



Black Business and Professional Association
Entreprise noire et Association Professionnelle

Creating Opportunities • Celebrating Excellence • Investing In The Future

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July 2, 2021

Executive Committee Secretary
Catherine Regan,
12th Floor, West, City Hall
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, On M5H 2N2
Email: exc@toronto.ca

Re: EX25.1 – Recognition Review Project Update and Response to the Dundas Street Renaming Petition

Dear Mayor Tory,

The Black Business and Professional Association (BBPA) strongly supports the decision to find a new name for Dundas Street and Dundas Square that is more appropriate for today's climate of anti-racism and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. It is offensive to the Black community that a major civic asset in our great city remains named after someone who for years delayed the abolition of slavery in the British Empire. Renaming Dundas St. is part and parcel of a similar effort to change the name of Ryerson University, which is in fact located on Dundas. As you have noted, Viscount Henry Dundas "had virtually no connection to Toronto" but was instrumental in the perpetuation of slavery and racism. This cannot stand.

As Dr. Martin Luther King so notably said, "The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice." This is an example of justice bending toward Black people, just as Ryerson's renaming is a form of justice for the Indigenous community. Justice means that the errors of the past are admitted and then the historical record is corrected.

It is time Mayor Tory to review other street names that might also be perpetuating the memory of other racists in Canadian history. As Professor Melanie Newton, the University of Toronto historian, commented recently, "This is the process of us coming to a richer and better relationship with our past." The Black community would like to see these changes implemented soon and deliberately and on behalf of the BBPA, we support this change, as it is in everyone's interest. We were pleased that you have said we are "recognizing a larger history that we must not ignore." Thank you for your efforts to eliminate anti Black racism in this city.

Sincerely,

Nadine Spencer
President
Black Business and Professional Association