

Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration

McGuinty Government Marks Bicentenary Of The Abolition Of The Slave Trade

Minister Of Citizenship And Immigration Name Members Of Bicentenary Committee

QUEEN'S PARK, March 21 /CNW/ - The McGuinty government has named fifteen individuals to a special committee that will advise on province-wide projects to commemorate the bicentenary of the abolition of the slave trade, a little-known and tragic period of Ontario's history, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration Mike Colle announced today.

"The bicentenary of the abolition of the slave trade is an opportunity for Ontarians to gain a better understanding of this shameful part of Ontario's history," said Colle. "This committee will provide leadership in a province-wide effort to educate and remember this ugly part of Canadian history."

The Ontario Bicentenary Commemorative Committee on the Abolition of the Slave Trade will advise the government and work with organizations and communities across the province on activities that commemorate the Act that was passed by the British Parliament on March 25, 1807. Committee members represent academia, historical societies, archivists, the arts, and the African-Canadian community from across the province.

Members of the committee include:

- Dr. Jean Augustine, Chair, Toronto
- Ned Blair, Toronto
- Dr. Hazel Campayne, Toronto
- Debbie Douglas, Toronto
- Lesa Francis, Durham region
- Karolyn Smardz Frost, Collingwood
- Janice Gairey, Toronto
- June Girvan, Ottawa
- Kemi Jacobs, Toronto
- Francis Jeffers, Toronto
- U-sheak Koroma, Toronto
- Dr. Oluremi Ogundimu, Sudbury
- Bryan Prince, Buxton
- Rosemary Sadlier, Toronto
- Carolynn Wilson, Collingwood

The government is investing up to \$1 million in community-based commemorative projects to remember, educate and commemorate the history of slavery and its abolition in Ontario.

The bicentenary of the legislation that banned British ships from trafficking and transporting African slaves will also be recognized in the Ontario legislature today with a resolution unanimously supported by all three parties.

Canada's early settlers brought African slaves to Upper Canada and

slavery expanded rapidly after 1783, as British Loyalists brought their slaves with them. In 1793, under Lt.-Gov. John Graves Simcoe, Upper Canada, which is now Southern Ontario, became the first jurisdiction in the British Empire to limit slavery.

The Abolition of the Slave Trade Act was passed by the British Parliament in 1807. It outlawed the slave trade throughout the British Empire and made it illegal for British ships to be involved in the trade and transportation of slaves.

"The Abolition of the Slave Trade Act is part of our identity as a province and as individuals," said Colle.

For information about funding for community projects, please contact Dr. Afua Cooper, Project Coordinator at (416) 327-8012 or afua.cooper@ontario.ca.

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ONTARIO BICENTENARY COMMEMORATIVE COMMITTEE
ON THE ABOLITION OF THE SLAVE TRADE

The Ontario government's new Ontario Bicentenary Commemorative Committee on the Abolition of the Slave Trade will work with organizations and communities across the province to support activities that commemorate the 200th anniversary of the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act.

Committee members are leaders in their field and are knowledgeable about African-Canadian history in Ontario. They represent academia, historical societies, archivists, the arts and the African-Canadian community across the province.

- Dr. Jean Augustine, chair of the committee, the first African-Canadian woman to be elected to the Parliament of Canada and former federal Minister for Multiculturalism and the Status of Women in Canada
- Ned Blair, president of the Organization of Black Tradesmen and Tradeswoman of Ontario, instrumental in giving black youth opportunities to get apprentice training
- Dr. Hazel Campayne, educator and consultant, active in African-Canadian and faith-based communities and community organizations in Ontario
- Debbie Douglas, founding member of the Black Women's Collective, an advocate for black and other marginalized students within the education system, and advocate of race relations and social justice issues to improve the lives of women and girls and immigrants in Ontario
- Lesa Francis, co-director of the African-Canadian Children's Literacy Circle encouraging children to celebrate their culture through reading, creative writing, poetry and spoken word
- Karolyn Smardz Frost, historian, archaeologist, and author of a book about fugitive slaves, Thornton and Lucy Blackburn's, escape to Canada through the Underground Railroad
- Janice Gairey, president of the Ontario Chapter of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, and advocate of human rights and social

- justice issues
- June Girvan of Black History Ottawa and Volunteer-in-Chief of Ottawa's J'Nikira Dinqinesh Education Centre's 'history-in-the-street' celebration of pioneers of our 'North Star Legacy'
 - Kemi Jacobs, leader in the immigrant and refugee serving sector, past president of the Canadian Council for Refugees
 - Francis Jeffers, founder of the International African Inventors Museum exhibiting inventions of Africans worldwide and founder of the Visions of Science symposium showcasing presentations by international black scientists
 - U-sheak Koroma, co-host of "Sounds of Africa" radio program and president of Concerned Citizens and Friends of Sierra Leone (Canada)
 - Dr. Oluremi Ogundimu, paediatrician, active member of the African-Canadian community and president of the Afro-Heritage Association of Sudbury
 - Bryan Prince, author and historian from the Buxton National Historic Site, and actively involved in many initiatives on black history and the Underground Railroad in Canada, the U.S. and Great Britain
 - Rosemary Sadlier, president of the Ontario Black History Society, instrumental in making the celebration of Black History Month a national event in Canada
 - Carolyn Wilson, curator of the Sheffield Park Black Cultural Museum which displays the history of black pioneers in Collingwood and surrounding region.

Dr. Afua Cooper, published author and historian in African-Canadian issues, will support the Ontario Bicentenary initiative as Project Coordinator.

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