensure that the recently created Secretariat for English speaking relations in Quebec has a life beyond any single government. We encourage all English speaking Blacks, and their colleagues, to support this initiative. Because it offers a glimmer of possible future participation. But most important, the BCRC, and its member organizations, are demanding organization participation and representation consistent with their arts, culture, education and community development mandates. The BCRC leadership member groups and partners are acting to ensure that the **English speaking Black community** does not sit in the Lazarus chair waiting for the crumbs that fall from those that dine at the table.

It is clear that our social and political situation in Quebec, as Black minorities, no matter what language we speak, is constrained by the quasiconstitutional arrangements between the mainstream English speaking and French speaking Canadians. As a result, in Quebec, the English speaking Blacks are excluded and discriminated against on the basis of both race and language spoken. This makes them unique, as compared to Blacks elsewhere in Canada, where language is less of a discriminant factor. Thus, we insist that the Federal Government, the Provincial Government and the Municipal Government speak directly to us, not through external agencies, be they Black or White. We have, in the past, collaborated with and sought the support of external and international agencies. We will

continue to do so, because it makes practical sense and is consistent with many theoretical and probable perspective visions of future worlds. But our priorities will, and must, be determined within the framework of Ouebec, and the conditions we live in Quebec, and with respect to the history of the struggle of Blacks in Quebec. In that sense, we will decide who our leaders are, not have them picked for us by the Government or others. Our problems cannot be solved by the uncritical use of models applied successfully in the context and histories of America, or Ontario, or Africa, or the Caribbean. We must develop our own experts and social innovators, not import them. Context is important in problem solving; always has been and always will be.

Searching the Landscapes of Montreal and Quebec for Solutions

The landscape in the Black community, like elsewhere, is rugged. There are many distractions. Trying to arrive at collective informed decisions is constantly being disrupted by the "me syndrome" or the fear among the rank and file of exploitation by what E. Franklin Frazier called the "Black bourgeoisie" and what the less generous Frantz Fanon called "the know-all, smart wily (local) intellectual" whose "only wealth is individual thought" and for whom your friendship is his road to greater success.

SAMPLE SURVEYS AND MIS-INFORMATION

We respect the opinion of sample survey experts who tell us that one cannot arrive at the best sense of the truth by polling the opinions of a non-representative set of respondents on a single Sunday in the year. Any informed person who says so, or attempts that, is being deceptive or engaging in misinformation. Hence the reason that polls for elections are taken repeatedly over extended periods of time. To avoid charges of misinformation, and to give generality

...Continued from Page 3

to our discovery, we have tried to arrive at the priories of the community from many different sources and contexts. This is the direct opposite to prominent leaders approving the use of information based on a single badly drawn sample or poorly conducted internet survey that uses the same biased sample of persons to evaluate the process. It is utterly disgusting and insulting to our intelligence. We need to be aware that seventeen and eighteen year old Black youth at Dawson and Vanier in the social sciences have an in depth understanding of sampling, generalization and internal and external validity.

A Quasi Meta Study Survey

While no estimation method is perfect. This approach has more information than a single badly drawn sample. From the late 2016 to March 2018 we have had at least 25 community meetings, workshops, conferences and consultations with the federal, provincial and municipalities of the City of Montreal, the Sud-Ouest Borough, and the Cote des Neiges-NDG Boroughs. In 2017, Seven (7) Key meetings were organized by the Black History Month Round Table (BHRT) with respect to the Montreal 375th Celebration (in protest of the exclusion of Blacks). Two major conferences were held by the Black Community Forum (16 June 20116 and 27 October 2017) involving more than a 100 persons and 15 organizations from the English speaking Black Communities. Four sessions were held between the BCRC Secretariat for the Black Community Forum and the City of Montreal and two meetings with the Sud-Ouest and the NDG CDN Boroughs. There were two economic forums, including the First International Black Economic Forum". There were three consultations with the federal and the provincial governments; four community meetings of the Rights and Freedoms Ad Hoc Community Committee of BCRC; two community consultations by La Lique

des Noirs; and a consultation meeting (May 2017) called by Faculty of Education, University of Montreal, to discuss the findings of research conducted over 10 years on the performance of Blacks and other minorities in the French school system; and a meeting (28 July 2017) of a group of Black community experts in education and development with the Ministry of Education (services d'accueil et d'éducation interculturelle (par intérim)Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur du Québec).

Based on the minutes, reports, survey results, proceedings case studies research, briefings and notes taken at these events the priorities of the Black community have emerged. Copies of these document are stored in the archives of the BSC and the BCRC. They are also accessible from the original source agencies (BHMRT, Black Community Forum, Faculty of Education U of M; Ministry of Education (6000 Fullum). It is interesting to note that these priorities are very similar to priorities developed by the Black Community Forum, Val Morin (July 1992) and revised and reaffirmed by a City of Montreal Black Communities Task Force in 2004 and the Black Community Forums of June 16 2016 and 27 October 2017. Elements of these priorities also correspond to those developed by QCGN studies setting priorities essential for a vital and sustainable English speaking minority communities in Quebec and used by the heritage department for informing their policies for funding (see QCGN Archives).

PRIORITIES OF THE BLACK COMMUNITIES OF MONTREAL

Based on the evidence derived from these sources described above, the following summaries of Black Community priorities are presented. The following are the priorities that the Black Community Forum has adopted and presented to community organi-



zations, and all levels of Government, as priorities that they must respect for Blacks in Montreal. While different leadership groups may assign different ranking to the items in this list, we know of no Black organizations, nor network of organizations in Montreal, that reject these as not being critical and comprehensive.

- 1. Support for the Black Family
- 2. General Health and Mental Health
- 3. Youth, Education, Employment and Employability
- 4. Arts and Culture
- 5. Rights and Freedom: Anti-Racism Strategies
- 6. Economic Development
- 7. Reinforcement of Community Structures
- 8. Mechanisms for reducing isolationism and fragmentation: Black community archive and communication network systems and centers.





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Under Dr. McCurdy's Leadership, the organization thrived. For our first big challenge, we successfully advocated that the law be repealed, in the issue where Nova Scotia refused to bury a Black baby in the cemetery alongside Whites. The event was highlighted on the National news and came to Howard's attention. He called me and said: "We have to do something about this immediately. Send telegrams to all the Black organizations asking them to write to the Premier of Nova Scotia about the situation; tell them to send telegrams; writing will take too long, and tell them what to write in the telegram-tell them this is an urgent matter." Within one week of this campaign, as Executive Secretary, I received a telegram which was read to me by CN/CP telecommunications as follows:

"I have given myself sufficient Provincial authority to repeal this and any such existing legislation from the Statue Books of Nova Scotia.
Signed: G. I. Smith, Premier."

Buoyed with the enthusiasm of our first victory, we learned that the Canadian Council of Churches was meeting in Toronto. Howard invited New Brunswick Vice-president, Joe Drummond, to accompany him to the meeting. Their presentation to the Council of Churches resulted in a three thousand dollar grant to the organization to fight racism in housing and

employment in Canada. The grant was a windfall because we had been operating out of our very own pockets. We even elected a Treasurer!!

At our first annual meeting of the Triple C, a number of groups arrived and sought to split the organization. Without missing a beat, Howard declared the Canadian Conference Committee of Black Organization adjourned, Sine Die and introduced a New organization: The National Black Coalition of Canada. The vast majority of the Black organizations continued with the NBCC and the newly formed organization established roots with Vice Presidents in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba, Alberta and British Columbia. The new National body was incorporated, its aims and objectives set out in the constitution.

Shortly after its incorporation, at 1.00a.m one morning, I received a call from Howard which went like this: "I want you to go to British Columbiathey seem to be having some problems between the Native born Blacks and the West Indian born Blacks, in the BC/NAACP organization. Go there and tell them to get serious—all Black People face the same problems regardless of where we were born".

I went to British Columbia and did as I was told. We resolved the issues.

And soon we had to tackle yet another case. Two Black Civil servants in Ottawa reported some discriminatory practices in their workplace. Howard and his uncle George McCurdy, represented them on behalf of the NBCC and the matter was resolved to the satisfaction of everyone concerned. Howard was that kind of "hands-on", "Mr. Fix it", dedicated to the

improvement of the condition of Black people in Canada.

He served more than one term as the President of the National Black Coalition of Canada.

He was well-respected by everyone within the organization, as well by the larger Canadian Community.

Under his leadership, the organization thrived: receiving government grants for the work it performed, which, among other initiatives, included a monthly Newsletter and the selection of a Canadian delegation for participation in the Second World Black & African Festival of Arts and Culture in Lagos, Nigeria. (FESTAC 1977).

His passing leaves a void on the Canadian Landscape. His academic brilliance, his vivacious personality, his commitment to excellence in all that he did, his demands of excellence from others whom he thought capable, and his quest for equality of opportunity for his people will never be forgotten.

Well done, thou good and faithful servant. May eternal rest be granted unto you, now that your work on earth is completed.



https://windsorstar.com/news/localnews/renowned-windsor--

il-rights-activist-and-former-mp-howard-mccurdy-h as-died



Community Events and Information









PARTICIPANTS NEEDED FOR NEW INTER-GENERATIONAL PROJECT BCRC is looking for youth participants between the ages 10-25 years and seniors 60 years and older to participate in a new and exciting inter-generational project. If you are interested in participating please inquire here: 6767, Cote-des-Neiges, Suite 497, H3S 2T6

Telephone: 514-342-2247

WORKSHOPS INCLUDE

YOUTH& SENIOR

E mail:info@ bcrcmontreal.com <a>BCRC

CULTURAL COOKING &CRAFTS

- Cooking Workshops
- Craft Workshops

TECHNOLOGICAL AWARENESS

- Computer Literacy
 - S ocial Media

STORYTELLING

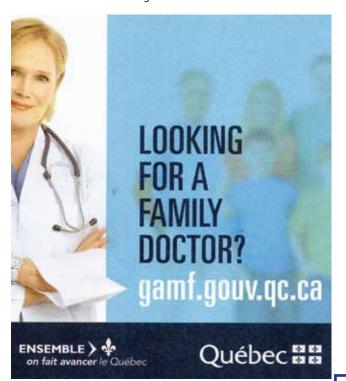
- Family History Talks
 - S torytelling



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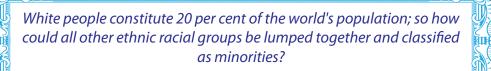


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JUSTICE

It's Time to Stop Calling Diverse Groups of People "Minorities"

By Yvonne Sam (Chairman of Rights and Freedoms Committee at BCRC)



The Canadian government uses the term "visible minority" as a classification for groups of people. The government defines this term as "persons, other than aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour."

This classification has lured controversy both nationally and abroad. In 2007, the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination openly voiced their concerns to the Canadian government regarding the use of the term. They argue that it is in violation of the goals and objectives of the International Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination, which came into effect in 1969. The Committee recommended an evaluation of this classification.

Obliged to respond, the government had academics research the term's history, nationally and internationally, held an open workshop to gather more input, and canvassed provincial and territorial governments on their use of the term in Canada.

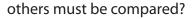
In 2011, a Government of Canada report, put forward to the Committee, said there were no plans of

changing the standard usage of the term.

Why do we allow ourselves to be called minorities? Minority means less than 50 per cent. White people constitute about 20 per cent of the world's population; so how could all of the other ethnic racial groups be lumped together and classified as minorities? Doing so leads people of colour to fall into an amorphous blob of otherness, no longer existing as people and communities.

Some may say that the Canadian government only uses the term to refer to Canada's population, where white people do make up a majority. The full and proper term is "member of a minority group," but is usually shortened to "minority." It's very rarely expanded to "member of a minority group in Quebec or Canada," which would be a more satisfying inclusion.

Another equally troubling and co-existing term is "non-White."
One wonders why this term is always used, while "non-Black" is never even uttered. Is it due to the fact that White is somehow seen as the standard, when, in fact, there is no standard group to which all



Imagine, for a brief moment, what goes through the minds of our young children. They enter school ready and eager to learn, to soak up everything and anything that is presented to them. Over time they are led to believe that they're "a member of a disadvantaged, non-white minority group," which will engender diminished self-worth.

I hope to see the word phased out in favour of a more peoplecentered approach, especially during the International Decade for People of African Descent.

Originally published in Huffington Post (February 5, 2018): https://www.huffingtonpost.ca/yvonnesam/people-colour-minority-white_a_23416712/





Test Your Knowledge With This Historical WordFind Puzzle!!

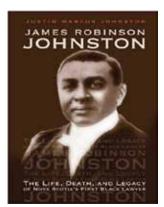
WordFind Words

- Visible Minority
- Multiculturalism
- Caribbean Nationals
- Howard McCurdy
- Triple C
- ❖ NBCC





Cozy Up with This Book!!!



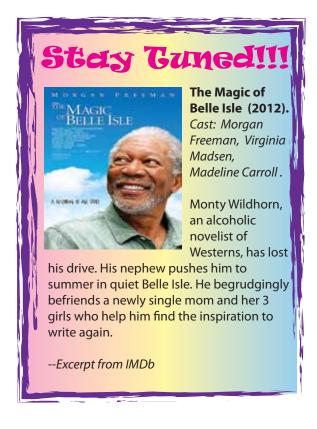
TJames Robinson Johnston: The Life, Death and Legacy of Nova Scotia's Black Lawyer, By Justin Marcus Johnston.

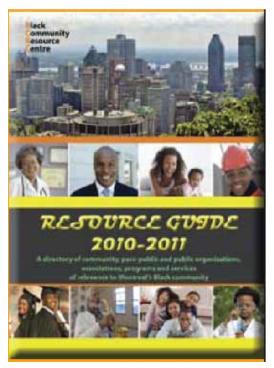
At the pinnacle of his career, Johnston was one of the best lawyers the province had ever seen. Unfortunately the circumstances of Johnston's death have overshadowed the significance of his life, causing this great man to be largely forgotten. This story reclaims Johnston, while examining the historical factors and racial climates that influenced this extraordinary man's life.

Justin Johnston weaves family lore with history, and includes rare photographs of "the lawyer," his family and friends, as well as personal correspondence and private papers from the family vaults.

--Excerpt from amazon.ca

This book can be found at the Atwater Library's Black Collection.





Our Resource Guide highlights a variety of non-profit, public and para-public organizations serving the English-speaking Black community

The Black Community Resource Centre (BCRC) is an organization that strengthens community capacity by providing professional support to organizations and individuals in need.

Our team is committed to assisting visible-minority youth rekindle their dreams and achieve their full potential.

Our Funders:

- ♦ Patrimoine canadien /Canadian Heritage, Official Languages
 - ♦ Agence de la santé et des services sociaux de Montréal
 - ♦ Black Studies Centre (BSC)



