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Note from the editor: The BCRC has always been dedicated to social justice. However, these past few months we have been working tirelessly to gain accountability from the governments of Quebec and Canada. This issue reflects our efforts in our quest for justice.

P.S.: If anyone wishes to submit opinion pieces on how we might better represent the community in the fight for social justice please send your submissions to editor@bcrcmontreal.com.

Armed with the Facts—Premier Couillard is called upon to act. Examination and Ref-ormation of the Quebec Human Rights and Youth Rights Commission requested

By Yvonne Sam;
Chairman (Rights and Freedoms Committee) Black Community Resource Centre

As the issue on race relations persists in this country, especially the province of Quebec, the Quebec Human Rights and Youth Rights Commission has, by their actions, been brought into the fray, and is now the focus of glaring racial attention. From its initial inception, the Commission was specifically mandated to ensure that Québec's laws, by-laws, standards and institutional practices, both public and private, comply with the Charter, which prohibits discrimination based on race, colour, ethnic or national origin and religion, in the exercise of human rights and freedoms. Sadly, however, the current structure of the Commission has failed to live up to this mandate, specifically, but not restricted to, senior



managers, legal affairs and employment equity where, currently, there is no racial or linguistic diversity. There is also an unprecedented absence of Black English-speaking lawyers and investigators, since the Commission bade farewell to the last Black English-speaking lawyer, Mme. Esmeralda

Thornhill, over two decades ago. Included in the population of Quebec are the visible minority citizens who number about 850,000, of which over 1, 000,000 are English-speaking. While the Human Rights Commission benefits all citizens, one cannot lightly dismiss the fact that the citizens most likely to require the services under the mandate of the Human Rights and Youth Rights Commission are the minority populations. In order for the Commission to be seen as being true and fair to its mission and mandate, there must be people in the Commission who are, themselves, representatives of

managers, legal affairs and employment equity where, currently, there is no racial or linguistic diversity. There is also an unprecedented absence of Black English-speaking lawyers and investigators, since the Commission bade farewell to the last Black English-speaking lawyer, Mme. Esmeralda

A Word From The President



BCRC STATEMENT OF POSITION ON THE BILL TO AMEND THE BILL AMENDING THE EDUCATION ACT

By Dr. Clarence Bayne

We are quick to accuse and vilify other countries and areas for denying their citizens their basic rights; however, it never seems to register that we are living those same injustices here, right in our backyard. The Quebec Government restricts our choices of educational institutions and dictates the language that we do business in, even though, according to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, we live in a bilingual multicultural National entity. They also dictate how we present, or express, ourselves in terms of the literary symbols we use to brand ourselves in the business sectors, limit our employment in the public sector on the basis of mother tongue spoken in the home, limit the strength and vitality of English Educational (Elementary and High Schools) institutions by denying all immigrants choice of schools, and they have created an institution of language police to enforce the signage rules. I am having real problems seeing the difference between what Quebec and Canada are doing, under the guise of preserving the French culture in Canada, and what these other "oppressive countries" are doing in order to preserve what they see as their own culture and ideas.

The Argument

Thus, based on these considerations we argue that, under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Quebec language rights and culture are more secure throughout Canada than English language rights are in Quebec. Any threat to the French language now, is more imagined than real. Thus, the BCRC, and the Black Forum, urge the Government to respect the Constitutional Rights of the English-speaking peoples of Quebec. We urge the Government

This was presented to the Quebec Community Groups Network (QCGN) and submitted to the Montreal Hearings on Bill 105.

Background and Analysis

Language has become a very controversial topic in Quebec and Canada. In fact, the backlash of this controversy has directly impacted the Black English-speaking community, especially in Quebec. It forces us to pose the question, has Canada fooled itself in thinking that it could become a harmonious nation based on all God's children, regardless of diversities? Quite simply, the English-speaking peoples of Quebec do not have the same rights as the French-speaking peoples of Quebec; nor do their institutions enjoy the same support as the French-speaking peoples living elsewhere in Canada. In a sense, it can be argued that the English-speaking peoples of Quebec were betrayed by their earlier leaders and abandoned to the fears of the French nationalism of Quebec. It all started with Pierre Elliott Trudeau's not-withstanding clause, which the Premier of Quebec, Robert Bourassa, took full advantage of, in his quest for French nationalism. The language police sprang directly from this fear of the demise of the French language. However, in recent times they have become quite immature, and, perhaps, have reached the end of their usefulness to the changing Quebec landscape. Bill 86, for Blacks, no matter which boat our ancestors first stepped off of, is nasty business. And the fact that it is happening from within the camp of the liberals, who are supporters of Federalism, indicates the underlying misconceptions with which both sides are trying to build a harmonious diverse society.

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Semaji

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How do I submit articles to be submitted to our quarterly Semaji newsletter? Articles for submission are accepted 30 days prior to publication. Issues are published September, December, March and June. Email editor@bcrcmontreal.com. If you are submitting photos please send a jpeg with credit.

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





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to use other ways of preserving and promoting the French language and Culture, without displaying the disregard that Bill 86 shows for those procedures and administrative arrangements essential to sustaining, in spirit and practice, the principles of a true democracy.

There is a tendency in both French-speaking Quebec and English Canada to confuse "equal" with "equality" when it comes to dealing with minorities. As Blacks, we are very aware of this problem, and suffer the consequences of those practices in the poor distribution of resources for sustaining the vitality of minority groups, whether it be in Quebec or elsewhere in Canada. We therefore fully agree with CQGN, when it says: "applying the same rules to everyone ensures that great sections of society will be disadvantaged. The principle of substantive equality is well founded in law, and has been proven time and again the best policy approach for achieving societal objectives. One size does not fit all."

It may very well be that there are too

many school Boards in the French sector. And that there are cost efficiencies to be gained in reducing the number of Boards. But, while that policy might be essential to a general strategy for improving the management of educational resources in the Province as a whole, it does not logically, or in any social and politically optimal sense, require that the Government reduce school Boards in the English minority sector by the same proportions. Furthermore, we agree with CQGN when it says: "Schools are not simply places where children are instructed. They are the cornerstone of communities, and their management and control is there best effected. Centralizing the power to manage and control these institutions—separating them from their communities—reduces, and will eventually remove schools as community institutions. What region in Quebec is prepared to lose its English schools and communities?"

Therefore, we take this opportunity to strongly recommend that electoral rights of parents and the community, with respect to electing officers of school Boards, be retained as a fundamental democratic principle. But, we recommend that school Boards be required to reflect the communities they serve. Thus, we strongly recommend that school

Boards be required to appoint Multicultural Multiracial Advisory Committees, similar to the system that was used by the English Montreal School Board, and which gave representation to the diverse populations in the school system under CODE: CS-13. [http://www.emsb.qc.ca/en/governance_en/pdf/BoardPolicies/CommunityServices/MCMREducation.pdf]

The EMSB terminated the function of the Advisory committee that worked with the Board in the implementation and over view of this policy. They did this in a rather undemocratic way and without consultation; because they had discretionary power to do so. We strongly suggest that this system be re-instated, and that the policy become part of the new act requiring that School Boards implement this policy. We applaud the Ministry decision to create seats for what it described as co-opted commissioners from the sport and health sectors. We urge the Ministry to expand this to include other organizations in the voluntary community sector and the racialized minority communities that are most at risk of exclusion and racial discrimination.

Dr. Clarence Bayne
The BCRC Black Community Forum
Secretariat.

Federal and Provincial Government detachment from the English-Speaking Black Community of Montreal: a legacy of Slavery, Colonialism and Old Settlers Wars

By Dr. Clarence Bayne

In the mid-nineties, a three year grant from the Federal Government of Canada made it possible for the BCRC to hire an Executive Director and program staff, who were dedicated to the support of organizations in the Black community, and to the co-ordination of the flow of resources from mainstream society to meet the development needs of individuals and organizations in the Black

English-speaking community. The late Honorable Senator Sheila Finestone, one of Montreal's great defenders and protectors of minority rights, was the voice for the project in the Liberal Caucus. The organization received its Charter in 1995. A central rationale for its being was to complement, rather than duplicate, services that were provided by member organiza-

tions and community based organizations working in the English-speaking Black community. It was the community's response to a concern and recommendation of the Val Morin 1992 Black Community Forum: "Avoid duplication: Instead of reinventing the wheel by having two similar programmes in place at the same time, we must have one programme that functions to its fullest capacity."

Thus, regular co-ordination sessions (Forums) were held to discuss economic development, employment, health, parenting, organizational management literacy and fundraising. The Executive Director of BCRC represented the community in many public and private sector forums and government briefings and information sessions.

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visible minorities and/or the English-speaking population. A clear understanding of the minority populations inhabiting Quebec must be foremost in the minds of those responsible for the nominations.

The Premier of Quebec, Hon. Philippe Couillard, as the holder of ultimate power, is called upon to act in a manner that is reflective of, not only his sterling governance, but also his government's commitment to diversion and inclusivity, by examining and reforming the Commission. This is of critical importance, especially in light of the four, currently existing, vacancies that are soon to be filled at the Commission's level. At risk is the public's image of the Commission, as well as the underlying veracity of rendered decisions.

Decisions affecting minorities and communities of color will always be a

litmus test of race relations with the Commission. For race relations to improve, the Quebec Human Rights and Youth Rights Commission need to have the moral courage to acknowledge systemic racism, speak truth to power and most importantly show by their composition that they are fulfilling their mandate in fighting racial discrimination and injustice. Blacks and other people of colour should not, through the displayed composition of the investigative parties, be left with no other alternative but to conclude that the Human Rights and Youth Rights Commission are pursuing their own agenda.

The current situation cannot, and must not, be allowed to go unchecked or unaddressed, as it blatantly constitutes a precondition for all to understand the material realities of racism that daily scars the lifescapes and landscapes of

Blacks in Quebec. To those directly empowered at the appointees/nomination level, serious attention and consideration is required to the factors already stated, in addition to tangible actions that translate into policies designed to make and maintain a difference in the human rights, freedom and liberties of the population regardless of color, language, race or creed.

In addition, let this fact not be overlooked, that as long as racialized minorities fear and mistrust the Human Rights and Youth Rights Commission, then democracy has failed to live up to its ideals.

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However; Government support waned as this type of funding began to dry up with the changes in Governments, and shifts in policies and priorities towards a Harper Conservatism, and towards French linguistic conformity and cultural nationalism in Quebec. This is a matter of much concern to the BCRC and its community of partners and collaborators. Under the Conservative Government, and in the face of increasing public demands for accountability and a shrinking funding base, Government policies began to

emphasize project financing rather than the core funding of organizations. This shift in the funding formula has had a significant impact on the Black Community Resource Center's (BCRC) operations, and its capacity to participate more fully in the democratic process and the society of Quebec. In particular, it has placed limits on the organization's operations and reduced its capacity to sustain its assistance to Black community organizations and Black community development and vitality. A recent survey, by the Institute for Community Entrepreneurship and Development (ICED), JMSB, Concordia University

(2014), on the critical needs of Black organizations reveal that key Black organizations operating in the English-speaking Black communities are under-resourced and under-funded. To address these problems, as a community, the BCRC Black Community Leadership Forum called key organizations in the community to a Forum. Validation for this meeting was based on the recommendations, principles and protocols for meetings of its type established and approved at the first Black Community Forum held at Val Morin July 3-5 1992.

permanent Black Community Forum, had been approved and the BCRC made the official Secretariat of the Black Community Forum. It is in that capacity that we address you.

It is our observation that the vitality of the White English- and French-speaking minority communities are better supported by all levels of Government in Quebec. There can be no question that the Federal Government is very determined that

On June 16, 2016, the Black Community Forum, a

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the vitality of the White English-speaking populations in Quebec is sustained. Indeed, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms make multiculturalism a central pillar of Canadian Nationhood. However the quasi-constitutional arrangements through which it is executed maintains the bilingual two nations view of Canada as a basis for the guaranteeing of those rights and freedoms. In effect, the outcomes for Black communities are reminiscent of the place of Blacks as defined in the Articles of Capitulation relating to the handover of Montreal to the English in 1760: the French were allowed to keep their chattel and their slaves. Emancipation in the British Empire in 1833 freed us only to be ignored (Robin Winks, *The Black in Canada*, Chapter 10) and victimized by the Canadian and Quebec institution of the "Colour Line" (The History of Blacks in Canada, James W. St. G, Walker Waterloo University, Minister of Multiculturalism, pp 7, 75-96). Today we continue to be written out of the History of Quebec (The Yolande James, *Black Task Force*, 2006). In fact, in 2016, an application submitted by the Black History Month Table to the City of Montreal for funding to participate in the Montreal 375th Anniversary was rejected by the City.

As a bare minimum, multiculturalism in a parliamentary democracy requires that all cultural/ethnic groups must have or be afforded the capacity to be informed and to inform the Government; and to participate fully in the social, political and economic processes of the society: this requires that there is in place a system of laws, democratic institutions and practices, an appropriate fair and equitable distribution of social and economic capital among all its citizens. In Canada this is recognized, but honoured more in the breach than in the observance/practice with respect to Blacks and other visible minorities. All political parties and leaders at all levels of Government in Canada have paid lip service to this and the need to facilitate the integration of visible minorities into Canadian society. Examples are the Parliamentary Special Committee on the "Participation of Visible Minorities into Canadian Society"; The Equality Now

Report, March 1984"; and in Quebec, the Yolande James "Task Force Report on the Full Participation of Black Communities in Quebec Society"; and in the general case, the official languages Act (OFA) with its Enabling Fund. However, none of the Governments have put in place specific mechanisms that are committed on a long term basis to the creation and sustaining of institutional assets and capacity (full time staff, equipment, facilities and core funding) in the Black communities to enable and support sustained full participation in the social, political and economic processes of Canadian society. This is particularly the case in Quebec with respect to the English-speaking Black communities where we have seen the rapid decay of their local institutions over the last thirty years with no effective response from Governments to their request for help. On the other hand, we note the major enactment of policy and legislation to mitigate the threat posed by Bill 101 and the Quebec Charter to the White English minorities and their institutions in Quebec. Special arrangements have been put in place to protect the rights and institutions of the two "founding peoples" of Canada. However, we have not been given the same consideration.

In Quebec and Montreal, we draw your attention to the nature of the contribution agreements providing long term core and infra-structure funding to QUAHN, QUESCERN, CQGN, CEDEC. On the other hand, in the English-speaking Black communities there is almost an absence of the Federal Government. We are treated as enclaves of the White English speaking minority with second level priorities. Except in those cases where Black Youth are considered at risk of evolving into criminals and posing a threat to the peace and harmony of the white communities, we must compete with mainstream institutions for grants aimed at meeting the priorities of the White English speaking minorities of Quebec. A tragic consequence of this indifference is the demolition of the Negro Community Center of Montreal (CBCnews posted Nov 20 2014 <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/montreal-s-negro--community-centre-demolished-1.2844166>). A special plan could not be developed to save the ninety year old building of the Negro Community Center of Montreal; because, according to mainstream protocols and practices regarding Government capital funding, it was required to raise \$4.5 million in matching funds as a condition of receiving Federal, Provincial and Municipal funding. It was not able to do so, and was sold for taxes and torn down in November 2014; and thus a part of Black and Canadian history and heritage was lost.

It is our opinion that the Federal Government and the Provincial Government pursue a policy of biculturalism, with linguistic singularity as a

component, when dealing with the Black Community in Quebec. This differs from multiculturalism, with two official languages, as practiced elsewhere in the Nation. What it means is that French Quebec is allowed to act to limit our rights and freedoms if they feel that the French culture and language is threatened. The charter of values is an extreme example of that. The OLA 1988 set the physical boundaries within which this is practiced. In addition, the changes and differences in demographics across the Province with respect to minority population ratios are associated with this accommodation of social inequalities and linguistic, racial and religious profiling and discrimination. Adding to this undesirable complexity, is the fact that funding policies of the municipalities differ from municipality to municipality and do not seem to be based on a systematic set of community development strategies and policies that address the particular needs of disadvantaged racialized ethnic minority groups, such as the Blacks in Montreal. So, we pose the question, "In practice, beyond the posturing and the window dressings of the Commissions, the special parliamentary committees, the Federal, Provincial and City task forces, the Police Chief's admission of racial profiling in the police establishment (CBC NEWS: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/freddie-james-s--racial-profiling-complaint-is-part-of-larger-issue-inside-montreal-police-force-1.2956262>), the toothless Quebec human rights commission (<http://www.crarr.org/>, CRARR Media Advisory. CRARR Release Finding of Systemic Racism Problems at BCRC Black Forum June 16 2016). is justice seen to be done for Blacks; do Black lives really matter to your strategic planners, policy makers, administrators and implementers of the laws, and protectors of rights and freedoms?" We do not think so. Nor does CRARR, La Ligue des Noirs, nor those seeking a redress to systemic racism in Quebec and Canada at the World Social Forum held in Montreal in August 2016 (<http://www.ledevoir.com/societe/actualites-en-societe/477601/racisme-un-sommet-noir-contre-le-deni-collectif>).

"It is recommended that the Government of Canada, and the Provincial Government of Quebec, provide sustaining funds for Black organizations with a long-term mandate serving the community and Canadians. It is also recommended that, in particular, Heritage Canada, Immigration and Cultural Communities, Library and Archives Canada, and other ministries and departments provide long-term, recurring funding to mandated Black community based organizations. In addition, it is recommended that they assist in strengthening Black community-based organizations, and facilitate in the creation and transfer of knowledge, by providing core

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funding to ensure the implementation and maintenance of professional communication network centers and a digitized archival system.”

It is our view that all levels of Government should respect these priorities as important to the Black communities in Montreal and Quebec; and, in particular, recognize and address the additional disadvantages suffered by the English-speaking Black communities in Quebec, due to the biases that Bill 101, the Quebec Charter of the French language (charte de la langue française), and the administrative arrangements of the Official Language Act of Canada introduce to the allocations of services and resources to French-versus English-speaking, versus First Nation peoples in the province. It is incumbent on the Prime Minister's Office as well as the offices of the Minister of Justice, the Minister of social development, and the Minister of Heritage to review and revise the protocols and procedures for implementation and administration of policies where they exist and consider new policies where none exist in order to address the concerns summarized above. It is also essential that the Government of Quebec act more vigorously to reduce systemic racism practiced against Blacks in Quebec; and particularly against English-speaking Blacks under the guise of pursuing Quebec's linguistic and cultural destiny. It is

imperative that the office of the Premier of Quebec, and the appropriate Ministries, act to remove elements of systemic biases in the Quebec Charter of Rights; and that they revisit the recommendations of the Yolande James Task Force to ensure they are effectively serving the purposes that they were intended to serve. In our view, they are not, because of the presence of racialism, systemic racism and hemophilic behaviours in the administrative units responsible for the implementation of those policies. The failure of successive Quebec Governments, and parties, to significantly increase the number of visible minorities in the Government, especially Blacks, is evidence of the continued existence of this bias (the Colour Line) in the civil service. It is our considered opinion that the non-or-under-representation of Blacks and other minorities in the key decision making institutions and processes of Quebec society is largely responsible for the persistence of systemic racism and discrimination in Quebec society. Quebec must end its isolation and deliberate neglect of the Black English-speaking communities for what seems to be no other reason than that their members are Black and that they inherited the language of English from a history of slavery and colonialization by the British, as opposed to the French.



We look forward to discussing these matters in more detail in the hope of working with our Government to find solution to these problems.

Respectfully
Dr. Clarence S. Bayne
Professor Emeritus Concordia
Chair of the Secretariat of the
Black Community Forum
Black Community Resource
center.

Standing on Their Shoulders Leaves a Lasting Impression

By Ashlie Bienvenu

On Thursday, September 28th, the BCRC was asked to present the Standing on Their Shoulders videos (a past BCRC community project), to students at



McGill, for community involvement day. The videos were very well received by the McGill students who signed up for the viewing. There was a discussion period, which followed the videos, in which students got to interact with two youth who were involved in creating the videos. We were also joined by a reporter from CBC.

The fact that Standing on Their Shoulders is still an important

and talked about project, almost a year after its completion, shows how impactful this project was on the community. We are very proud of the hard work that our youth put into these videos and how they have positively impacted the community. Great work, Standing on Their Shoulders Team!



Crossword Answers from Last Issue

Across

1. Val Morin Forum
3. Harriet Tubman
4. Racial Discrimination Act
5. Leonard Braithwaite
6. Viola Desmond
7. Sir George Williams Affair

Down

2. Reverend Washington



Test Your Knowledge With This Historical Crossword Puzzle!!

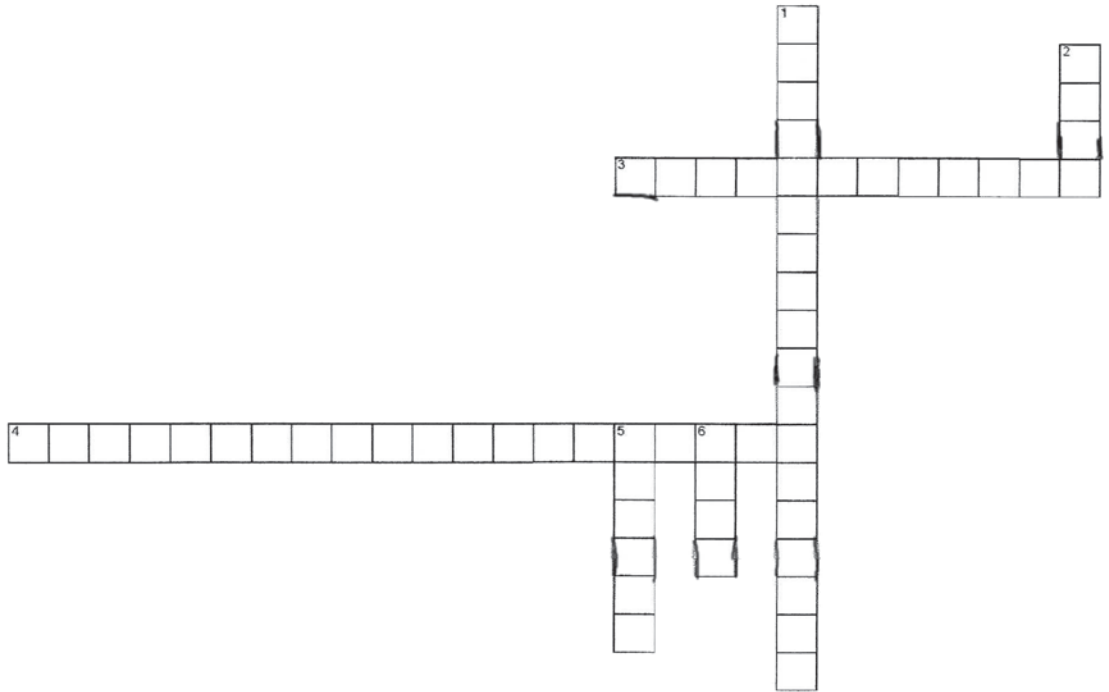
Black-Montreal History

Across

- 3. Who was UNIA (Universal Negro Improvement Association) founded by? (Two Words)
- 4. Which community centre was founded 1927? (Three Words)

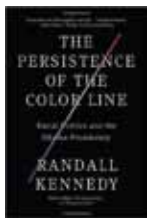
Down

- 1. Which club for the Montreal Black community was founded in 1902? (Three Words)
- 2. In which month does the annual Carib Carnival take place? (One Word)
- 5. Which Universal Exposition featured m Caribbean pavilions in 1967? (One Word)
- 6. Which industry protested racism on th in the early 80's? (One Word)



*Information was taken from the project "Histoire et culture de la diaspora caribéenne Québec: préparation d'outils éducatifs pour intervenants jeunesse communautaires."

Fall Re



The Persistence of the Color Line: Racial Politics and the Obama Presidency, By Randall Kennedy.

Kennedy tackles such hot-button issues as the nature of racial opposition to Obama; whether Obama has a singular responsibility to African Americans; the differences in Obama's presentation of himself to blacks and to whites; the challenges posed by the dream of a post-racial society; the increasing irrelevance of a

certain kind of racial politics and its consequences; the complex symbolism of Obama's achievement and his own obfuscations and evasions regarding racial justice.

--Excerpt from amazon.com



The Color of Water: A Black Man's Tribute to his White Mother, By James McBride.

Who is Ruth McBride Jordan? A self-declared "light-skinned" woman evasive about her ethnicity, yet steadfast in her love for her twelve black children. James McBride, journalist, musician, and son, explores his mother's past, as well as his own upbringing and

heritage, in a poignant and powerful debut, The Color Of Water: A Black Man's Tribute to His White Mother.

--Excerpt from amazon.ca

Stay Tuned!!!

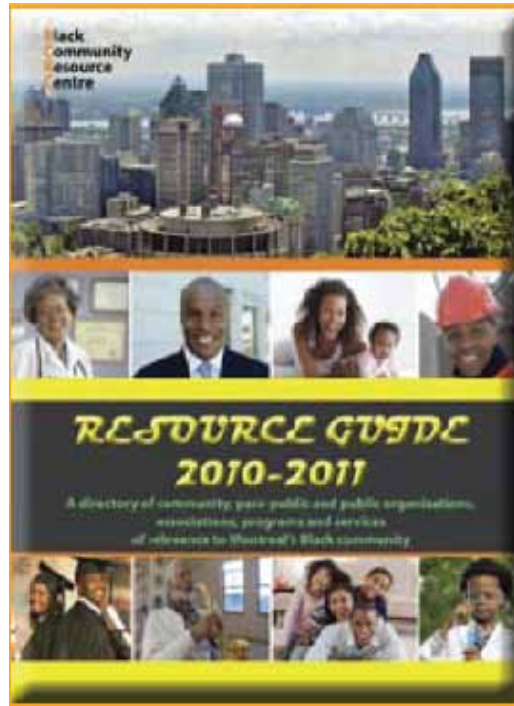


Queen of Katwe (2016).
Cast: Madina Nalwanga, David Oyelowo, Lupita Nyong'o.

A Ugandan girl sees her world rapidly change after being introduced to the game of chess.

--Excerpt from IMDb

These books 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

Québec 

Canada 