

CITY OF EDMONTON

HISTORIAN LAUREATE

ANNUAL REPORT



**FEBRUARY
2025**

Prepared by



PROGRAM HISTORY



In 2010, the City of Edmonton reinforced the importance of identifying and preserving Edmonton's history by becoming Canada's first municipality to appoint a Historian Laureate. The Historian Laureate is the City's official ambassador on historical matters and promotes the history of the city and its citizens. A jury, comprised of members of the Edmonton Historical Board and the Edmonton Heritage Council, selects a new Historian Laureate every 2 years.





DONNA COOMBS-MONTROSE
CURRENT HISTORIAN LAUREATE
2024 - 2026

Donna Coombs-Montrose is a Community Activist and History Advocate who has resided in Edmonton, Alberta for over 20 years. Donna's activism began while a student in Toronto during the 1970s and continued her heritage exploration in her home country during the succeeding years, after completing her academic training in librarianship and archives. Since coming to Edmonton with her family she has served on the board of CARIWEST – Western Carnival Development Association – 1999-2017, including the last 10 years as its President. Her core intent was to raise the contributions of Caribbean and other diaspora immigrants to building this society. She has

also served as founding member of the Alberta Labour History Institute (ALHI) from 1999/2000 and as a Director for the past seven years. A Founding Member of the Caribbean Women Network, an Elder to CCACH (Council of Canadians of African and Caribbean Heritage), an active member of the Congress of Black Women (Edmonton Chapter), WAWT (When African Women Talk) and CURC (Council of Union Retirees).

Donna is also contributing to these and several other organizations. She has also served as a juror for many different grant streams and written many anecdotes. With a passion for story telling as an essential platform for documenting a community's history, Donna has recorded with online access, many interviews of community members in labour, culture, health, education, entrepreneurship, in various trades and professional occupations, on the ground of transforming our society. Current projects include Caribbean Oil Workers Contribution to Alberta's economy, and Jasper Place – The Black Community. A recipient of the Queen Elizabeth II Jubilee Medal in 2022, Donna is an avid painter who plays in the music band iLand.+ Energized by a visionary agenda and nurtured by a community with high expectations, the coming period will be pivotal in her role as City of Edmonton Historian Laureate, 2024-2026.





A YEAR IN REVIEW

Following a gutsy presentation/appointment for the Historian Laureate position on August 20, 2024, I have **“hit the ground running”** in order to promote community responsibilities, initiate new ideas and projects, and assess social and financial expectations. I am really thrilled to report that My City has a fantastic team of devoted people who have brought all their resources to the table of goodwill. Their teamwork has made the dreams work.



MEETINGS

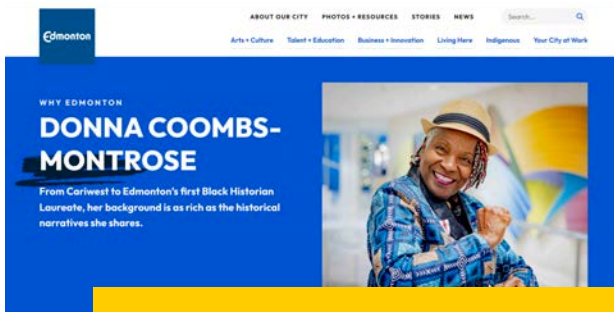
- * Edmonton Historical Board monthly meetings August 2024 – January 2025: attended either virtually or in person where possible.
- * Edmonton Heritage Council: Collaboration with staff either virtual or in person.

CONFERENCES

- * **Supporting Black Canadian Community Initiatives**
(SBCCI) Halifax, Nova Scotia, October 2024 and continue to work with local affiliates like the Africa Centre on the ground
- * **APT Preservation and National Trust Conference**
Montreal, November 2024
- * **Civil Society Crime Summit**
Edmonton
- * **Building Inclusive Communities: A Common Vision**
Edmonton

ACTIVITIES

- * Taught Grade 9 class at City Hall School on November 24.
Class Teacher: Moselle Semeniuk



- * Attended Community Meeting with Danielle Smith on November 4th

- * Fed the 'houseless' at Bissell Centre November 10

- * Interview with City of Edmonton for Historian Laureate interview. Featured Profile on "Why Edmonton"

why.edmonton.ca/stories/donna-coombs-montrose/



- * Met with Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council, Equity Specialist – Dec 23 for interview

- * Attended ECAMP Trivia at Canadian Brewhouse downtown as a 'Trivia trainee'

- * Prepared most of quiz content on Black Community's history and served as QuizMaster for **ECAMP's AfroQuizzing (Trivia edition)** on Jan 26.
I had a blast!!

- * Friends of Edmonton Public Library - Presented a complimentary Evening with Edmonton's Historian Laureate for their exclusive fundraiser.



- * Met with Royal Alberta Museum Coordinator, Kevin Farmer several times to plan upcoming Historian Laureate at the RAM for Feb 13.

- * Served as Adjudicator for Black History Month oversight committee with Africa Centre, City of Edmonton, EHC, and ECF.

- * For Black History Month mounted the **ECAMP Virtual Museum: And Still We Rise: A Black Presence in Alberta, Late 1800s -1970s** at the following events:

- Black History Month Opening at the Citadel (Feb 3)
- Conference presentation (Feb 7th)
- RAM presentation (Feb13)
- Canada Place Service Canada (Feb 26)
- Afro Quiz EPL Muttart Theatre (Feb22)

- * Met with Edmonton Public Library Jasper Place Librarian Heather McMullin re presentation. Requested postponement to BHM 2026 to allow for inclusion of Jasper Place's Black community who have been interviewed in area project.

- * Met with Programming Coordinator for Fort Edmonton Park to discuss programming



- * Additional speaking presentations:
 - Rotary Club, Chateau Lacombe, Edmonton (Feb 24),
 - CKUA Panel (Feb 8)
 - Lunchtime Speaker PCL Construction (Feb 20)
 - Caribbean Optimism Club (Feb 20 afternoon)

Several additional bookings for March and beyond will be included in a forthcoming report





ROYAL ALBERTA
MUSEUM



EDMONTON
HISTORICAL
BOARD



EDMONTON
HERITAGE COUNCIL

PRINCE OF WALES ARMOURIES
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