

Why Black History Month in Canada?

Black History Month is a national moment to recognize and celebrate the contributions of Black Canadians - past and present. Key milestones.

- **1979:** Toronto issued Canada's first municipal proclamation of Black History Month (through community advocacy).
- **1995:** The House of Commons recognized February as Black History Month (motion introduced by the Honourable Jean Augustine).
- **2008:** The Senate adopted a motion to recognize Black Canadians' contributions and February as Black History Month.

Black history is Canadian history - including in public service, labour, and transit.

Connect with us

ATU | Local 113 | Black Caucus

We amplify Black voices in transit, build community, and advocate for equity in our workplace.

Get involved

- Join a meeting or volunteer at an event
- Share a story or nominate a colleague
- Support wellness, mentorship, and equity initiatives

References: Government of Canada (Canadian Heritage) - About Black History Month; House of Commons Hansard (Dec 14, 1995); Senate Debates (Mar 4, 2008); ATU Canada - Equity and Inclusion Committee (bylaw, 2019); ATU Canada - Local Unions; ATU International - Black Caucus; WeMoveToronto.ca - ATU Local 113 President letter for Black History Month (Feb 1, 2023).



BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Canada - February

Honouring Black Excellence in Transit

Celebrating Black communities and the Black transit workers who keep Toronto moving every day.

ATU Local 113 | Black Caucus | TTC



Contact Information

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Black transit workers at the TTC

From the earliest days of transit to today's city-wide network, Black workers have helped power Toronto's public service and labour movement.

We see Black excellence across roles

- Bus, streetcar, and subway operators
- Station staff and supervisors
- Wheel-Trans, customer service
- Maintenance, trades, and operations support
- Training, planning, safety, and leadership

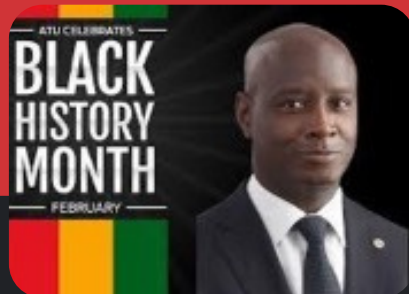
What this month can look like

- Spotlight a colleague each week
- Host a lunch-and-learn with a Black speaker
- Share a timeline of Black Canadians in Toronto
- Create a wall of appreciation: "Thank you for keeping the city moving"



Irma James immigrated from Trinidad in May 1971 and became the first Black female streetcar operator with the TTC in 1983. She operated the CLRV and the ALRV until 2007. She made history, her perseverance paved the way for greater diversity and inclusion in the workforce, inspiring future generations of Black Canadians to challenge barriers.

Spotlight & Stories ATU Local 113-President



ATU International Black Caucus Conference



Historical Black Operators

James Bowen, Alfred Moss, Riley Whitely, and Wendell Feres.



Joe Feres James Bowen

ATU Canada: Black transit workers across the country

Black transit workers are part of ATU locals in communities across Canada - keeping buses, rail, and paratransit services running coast to coast.

ATU Canada locals include (examples)

- Local 113 (Toronto, ON)
- Local 1587 (Toronto, ON)
- Local 1624 (Mississauga, ON)
- Local 1724 (Vancouver, BC)
- Local 1760 (Ottawa, ON)

& many more locals across Canada

Equity & Inclusion inside ATU Canada

In 2019, ATU Canada members passed a bylaw to establish an Equity and Inclusion Committee to address discrimination and advance inclusion for members - including people of colour and other groups experiencing marginalization. Connected to the broader ATU.

ATU's international Black Caucus builds solidarity, leadership, and empowerment across the union. Ways to celebrate & support.

- Spotlight Black ATU members from different locals
- Share mentorship and career-path stories
- Promote reporting pathways and a respectful workplace
- Encourage participation in union education, conferences, and equity programming