32nd Annual Scholarship and Awards Gala

Passion, Purpose, and Persistence: Celebrating Excellence

Saturday, November 16, 2024

Ontario Provincial Police
OPP ASSOCIATION



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Table of Contents

Greetings

4 Association of Black Law Enforcers

6 Ontario Provincial Police

7 Ontario Provincial Police Association

8 OPP BIPOC Committee

9 National Black Police Association U.S.

10 National Black Police Association U.K.

11 National Black Police Association

12 Prime Minister

13 Lieutenant Governor of Ontario

14 Premier

16 Grand Chief of the Nishnawbe Aski Nation

17 Serving with Pride

18 Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police

19 Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police

20 Chippewas of Rama First Nation

21 Mayor of Orillia

2024 A.B.L.E. Gala

22 A.B.L.E. Gala Planning Committee

23 Thank You A.B.L.E. Members

24 Keynote Speaker

26 Emcees

28 Rama First Nations Community Members

30 Entertainment

2024 A.B.L.E. Scholarships

32 About the Peter Butler III - Rose Fortune Scholarship Program

34 Learning Our Roots

35 A.B.L.E. Scholarships – Normalizing Black Representation in Law Enforcement

36 2024 Sponsors

38 Scholarship Winners

2024 A.B.L.E. Awards

45 About the A.B.L.E. Awards

46 Award Winners

Features

53 A.B.L.E.'s Work is More Vital than Ever

54 Pioneering New Opportunities

56 Paving the Way for Black Women in the OPP

57 Expanding Our Support for A.B.L.E. Members

58 Uniting Passion and Purpose

60 A Trailblazer in Law Enforcement

61 Inspiring and Leading Others

62 Passion, Purpose, and Persistence: A Secret World Brought to Life

63 Pioneering Inclusive Leadership and Wellness Across Borders

64 Bridging Cultures and Building Trust: The Journey of Four Nishnawbe Aski Police Officers

66 From Jamaica to Orillia – A Journey to Mentoring, Inclusion, Trailblazing Changes in Policing

68 A Commitment to Others Over Self

Tributes

69 An Unwavering Supporter of A.B.L.E.

70 A Friend, A Champion

Tribute to a Community Giant

72 A.B.L.E. Connects

74 Congratulations

Association of Black Law Enforcers



WELCOME! It is an honour and privilege to extend a warm welcome to you all to the Association of Black Law Enforcers' 32nd Scholarship and Awards Gala. Tonight, we gather under the inspiring theme of ***Passion, Purpose, and Persistence: Celebrating Excellence.*** These three foundational pillars embody the driving force of our Association, which sets the tone for tonight's gathering and an opportunity to celebrate excellence!

My team and I are excited to be part of this historic collaboration, jointly hosted by the Association of Black Law Enforcers (A.B.L.E.), the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP), and the Ontario Provincial Police Association (OPPA) for the very first time. This unique partnership demonstrates our shared commitment to inclusion and collaboration within the justice and law enforcement sectors. By working together with the diverse communities we serve, we strengthen our ability to enhance public safety—a mission that unites us all.

I want to say Miigwech and extend a heartfelt acknowledgement to the Rama Police Service, and our Indigenous brothers and sisters. As we gather on this sacred land of the Chippewas of Rama First Nations, we share a collective purpose for achieving equitable access to post-secondary education, recognizing Black excellence in law enforcement and public safety and celebrating the often-overlooked heroes who are shifting mindsets and creating opportunities for others. Our goal is to cultivate healthy work environments that embrace differences, promote diversity and insist on inclusion, while rejecting all forms of racism, discrimination and prejudice. Our ongoing success relies on a united and bold approach to improving relationships, building bridges and breaking down barriers while preparing the next generation for success in whatever paths they choose.

To our scholarship recipients and their families, congratulations! The Association of Black Law Enforcers is proud of each of you for choosing to continue the legacy of those who came before you. Your decision to pursue post-secondary studies is not just an investment in your future, but a commitment to being part of the solution from within. By upholding professionalism, ethics and values in law enforcement, we can work to rebuild, reimage and reinvigorate a safer and more inclusive image profession. This commitment to excellence will foster increased recruitment, promotion and retention while ensuring fair treatment for all people across jurisdictions.

I would also like to extend my congratulations, on behalf of my fellow Board members, to our 2024 A.B.L.E. Award recipients. I encourage you to continue leading and advocating for wellness and respectful work environments. Be intentional and bravely lead from where you are and seize opportunities to create and sustain positive change. Be bold, be courageous and be yourself. And PLEASE remember to take time for yourself and don't forget to acknowledge your achievements with a little self-praise or a round of applause. Celebrate your successes along the way and learn from your challenges.

Continue to rise by staying informed about your community and its needs. Be a supportive teammate and strive for excellence in your leadership roles. Embrace innovation by exploring new ideas and approaches, and don't hesitate to lead the way in creating positive change.

Reflect on the legacy you want to leave behind. Aim to make a lasting impact on both your community and the law enforcement landscape in Canada. Serve with passion and a clear purpose and remain persistent in your efforts. Always strive for excellence and work to make a meaningful difference in the lives of others.

To our generous sponsors, as well as everyone who purchased a ticket to support our Peter Butler III and Rose Fortune Scholarship Program, I want to express my heartfelt thanks. This gratitude comes on behalf of all the members of our cherished Association of Black Law Enforcers.

To those attending for the first time, our international delegates from the United States and United Kingdom, and tonight's keynote speaker, Chief Davis, Memphis Police Department, welcome! Thank you for joining us for this significant celebration.

I wish you all a wonderful, fun-filled evening!

Jacqueline Edwards
President
Association of Black Law Enforcers

Equity, Inclusion and Support for Ontario's Police Force

With over 6,200 uniformed officers and 3,600 civilians, the Ontario Provincial Police Association ensures that those who protect our communities are well-represented and supported.

The OPPA strives to improve health and safety standards, promote better tools and resources, and provide essential support for members facing operational stress injuries. From negotiating fair contracts to fostering a safe and inclusive work culture, the OPPA is committed to the well-being of its members, ensuring they remain strong for the communities they serve.

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Ontario Provincial Police



November 16, 2024

As the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) Commissioner it is my privilege to welcome you to the Association of Black Law Enforcers (A.B.L.E.) 32nd Annual Scholarship and Awards Gala. Our organization is honoured to host such a prestigious event.

I also have the honour of serving the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police (CACP) as their President, and I extend a warm welcome to you from the CACP Executive Team.

The OPP and A.B.L.E. share many common commitments, including fostering a culture of diversity and inclusion, building positive relationships with communities and maintaining professionalism and integrity. The individuals we are celebrating here tonight embody these commitments and will help shape the future of law enforcement in the years to come.

I would also like to recognize and thank our generous sponsors and organizers who share our devotion to inclusion and recognize the importance of reflecting the diverse communities we serve. Without you, tonight would not be possible.

Thank you all for joining us tonight and for being part of this significant event, which represents a cornerstone of the values of police services today.

Yours truly,

Thomas Carrique, C.O.M.

Ontario Provincial Police Association



On behalf of the close to 10,000 members of the Ontario Provincial Police Association, we are proud to be co-hosting the Association of Black Law Enforcers (A.B.L.E.) 32nd Annual Scholarship and Awards Gala.

Thank you for the opportunity to co-host the event along with A.B.L.E. and the Ontario Provincial Police. We are honoured to be the first police association to be co-hosts of this prestigious annual event supporting and encouraging young people to consider careers in justice and law enforcement.

A number of our members have benefited in their youth from the year-round work of A.B.L.E., and the opportunities provided by this event. The recruiting and retention of valuable law enforcement personnel in 2024 is one of our top priorities. The scholarships and awards from this event will go a long way to inspiring our current and future law enforcement members.

Congratulations to all of the recipients and thank you to everyone who helped to organize and took the time to attend and support this event.

We look forward to some of the recipients tonight becoming our members. Together we are stronger.

Sincerely,

John Cerasuolo
President, Ontario Provincial Police Association

OPP BIPOC Committee

As Black Indigenous Persons Of Colour (BIPOC) members of the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP), we extend our heartfelt gratitude to the OPP and OPPA for co-hosting the Association of Black Law Enforcer's 32nd Annual Scholarship and Awards Gala this year on the traditional territory of Rama First Nation. The opportunity to join our professional peers in such a meaningful event is truly significant to us. We deeply appreciate the support in making it possible for our BIPOC members to join our colleagues in celebrating our resilience, culture and the significant contributions we've made to public safety and building trust within our communities. This gesture of inclusion and solidarity means a great deal to us and underscores the importance of unity within our law enforcement community.

"As a member of the OPP, I am honoured to be a member of A.B.L.E. and have the opportunity to learn from the incredible leaders that continue to provide guidance and leadership to members across Ontario and beyond." — *Insp. Vanessa Gosein*

"It's wonderful for the OPP to showcase how invested the organization is in marginalized and racialized communities." — *Sgt. Charmaine Tomlinson*

"A.B.L.E.'s collaboration with the OPP marks a historic milestone, underscoring the importance of cultivating a culture that values and supports every member. This partnership highlights our commitment to embracing the strength that diversity brings to our organization and the communities we serve." — *Nadeera Marshall*

"As a BIPOC member within a large policing organization, I am proud to see the OPP partnering with A.B.L.E. to be part of providing scholarships to the future of our communities. A.B.L.E. has provided an environment that has allowed me to connect with mentors and mentees who may face similar unique challenges as myself. The relationships I developed and maintained through A.B.L.E. continue to provide essential support that allows me to address complex issues within my professional and personal life." — *D/Sgt. Mishael Yearwood*

"In the early 90s, I was seeking a career in law enforcement, and I was fortunate to be invited to one of A.B.L.E.'s meetings. The founding members provided me with insights on how to achieve my goals, and now, with approximately 30 years of policing, I am excited and happy to be a part of the OPP collaboration with A.B.L.E. Thank you, A.B.L.E., for putting me on the path to success and for providing me with the insight to achieve my goal of becoming a police officer." — *D/Sgt. Derrick Robinson*

Thank you to everyone involved for making this extraordinary event happen.

In peace, respect, appreciation and kindness,

OPP BIPOC Members

National Black Police Association U.S.



It is my pleasure and honor to congratulate the OPP and OPPA as they co-host The Association of Black Law Enforcers (A.B.L.E.) 32nd Scholarship and Awards Gala.

Your theme is **"Passion, Purpose, and Persistence: Celebrating Excellence".**

Passion is a strong and controllable emotion.

Purpose is the reason for which something is done with intention.

Persistence is the firm or obstinate continuance in a course of action in spite of difficulty or opposition.

These three words are powerful. They describe A.B.L.E. head on. To do the work that you have done and continue to do, even in the face of criticism and defiance, you continue to stand tall. You speak out in support of your members and communities and most importantly, agencies are called out and held accountable for any types of misconduct.

Accountability and transparency are the tenets of what the National Black Police Association (NBPA) were founded on in 1972. NBPA has and will continue to hold police departments and any other law enforcement agencies, local and federal, to the high standard of professional service for our communities. I am very glad to know and see that A.B.L.E. does the same here in Canada.

A.B.L.E., continue to be that beacon of light for all Black and minority officers, as well as being the voice for the communities you serve. Congratulations to the scholarship and award recipients and those members recognized.

Stay safe, be blessed.

Willie L. Williams III
National Chair

National Black Police Association U.K.

I am delighted to be writing to wish you all the very best during your 32nd Scholarship and Awards Gala.

The title of your Awards Gala, "Passion, Purpose, and Persistence: Celebrating Excellence" is yet again a very fitting one given the many challenges we all face in our fight against racism and injustice.

As you are aware, the U.K. witnessed major public disorder targeted towards racially marginalised communities and in particular refugees and asylum seekers. The current rhetoric around immigration has dehumanised the most vulnerable in society and failed to highlight the many benefits that having a diverse society create.

We appear to have lost our way fighting for racial equity and we are witnessing a pushback on the energy created after George Floyd's murder. The rise of the Black Lives Matter movement empowered many within law enforcement to find their voice but in doing so, some have sought to de-legitimise those who push for reform and a better environment within our industry.

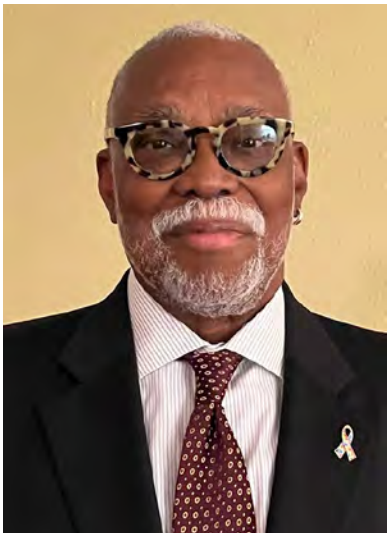
A.B.L.E. and the NBPA U.K. are the barometer for how racism and discrimination manifests in policing and law enforcement. We reach beyond catch phrases, slogans and glossy brochures to tackle the systemic nature of racism and will always represent our members views in an honest and challenging manner in the hope that our voices are heard and true improvements can be made.

We want the organisations we work for to do better for our members and the communities we serve. The success for law enforcements on racial equity is our shared success as we will not need to support so many members suffering discrimination or listen to our profession be criticised by our families and friends.

I know the personal sacrifice it takes to truly advocate on behalf of others and our solemn duty is to serve others in the best way we can. I wish you all the best in your work and as always, we stand shoulder to shoulder with you all in the fight for racial equity.

Andy George
President of the National Black Police Association, U.K. and
Chief Inspector in the Police Service of Northern Ireland

National Black Police Association



Statement on the Occasion of the 32nd Anniversary of the Association of Black Law Enforcers

I would like to extend a heartfelt congratulations to the Association of Black Law Enforcers (A.B.L.E.) of Canada on their 32nd Scholarship and Awards Gala. This year's theme "Passion, Purpose, and Persistence: Celebrating Excellence" is most appropriate. This passion, purpose and persistence continues to be necessary ingredients needed to do this work related to addressing the human and civil rights violations of our people.

The Association of Black Law Enforcers is to be commended for its dedication and commitment to real justice and equality. Sisters and Brothers, it is that same passion, purpose and persistence that must be used to address reoccurring and increased police violence against Black and other people of colour. As we witness these attacks on our people locally, nationally and internationally, organizations such as A.B.L.E., the National Black Police Association U.K./U.S. and the National Association of Blacks in Criminal Justice must stand in opposition to it.

In closing, the leaders and members of the Association of Black Law Enforcers are a very special group of individuals with a great vision, mission and engagement. Additionally, I am very proud to be associated with this great organization and its leadership.

Ronald E. Hampton
Former, Executive Director
National Black Police Association

Prime Minister



November 16, 2024

Dear Friends:

I am pleased to extend my warmest greetings to everyone attending the 32nd Anniversary Scholarship Awards Gala hosted by the Association of Black Law Enforcers (A.B.L.E.).

Since 1992, A.B.L.E. has been dedicated to addressing the needs and concerns of Black and other racial minorities in law enforcement. A key initiative of the organization is its Peter Butler III – Rose Fortune Scholarship Program, aimed at supporting youth interested in pursuing a career within the Canadian justice and public safety systems. I would like to offer my sincere congratulations to this year's scholarship recipients. Your hard work and dedication are an inspiration to us all and I wish you every success in your future endeavours.

I would also like to commend A.B.L.E. and the co-organizers of tonight's event, the Ontario Provincial Police and the Ontario Provincial Police Association, for their commitment to recognizing and fostering excellence in the Black law enforcement community. You can take pride in knowing that your contributions are greatly appreciated and are helping to build a better Canada for us all.

Please accept my best wishes for an enjoyable evening.

Sincerely,

The Rt. Hon. Justin P. J. Trudeau, P.C., M.P.
Prime Minister of Canada

Lieutenant Governor of Ontario



November 16, 2024

I am delighted to extend my warm greetings to everyone celebrating the 32nd Association of Black Law Enforcers Scholarship and Awards Gala.

A.B.L.E.'s dedication to supporting Black and other racialized law enforcement professionals and community members, while addressing their unique needs and challenges, is commendable.

Congratulations to those being honoured today for their unwavering commitment to public safety, professional excellence and fostering positive relationships within the communities they serve. Your work underscores an inspiring shared commitment to inclusion and collaboration within Ontario's diverse communities.

As the representative of the Crown in Ontario, I thank the staff, volunteers and the many community supporters who have worked to allow this event to come to life.

Sincères salutations,

Edith Dumont

Premier



November 16, 2024

Welcome everyone to the Annual Scholarship and Awards Gala of the Association of Black Law Enforcers.

Tonight, you gather to recognize the outstanding contributions and achievements within the Black community. Congratulations to those receiving scholarships tonight. You are our future police officers, corrections officers, paralegals and lawyers. Know that your achievements will help build a stronger and more diverse justice system that reflects the communities it serves.

As you know, I have the utmost respect and gratitude for the dedicated police officers and other law enforcement professionals who serve and protect our communities. I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge the many contributions of Black law enforcers to this noble profession. Thank you for all you have done and continue to do for us!

I salute the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) and the Ontario Provincial Police Association (OPPA) for supporting this event.

Best wishes for a memorable evening!

Doug Ford
Premier

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Grand Chief of the Nishnawbe Aski Nation



November 16, 2024

Dear Members of A.B.L.E,

On behalf of Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN), I extend my heartfelt greetings and acknowledgments to the Association of Black Law Enforcers (A.B.L.E.) for the remarkable work that you are all doing to address the needs and concerns of racial minorities within the law enforcement community.

Your dedication to fostering a more inclusive and equitable environment is truly inspiring. The efforts of Black officers, particularly those serving within the NAN territory, are very much appreciated within the NAN territory. NAN, a place of both beauty and challenge, benefits immensely from your unwavering commitment and courage to our people and communities. It is a testament to your strength and resilience that you continue to serve with distinction, even in the face of adversity.

Many people may overlook our territory when choosing where to work, and do not understand the value of how they may contribute if they choose to come here. However, your contributions and support of our communities do not go unnoticed. And we thank you.

As the Grand Chief of NAN, I wish A.B.L.E. continued blessings and success in all your endeavors. Your association is not only changing how others view law enforcement, but your officers are making a profound impact as individuals across our nations. May your work continue to inspire and lead the way towards a more just and inclusive society.

Once again, thank you for your unwavering dedication and service. Together, we can build a future where every community is valued and every voice is heard.

With deepest respect and gratitude,
NISHNAWBE ASKI NATION

Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler

Serving with Pride

Congratulations Association of Black Law Enforcers,

On behalf of Serving with Pride, we extend our sincerest gratitude for the opportunity to bring greetings to the Association of Black Law Enforcers (A.B.L.E.). It is with great pleasure that we share in your celebration of 32 years of hosting a successful Scholarship and Awards Gala. Serving with Pride has been very lucky to look up to A.B.L.E. as a leader in the province of Ontario. We share in the mutual goal of advancing the professional careers of our members, as well as continuing to attract new talent from equity-deserving populations. Your support and collaboration mean a lot to us, and we are excited about the prospect of reaching a wider audience through this publication. We know that many 2SLGBTQ+ racialized members experience different forms of discrimination which are often not addressed by simply tackling race, sexual orientation and gender identity on their own. Working together with the Association of Black Law Enforcers is a crucial piece to ensuring our members' unique intersecting identities are valued and celebrated. We look forward to fostering a lasting partnership that will continue to benefit both organizations and the members we serve.

With Warm Regards and Gratitude,

Noah Clouthier and Robert Chevalier
Co-Chairs, Serving with Pride

Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police

November 16, 2024

To the members of A.B.L.E.:

Congratulations on your 32nd successful gala, honouring the exceptional work of Black leaders in law enforcement and contributing to the community through the support of youth from the next generation of community leaders. The Association of Black Law Enforcers has provided unwavering support for members of racialized communities working in law enforcement. Its membership continues to hold this profession accountable for the equitable treatment of all, in the ongoing hope of racial harmony, both inside the walls of our public safety agencies and in our communities. The Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee stands proudly alongside A.B.L.E. members in the effort to end systemic racism in public safety and to create authentic inclusion in our agencies. The journey continues after 32 successful years of raising awareness, creating accountability and fostering belonging through education and support. I wish you all the very best in your gala!

Sincerely,

Michelle Davey
Deputy Chief Constable
Delta Police Department
Co-chair of the CACP Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee

Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police

Congratulations on A.B.L.E.'s 32nd Annual Scholarship and Awards Gala

On the occasion of the Association of Black Law Enforcers (A.B.L.E.) 32nd Annual Scholarship and Awards Gala, I join police leaders from across Ontario and Canada in extending our heartfelt congratulations and thanks to A.B.L.E. as we come together to celebrate the outstanding achievements of Black law enforcement personnel. This prestigious event not only marks another successful year of service but also provides an opportunity to reflect on the vital role A.B.L.E. plays in advocating for diversity, equity, inclusion and professionalism within law enforcement and the justice sector.

As a community, we recognize the significant contributions Black justice professionals make to ensure safety and justice for all citizens. A.B.L.E.'s commitment to mentoring, education and leadership development has empowered countless individuals from all communities to pursue careers in law enforcement, the broader justice sector and beyond. A.B.L.E.'s work in promoting diverse and representative police organizations across Ontario remains essential in fostering trust between law enforcement professionals and the communities they serve.

The Annual Scholarship and Awards Gala is a celebration of the dedication and resilience of those who work tirelessly to make our justice system fairer and more equitable. It's also an expression of faith in our collective future as A.B.L.E. inspires the next generation of world shapers to advance social justice and dismantle systemic barriers for everyone.

I commend A.B.L.E. for its ongoing efforts to support the professional growth of its members while promoting positive change. May this year's Annual Scholarship and Awards Gala be a resounding success, and may the association continue to inspire and lead for many years to come.

Sincerely,

Roger Wilkie
Deputy Chief, Halton Regional Police Service
President, Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police

Chippewas of Rama First Nation

Aanin/Hello,

On behalf of Rama First Nation, I would like to welcome all of you and extend my heartfelt congratulations to the Association of Black Law Enforcers on the occasion of your 32nd Scholarship and Awards Gala.

This event is a testament to the hard work, dedication, and resilience of those who serve our communities in law enforcement. It is also and opportunity to celebrate the achievements of individuals who embody excellence and integrity, and to honour their ongoing contributions toward a more just and equitable society.

As we gather tonight, let us recognize the vital importance of diversity and inclusion in all aspects of our work, especially within the field of law enforcement. May this evening be a reminder of the power of education, mentorship, and solidarity, as we continue to inspire and uplift the next generation of leaders who will carry the torch forward in the pursuit of equality and fairness for all.

Wishing you all an evening filled with pride, inspiration and unity.

Miigwech/Thank you,



Gimaa/Chief Ted Williams Chippewas of Rama First Nation

Mayor of Orillia



On behalf of the City of Orillia, I would like to welcome all those participating and attending the Association of Black Law Enforcers (A.B.L.E.) 32nd Scholarship and Awards Gala, co-hosted by the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) and the Ontario Provincial Police Association (OPPA).

This gala signifies a significant opportunity to recognize and support the educational endeavors of future leaders within the Canadian justice public safety systems. The theme of this year's gala, "Passion, Purpose, and Persistence: Celebrating Excellence," beautifully encapsulates the spirit of honouring and inspiring the next generation of racial minority youth. I commend A.B.L.E. for its unwavering commitment to fostering excellence and leadership in the Black community.

I look forward to joining you all in celebrating this wonderful occasion.

Sincerely,

Don McIsaac
Mayor

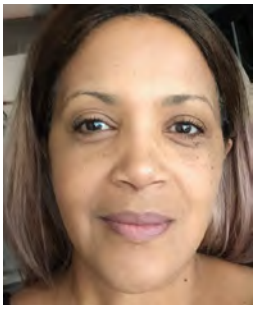
A.B.L.E. Gala Planning Committee



Adam Holness



Andre Johnson



Debbie Gladding



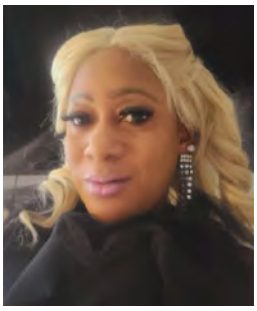
Devin Allen



Jackie Edwards



Jenn Kanstein



Karen Graham



Kari Dart



Kevin Allen



Kim Daynard



Lisa Shipley



Lynn Neale



Mark Wilson



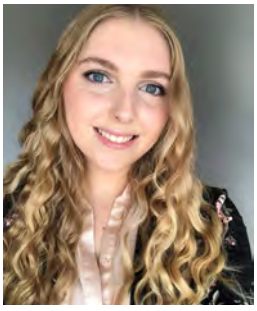
Miles Orakwelu



Nadeera Marshall



Sean Bowers



Shanna Stacey



Sharon Seepersad



Sheri Chapman



Shernett Williams



Jannelle Armorer



Jasmine Swadia



Kolin Alexander



Laura Houliston



Quame Scott



Rohan Thompson



Tiffany Castell

Thank you A.B.L.E. Members for your support and trust!

Interested in becoming a member?

A.B.L.E. Membership is opened to all active and retired Black and other racial minority peace officers and auxiliary police officers. Members of the community, who support the goals and objectives of A.B.L.E. and want to assist in improving the relationship between the community and the law enforcement profession, may also become members.

Membership Options		
Associate Membership	**Primary Membership**	**Affiliate Membership**

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Association of Black Law Enforcers (A.B.L.E.)

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Keynote Speaker



Chief Cerelyn "CJ" Davis

Memphis Police Department

Memphis Police Chief Cerelyn "CJ" Davis has over 35 years of experience in the law enforcement profession. Being focused on holistic interagency wraparound services and transformational policing for crime reduction, Davis' research-driven work is strongly influenced by the practical application of the latest tools in technology, predictive policing, leadership development and all-important community engagement.

She began her career with the City of Atlanta Police Department, where she learned the importance of forging relationships with Atlanta's diverse community. As a Commander she led the Special Operations Section, which included Organized Crime, SWAT, Mounted Patrol, Motors, Helicopter Unit, Vice and Narcotics, all Federal Task Force Officers. In addition, she served as the Internal Affairs Commander, the Atlanta Hartsfield Jackson Airport Precinct Commander, and served on Executive Loan as a Project Manager to the Mayor's Office.

After her promotion to Deputy Chief, she led the Strategies and Special Projects Division, overseeing the Department's new Video Integration Center (VIC), a real time crime centre where she ensured more than 3,000 public and private sector cameras were included in the citywide network. Also, under her leadership was Planning and Research, Accreditation (CALEA), the Atlanta Police Leadership Institute (APLI), capital projects, facility improvements and more. Davis retired in June 2016 to accept the position of Chief of Police for the City of Durham, NC.

As the Chief of Police, Davis made great strides towards improving the Durham Police Department's outreach and crime reduction efforts by building trust between citizens and law enforcement and fostering sustainable partnerships with key stakeholders.

In April 2021, Chief Davis was selected by Memphis Mayor Jim Strickland as the first female police chief for the Memphis Police Department. She began her tenure as the Chief of Police for the Memphis Police Department on June 14, 2021.

Chief Davis is a graduate of the 225th Session of the National FBI Academy and completed senior management training at the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) in Boston, MA. Chief Davis has experienced training opportunities abroad at the Emergency Preparedness College in York, England, and as a participant in a leadership exchange session in Tel Aviv, Israel with the Israel National Police.

She is a past President of the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE), and testified as a subject matter expert before the U.S. Senate

Judiciary Committee on the matter of police reform, in the aftermath of recent police injustices. She has since been featured on Good Morning America, CNN and other networks as a law enforcement subject matter expert on similar topics.

She has served on the Board of Directors for Major Cities Chiefs (MCCA) and the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), and was appointed to North Carolina Governor, Roy Cooper's Racial Equity in Criminal Justice Task Force to help facilitate police reform in the state of North Carolina. These organizations aim to implement procedural justice by action and diversity in the police force. Involvement with these groups heavily influenced Davis' principles of policing and lead her strategic focus for the work required in the Memphis Police Department. In the short time she has been Chief of Police in Memphis, she has made great strides in recruiting record-breaking numbers of officers, focusing on racial and gender diversity, community and business partnerships, and increasing crime reduction efforts through laser focused data driven policing. Davis has also implemented the growing public/private camera network known as "Connect2Memphis."

Throughout her career, she has received numerous awards and commendations, to include *Atlanta Police Supervisor of the Year*, and featured in *OPRAH 'O' Magazine* as winner of the "Women Rule" competition, where she was recognized for establishing a women's mentoring initiative entitled, "Sisters-In-Law." In 2013, she was featured in Atlanta's *Women Looking Ahead Magazine* as one of Georgia's 100 Most Influential Women.

Chief Davis is a sought-after public speaker on the subjects of leadership, organizational change and strategic planning. Davis has a Bachelor of Arts degree in Criminal Justice and a Master's degree in General Administration. She is the proud wife of a very supportive husband, Terry Davis (retired law enforcement) for 30 years and mother of one daughter.



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Deputy Commissioner Rohan Thompson

Commander, Traffic Safety and Operational Support

Rohan Thompson started with the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) in 1990 and has worked in various areas within the OPP, including assignments with both the OPP Deputy Commissioner's Office and Deputy Solicitor General's Office, formerly known as the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

Rohan's early years were spent in the Greater Toronto Region (GTR), now known as the Highway Safety Division (HSD), where he worked at the Niagara, Port Credit and Toronto Detachments. He also worked at the Caledon Detachment and spent several years in a specialized traffic unit called the Greater Toronto Region Highway Rangers.

When he was promoted to Staff Sergeant in 2001, he was instrumental in the development of the Provincial Emergency Response Team (PERT), now known as USAR CBRNE Response Team (UCRT), which he headed for five years. He moved on to Divisional Planning Manager at Highway Safety Divisional Headquarters.

In 2008, he was promoted to Inspector and served as the Detachment Commander of the Toronto Detachment and at the Highway Safety Divisional Headquarters as the Division's Crime and Traffic Operations Manager.

In December 2014, Rohan was promoted to the rank of Superintendent and was seconded from the OPP to become the new Chief of Oversight and Investigations for Correctional Services.

In September 2017, Rohan returned from his secondment and was assigned as the Superintendent, Director of Investigations, Investigation and Enforcement Bureau, Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario (AGCO).

In January 2020, Rohan was promoted to Chief Superintendent and held the position of Commander of the Highway Safety Division until being promoted to his current rank and position as Deputy Commissioner of Traffic Safety and Operational Support.

He is a graduate of Georgian College Police Foundations and holds an Executive Certificate in Conflict Management from the Faculty of Law, University of Windsor. He is also a graduate of the University of Toronto, Rotman School of Management, Police Leadership Program.

Rohan is also the recipient of the Order of Merit of the Police Forces, the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal and the Vice Regal Commendation.

Carrie John

Manager, Probation and Parole (Retired),
Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services



Carrie John describes herself as a wife, mother, daughter, sister and God's favourite child. She currently works at the Toronto International Celebration Church as a youth pastor at Reign Youth Ministries.

After graduating from the University of Toronto in 1992, she worked for the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services for over 27 years in various law enforcement capacities, such as a correctional officer, a discharge planner and then a probation and parole officer. Her last position before she retired from law enforcement was managing the Riverdale Probation office in downtown Toronto in 2010.

She was also actively involved in A.B.L.E. for many years, working as its communications officer and social director.

Carrie's life changed drastically at the end of 2010 after having emergency brain surgery which left her in constant pain and immobile for all of 2012. During that time, she encountered God and began to depend on Him in every area of her life.

After a year of being partially bedridden and unable to walk on her own, Carrie was miraculously healed in January 2013 at a healing service at the Toronto International Celebration Church. She was then led by Holy Spirit to attend their bible school and, after retiring from law enforcement, was hired as their youth pastor in 2019.

Now, she lives for Jesus, sharing his gospel with youth each week and takes every opportunity she can to share him with others.

Carrie has been married to her university sweetheart for over 26 years. They have two adult children (22 and 25).

Rama First Nations
Community Members



Oshki Gnebig Minis Singers

Oshki Gnebig Minis Singers, or Young Snake Island Singers, is a Boys Big Drum group from Chippewas of Rama First Nation. Comprised of boys ranging in age from 9-14, the boys have been singing together since 2021 under the guidance and instruction of Meegwans Snake. What started as a weekly drum teaching to learn about the drum, songs and history, has turned into a strong, confident group of young men who have sung all over Ontario bringing their voices to community powwows, socials, conferences and events, celebrations and special moments of honour. Under the guidance of Meegwans, as well as support from parents, community, Chief and Council, just to name a few, these boys have learned what it means to sit around the big drum, how to live Mnobmaadziwin, the good life and how they should conduct themselves in the greater world. Miigwech for this opportunity to share the gifts that the creator has blessed us with.

Stephanie Williams Sandy

First Nations Elder



Elder Stephanie Williams Sandy is from Chippewas of Rama First Nation, known as Mnjikaning. Her spirit name is Nemki Benshi Kwe, and she is from the Fish clan.

Stephanie was a Child Welfare Worker (now called Child Well-Being Advocates) for 35 years and held supervisor and acting manager positions before retiring.

She is currently a Nokomis/Elder at Georgian College, Orillia, as the visiting Elder. Stephanie feels fortunate to participate as an advocate for her people and accepted a seat on the Elder Council for the Simcoe County District School Board. Her education is as a Social Service Worker, and she holds a Certification in Aboriginal Adult Education from Brock University.

She feels blessed to be a mother of five children, grandmother of nine grandchildren and great grandmother of three great grandchildren.

She is Nookmis to her family and to her community.



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Entertainment



Tanya Douglas

Singing The National Anthem

For the past 11 years, Tanya Douglas has been a dedicated member of the Toronto Police Service (TPS) Parking Enforcement Unit. Her recent promotion to Patrol Supervisor is a testament to her unwavering commitment and loyalty to the service.

For the past eight years, Tanya has served as the Social Sub-Committee Civilian Representative of the Toronto Police Service's Black Internal Support Network (B-ISN). She actively participates in and supports numerous B-ISN initiatives, including humanitarian projects in St Ann's, Jamaica, and fundraisers for hurricane disaster relief in the Caribbean.

Tanya has always had a passion for music. She sang her first solo at the age of three. She remained integral to the children's choirs and her church's praise and worship teams. At 11, she began vocal lessons at the Ontario Conservatory of Music.

Tanya reintroduced herself to signing when she recently performed the Black National Anthem at the Toronto Police Service's Black History Month 2024 kick-off in February at the service's headquarters. Since then, she has sung at various Toronto Police Service events, including the Police Week kick-off and Gloves Up Toronto, with event benefits going to Toronto's Beyond the Blue and Tropicana Community Services.

St. Kitts Music

The Motown Soul Show

The Motown Soul Show is about taking you back to the days of Soul and Motown music that has morphed into R&B today. Motown Soul is made up of four singers with powerful vocal abilities. Enjoy the music of Stevie Wonder, Temptations and Aretha Franklin, along with R&B hits that will make you move and sing along.



Christopher Michaels

DJ



Christopher Michaels, one of the nation's most esteemed DJs, has captivated audiences both locally and globally with his exceptional talent to seamlessly transition between a wide array of musical genres.

With a career that has endured over four decades, Christopher has graced the stages of most Toronto venues, holding residencies at iconic Toronto establishments such as Studio 69, Bamboo, Fluid Lounge and the Brant House/Citizen on King Street West for 17 years. His impressive clientele includes ET Canada, Google, Burger King and a plethora of celebrity events, including those for Vince Carter and President Obama.

This multi-award-winning DJ began his commercial radio career in 2001 by co-hosting the all-old-school mix show Reflections, helping to launch Canada's first urban radio station, FLOW 93.5FM. "Your Girlfriend's Favorite DJ" was the resident mix show DJ on weekend afternoons at Flow for 10 years. His show, The ChrisMix, captured listeners' attention across the city and online around the world.

In 2011, he joined G98.7 FM, the country's first urban adult contemporary station and established "The Soul School Mix," a mix show heard twice daily during the morning and afternoon rush hour drive where Chris engaged listeners with his diverse mixes.

Christopher continues to entertain crowds. When he's not in the DJ booth, he volunteers as a basketball coach, helping young female athletes achieve scholarships at American Division 1 universities.

About the Peter Butler III - Rose Fortune Scholarship Program

A.B.L.E. is committed to ensuring that the criminal justice system is reflective of the entire Canadian mosaic by providing opportunities for our young people to serve, protect and correct. Accordingly, A.B.L.E. will contribute funds towards the tuition fees of each successful candidate pursuing post-secondary education in one of the following areas of study:

- Law Enforcement / Law and Security
- Correctional Worker Program
- Law and Criminal Justice Studies
- Police Foundation Studies
- Criminology



Selection Criteria and Required Documents

Scholarship recipients will be selected based on academic achievement, community service and financial need. An interview will be conducted to determine eligibility. A.B.L.E. determines the scholarship amounts on an annual basis.

To be considered by A.B.L.E. the candidate must:

- Be attending or planning to attend an accredited College or University.
- Provide proof of acceptance or present status at an accredited College or University.
- Provide transcripts of current academic standing.
- Provide a letter of support from a community agency or organization where volunteer work was, or is, being done.
- Submit an essay of 450-500 words on one of the following topics:
  1. Describe your voluntary service to the community.
  2. Why have you chosen your particular field of study and how will your chosen career make a positive contribution to society.
  3. Why should you be selected as an A.B.L.E. award recipient?
- Candidates must be of good moral character and habits.
- Applications and the required supporting letters and documents must be received by A.B.L.E. on or before the deadline, which is determined on a yearly basis.

To obtain application packages, please contact the Student Services Department within your school or call the A.B.L.E. hotline at (905) 669-3905. Packages become available for distribution in the schools during September of each year.



Peter Butler III

1859 – 1943

Peter Butler III was born in Lucan, Ontario, in 1859. In 1883, he became a member of the Middlesex County Police, where he served as a tough but fair county constable. In 1913, he joined the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) and retired in 1936 after fifty years of policing.

Although some of his town's British immigrants objected to a Black police officer, Butler quickly gained their respect. Known to carry a gun only when transporting prisoners to jail in London or chasing cattle rustlers, he was a deadly shot, who maintained a personal collection of 38 caliber guns.

Constable Peter Butler III died in 1943. In his honour, dignitaries from the county, the province, as well as guests from the United States, attended his funeral. Six OPP officers followed the casket to the family plot on Sauble Hill.



Rose Fortune

1774 – 1864

Rose Fortune was born into slavery in the southern United States in 1774. Ms. Fortune was owned by the Devone Family. As loyalist refugees, they made their way to Annapolis Royal, Nova Scotia, following the American Revolution.

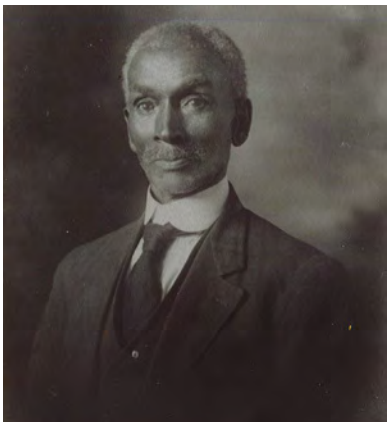
In the latter part of the 1700s, Ms. Fortune appointed herself policewoman for the area. Ms. Fortune was especially known for spanking local mischief-makers and rousing local dignitaries from their beds.

It is believed that Rose Fortune was Canada's first female law enforcer, welcomed by rich and poor alike. She was also well known about the town as the founder of one of Annapolis Royal's first cartage companies.

Rose Fortune gained her freedom in Annapolis and died in 1864 at the age of 90.

Learning Our Roots

Constable Anthony Banks



In 1881, Anthony Wellington Banks became the first Black male police constable and game warden in Ontario (and possibly in Canada) when he was appointed by S.S. McDonnell, the Crown Attorney of Essex County. Born in Colchester South, Essex, Ontario, Canada, on June 9, 1840, he was the son of Irwin Banks, an escaped slave from the United States (Ohio) who fled that country and came to Canada to be free, and Esther Fields of Amherstburg, Canada.

Constable Banks served in his policing role for over 25 years. He married Susan Simpson, and they had 14 children. His son, Walter, also served as a County Constable and lived in Colchester. Constable Banks died on October 17, 1929, at the age of 89.

Credit to Amherstburg Freedom Museum

Congratulations A.B.L.E.,
all the awards winners and
scholarship recipients.

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A.B.L.E. Scholarships – Normalizing Black Representation in Law Enforcement

Brooke Chambers



The impact of the A.B.L.E. Scholarship and Awards has shaped the future of Black individuals in law enforcement for more than 30 years. I am honoured to have taken part in the narrative that highlights the significance of the efforts to normalize Black representation in policing, and the transformative power of recognition and mentorship across Canada and beyond.

I was witness to the story of Jackie Edwards, who evolved from the first group of scholarship recipients to the first female A.B.L.E. President, which exemplifies the far-reaching effects of these scholarships, and goes beyond just financial support. They build a bridge between community and police and provide self-esteem, create life-long connections and provide mentorship, allowing recipients to see themselves achieving their dreams.

The pride I feel and fulfillment in witnessing such growth as one of the first members of A.B.L.E. underscores the invaluable role these initiatives play in creating agents of change within the organizations we serve and the communities in which we live. Hundreds of scholarships have been given with countless stories of successful honourees becoming law enforcers.

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Scholarship Recipients



Aiyana Thomas

Sponsored by the Toronto Police Services Board

Aiyana Thomas is pursuing a degree in Criminology at Kwantlen Polytechnic University. She aspires to have a career in forensics, and this scholarship will allow her to continue her passion for justice and community service.

As a Black woman, Aiyana's experiences have deepened her commitment to advocating for marginalized communities. Inspired by trailblazers like Rose Fortune, Canada's first known Black police officer, she is determined to break barriers and make a meaningful impact in the justice system. Through her work in forensic science, she aims to address systemic challenges affecting Black communities and promote justice and equality.

Alongside her academic pursuits, Aiyana mentors youth through Ethos Lab, helping them build skills and confidence. Her volunteer work with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police is enhancing her understanding of the justice system and strengthening her leadership abilities. She is thankful to A.B.L.E. for this scholarship opportunity, which will alleviate the financial burden of her education and empower her to continue making a positive impact.

Alexis Remekie

Sponsored by the Toronto Transit Commission



Alexis Remekie is a third-year undergraduate student at Ontario Tech University, recognized on both the Dean's and President's lists with an A+ GPA. She is pursuing a degree in Criminology and Justice Studies, with a research focus on correctional community re-entry, particularly the unique challenges faced by formerly incarcerated Black queer, trans, and non-binary individuals. Her work examines the intersections of gender, sexual orientation, and race and how these factors influence re-entry experiences.

As an undergraduate research fellow under the supervision of Dr. Wesley Crichlow, Alexis is contributing to Canada's first bilingual Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) project, which investigates the carceral intersections of gender identity and anti-Black racism in the re-entry process. Her research is both academically enriching and personally meaningful as a Black queer criminologist committed to addressing over-incarceration and advancing rehabilitation programs.

Alexis aims to pursue a Master's and Ph.D. in criminology, with the ultimate goal of becoming a professor dedicated to mentoring future Black criminologists. The A.B.L.E. scholarship opportunity provides essential support for her ongoing research and efforts to contribute to meaningful reforms in the criminal justice system.

Benjamin Harvey

Sponsored by Humber Polytechnic - Faculty of Social and Community Services



Benjamin Harvey is enrolled in the Honours Bachelor of Applied Science in Justice Studies program at the University of Guelph-Humber.

Benjamin's interest in law enforcement comes from his desire to pursue a career path that could lead him to impact others' lives and his own in a positive way. He believes his educational experience will provide him with the knowledge and understanding to serve the diverse population of Ontario equitably.

He has consistently volunteered at his church in the audio-visual department and was recognized as a standout volunteer with Streams Community Hub, a youth-focused arts-based charity dedicated to empowering youth through creative expression.

Benjamin is grateful for the A.B.L.E. scholarship, which will support him in his pursuit of becoming a police officer so he can serve his community and positively affect those around him.



D-yana Bommier

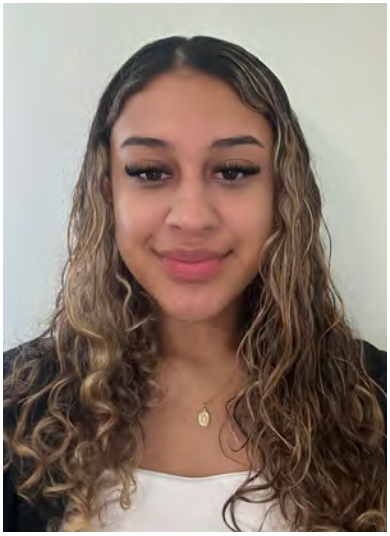
Sponsored by CN Police

D-yana Bommier's professional journey demonstrates her versatility and unwavering commitment to community service. She has successfully transitioned from psycho-social worker to mental health educator and financial advisor. In leading a coalition of eight community organizations, she has addressed a range of social challenges, underscoring her dedication to community welfare. Through her active participation in various committees, D-yana has gained valuable experience in leadership, diversity and governance, particularly through her roles at Concordia University and as president of Acsion.

As a member of La Jeune Chambre de Commerce de Montreal (JCCM), D-yana completed leadership and entrepreneurial programs that align with her vision of fostering inclusive decision-making. Her involvement with the 1834 Operation Black Vote and the Black Wealth Club highlights her commitment to advancing Black leadership and wealth generation. Additionally, as an ambassador for Concertation Montréal, she inspires underrepresented groups to engage in governance and leadership roles.

Currently pursuing a Bachelor of Law, followed by a Juris Doctor, the A.B.L.E. scholarship will provide D-yana the opportunity to address systemic issues, advocate for justice and uplift marginalized communities through impactful legal reform.

Scholarship Recipients



Isabella Bedoya-Romero

Sponsored by Toronto Police Service

Isabella Bedoya-Romero is a second-generation immigrant and has firsthand experience with the challenges faced by newcomers to Canada. This connection has driven her passion for supporting immigrant and refugee communities, leading her to pursue the Social Service Worker program at Niagara College.

In Isabella's field placement at the YMCA, she focused on providing comprehensive support to newcomers, including mental health counselling, community support, job search assistance and access to essential resources.

This experience equipped her with the skills to assist immigrants and refugees in navigating their new environments, aligning with A.B.L.E.'s goal to bridge gaps between law enforcement and the community.

She would like to thank A.B.L.E. for this scholarship. It is pivotal in her journey to become an effective advocate and social service professional.

Maheep Grewal

Sponsored by the Ontario Provincial Police Association



Maheep Grewal is currently pursuing a Bachelor of Criminology at Kwantlen Polytechnic University.

Maheep's interest in criminology and policing stems from a profound desire to contribute to a justice system that is fair, equitable and reflective of our diverse society. Growing up, she witnessed firsthand the challenges and systemic biases that various communities often face within the justice system.

Her academic journey equipped her with a deep understanding of criminological theories. She is interested in exploring restorative justice approaches, community policing and initiatives that bridge the gap between law enforcement and the community.

Receiving the A.B.L.E. scholarship not only supports her educational endeavours but also enable her to contribute meaningfully to the justice sector and the community. She is determined to honour the legacy of Rose Fortune and Peter C. Butler III by embodying the values of integrity, justice and service in her future career as a police officer.

Oraydo Poyser

Sponsored by York Regional Police



As a former Jamaican police officer, Oraydo Poyser recognizes the value of community-focused policing. He had a significant role in proactive community involvement initiatives that prioritized resolving problems. A fundamental aspect of Oraydo's identity is the dedication to serve the community. He has volunteered at several community and policing organizations while studying Police Foundations part time. His involvement in volunteer work and community service has provided him with valuable experiences that will be carried into his future career.

Oraydo believes that a career in policing offers a unique opportunity to make a tangible difference. Oraydo aims to gain comprehensive knowledge and skills that will equip him to handle the complexities of contemporary law enforcement with integrity, empathy and professionalism. Oraydo's primary goal upon completing Police Foundations is to become a police officer who promotes community policing, advocates for youth programs, champions mental health awareness and enhances diversity and inclusion.



Ranisha King

Sponsored by Dr. Cyrus

Ranisha King is currently enrolled in the Bachelor of Critical Criminology program at Brock University. She has chosen to dedicate herself to a life of community service. A Rexdale, Toronto, Ontario, native, Ranisha understands the link between socio-economics and crime.

She aspires to be a mentor to members of her community, which she believes will be instrumental in their positive transformation. She also aspires to use her degree in Critical Criminology to become a life coach and counsellor for youth in the criminal justice system.

Ranisha's goal is to give a voice to society's downtrodden and understand their circumstances, letting them know they are not alone and that support is available.

She aims to develop workshops for the education system to improve student-teacher relationships and advocate for increased funding toward the employment of anger management coaches, additional school counsellors and on-site crisis intervention teams.

Scholarship Recipients



Reine Ndome

Sponsored by Dr. Lancelot Brown

Reine Ndome is a first generation fourth-year criminology student at the University of Windsor. She is a Black woman with roots in Cameroon and the Ivory Coast in Africa.

Reine has aspired to work either as a police constable or as a Canadian Border Services Officer since childhood. She volunteers with the victim/witness assistance program at the Windsor Ontario Court of Justice, where she supports individuals who have experienced trauma and gain deeper insights into the justice system.

Reine also serves as the equity, diversity and inclusion student supervisor for Lancer Recreation, ensuring that every visitor to the Toldo Lancer Centre feels included and valued. She has partnered to develop programs for low-income youth in Windsor, providing them with free access to the facility and teaching them life skills.

Receiving the A.B.L.E. scholarship serves as proof for Reine that persistent hard work pays off.

Success Ogboe

Sponsored by the Ontario Provincial Police



Success Ogboe has been accepted into Osgoode Hall Law School as an aspiring lawyer. He wishes to encourage positive change in his community.

Success' journey has been shaped by a desire to bridge the gaps in the justice system, to advocate for those who are often overlooked and create pathways for others to succeed.

He has an academic background in criminology and has volunteered extensively with The Spot Youth Centre, Bridging Borders with Inmates and Hoop 2 Hope.

Success' decision to pursue a career in law was due to years of witnessing the disparities in how justice is administered. He chose to study criminology to understand the root causes of crime, the systemic factors that contribute to inequality and how the justice system can be reformed to better serve all.

Success believes his academic background, volunteer experience and commitment to justice are what make him deserving of the A.B.L.E. scholarship.

Vanessa Budimunda

Sponsored by the Canadian Police Knowledge Network



Vanessa Budimunda is a trilingual third-year Juris Doctor candidate and a varsity basketball athlete at the University of Windsor. Resilience, perseverance and initiative are the main themes defining her journey to the legal profession.

As the youngest child of a low-income household led by an immigrant single mother of eight, Vanessa always saw her challenges as opportunities to author a different chapter in her legacy. She hopes to create spaces for Black people and women to lead.

The financial burden of such professional aspirations is immense and heavy. Being an A.B.L.E. scholarship recipient will assist Vanessa in her career pursuits, enabled by the work initiated by Rose Fortune during those days when Black people could not enjoy their Charter-protected rights and freedoms.

Earning this scholarship will also bring Vanessa closer to Peter Butler III's legacy by becoming her generation's first professional basketball athlete and lawyer.

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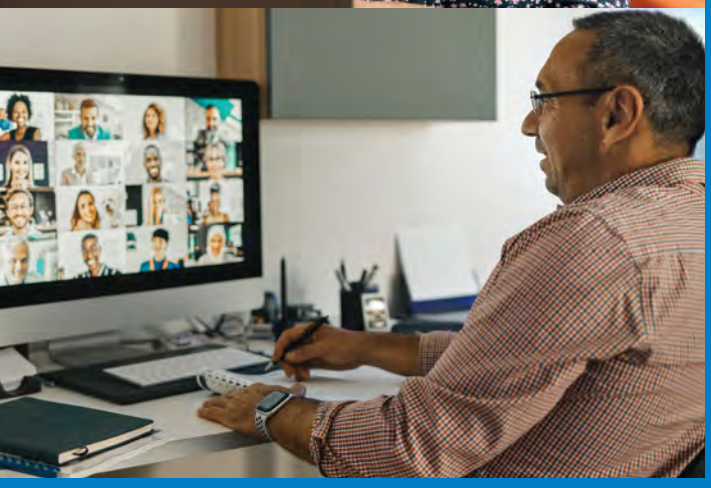

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About the A.B.L.E. Awards

In 2023, the A.B.L.E. Board of Directors announced a new set of awards to be presented on an annual basis. These include:

Rising Star
Recognizes an individual with less than 10 years work experience, but who has demonstrated excellence in their field exemplifying professionalism, dedication and teamwork.

Community Leadership
Recognizes an individual who has gone above and beyond to serve their community. An ambassador of their profession and a role model who made a tremendous impact on the community they serve.

Teamwork
Recognizes a team who has performed exceptionally well in the execution of a project, initiative, program or a specific task or assignment significantly impacting their organization.

Leadership Excellence
Recognizes an individual who has displayed exemplary professionalism over many years. This individual is renowned in their organization as a leader and with a high degree of integrity, commitment and courage.

Program Innovation
Recognizes an individual who has created, developed or led an initiative that has contributed to public safety, job improvement or enhanced community engagement and relations.

Trailblazer
Recognizes an individual who is a pioneer in their career and has made significant contributions to their organization.

Legacy
Recognizes an individual who has made a profound and lasting contribution to law enforcement over an extended period. This individual has left an indelible mark on their organization and community.

President's
This award recognizes an individual who has demonstrated extraordinary dedication and commitment to the goals and objectives of A.B.L.E. This award recipient is a leader who goes above and beyond to positively influence the community and the law enforcement landscape in Canada. This individual serves with passion, strives for excellence and makes a difference to the lives of many.

Rising Star Award Recipient



Gelila Geremew

Gelila is an exceptional young leader whose achievements, both personal and professional, embody the qualities recognized by this award. She has always demonstrated an unshakable commitment to fostering positive change in her community. She has worked tirelessly to uplift marginalized voices, promote inclusion and address systemic challenges faced by Black youth.

She earned her Honours Bachelor's Degree from Carleton University in less than three years and graduated among the top in her class. She was recognized as a member of the Golden Key International Honour Society.

Gelila served as a volunteer at the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities. Gelila's leadership also extended to her role as co-president of Movement YA, a faith-based young adult group focused on promoting human rights and social justice.

In 2022, Gelila became a student ambassador and interned at the Senate of Canada. As a 4th Year Representative for the Carleton University Political Science Society in 2023, she was elected president of the Jaku Konbit Charter Club, creating a vital space for Black students on campus.

She has been honoured with the Honourable Walter Baker Scholarship, the Canadian Platinum Jubilee emblem and the Black History Ottawa Community Builder Award for her outstanding contributions to community service.

One of her key initiatives is the Black Youth Rising project, which aims to create economic opportunities for young adults.

In collaboration with the Government of Canada, Gelila has worked to address anti-Black racism, systemic discrimination and the overrepresentation of Black people in the criminal justice system.

Gelila Geremew is an exemplary candidate for the Rising Star Award, as she consistently demonstrates excellence in her work, a deep commitment to her community and a passion for social justice. Her outstanding academic and professional achievements make her a standout young leader.

Community Leadership Award Recipient



Nicole De Roché

Ms. Nicole De Roché has strong leadership, coordination, communication and interpersonal skills. She is honest and trustworthy and does everything whole-heartedly. She always has a professional demeanour and is open to learning and giving her time to the community as a volunteer. Nicole starts with a need to find programs for her children or family members and ends up giving her time to support a worthy cause.

At Outports and Postal Operations District, Nicole has taken the lead in organizing Christmas dinners since 2012 and runs the tuck shop with a co-worker.

Since 2021, Nicole has been volunteering with the York Region Alliance of African Canadian Communities, Sankofa program. Sankofa provides a safe place for students and mentors to discuss cultural identity and exposes students to African and Caribbean cultures.

Nicole volunteered with Build a Dream's "Dreamer Day—Celebrating International Day of the Girl." The organization delivers special programs to encourage and empower female students to explore careers where women are underrepresented. A picture of Nicole's table at the Palais Royale is featured on the WE BUILD A DREAM 10-Year Anniversary Gala. Nicole is volunteering at the Dreamer Day event again this year.

In 2023, Nicole was approached by Cheryl Lewis, Executive Director of the African Canadian Christian Network (ACCN), regarding registering her son for the UMOJA Robotics team. The ACCN inspires black youth to pursue STEM-related studies and careers. Nicole signed her son up for the program, and she also volunteers in any way she can, including making buttons for the team for advertisement and fundraising. The UMOJA robotics group won the Impact Award and qualified for the World Robotics Championship in Houston, Texas. Nicole travelled to Houston to support her son and the team!

Teamwork Award Recipients



Royal Canadian Mounted Police Surrey Detachment

An investigative team consisting of the following Surrey Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) officers: Team Commander, Staff Sergeant Derek Bonner; Primary Investigator, Sergeant Wahid Hamidi; File Coordinator, Corporal Destiny Symonds and Undercover Operator, Sergeant Andre Johnny. This team demonstrated exceptional execution of a project investigation (Project EPA), which resulted in the arrest of an international sextortion suspect in Nigeria.

On February 13, 2023, in Surrey, British Columbia, a 14-year-old male was found deceased at home by his family. The cause of death was suicide. As a result of the police investigation, it was discovered that a suspect had been sextorting the victim through online communication.

The investigative team initiated communication with the suspect for the purpose of gathering information and evidence. Eventually, the suspect's identity and location were revealed. The decision was made to send Surrey RCMP members to Nigeria to further this investigation.

Surrey RCMP Serious Crime Unit (SCU) members travelled to Lagos, Nigeria, and with the assistance of the RCMP Deployed Analyst, they joined the American Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Australian Federal Police. They worked collaboratively with all partners during a two-week period, where 15 sextortion suspects were charged and arrested.

This investigation is an exemplary demonstration of the skill, dedication and perseverance of the Surrey RCMP SCU working with international partners to identify an overseas suspect. The broader impact of this investigation is the hope that the situation can be used to educate youth on safe practices when using the Internet.



Top image:
Sgt. Andre Johnny, Nigerian Crown Counsel, and Sgt. Wahid Hamidi.

Bottom image:
Surrey RCMP Investigative Team with Nigerian Economic and Fraud Crimes Commission (EFCC).

From left:
Surrey RCMP:
Sgt. Wahid Hamidi (fifth), Cpl. Destiny Symonds (seventh), and S/Sgt. Derek Bonner (eighth).

Leadership Excellence Award Recipient



Tennyson Ramsay

Tennyson Ramsay is deserving of the Leadership Excellence Award as he continues his journey to make a clear path for fairness and equality within the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC). Tennyson was hired in 1992 as a Special Constable and was the first and only African Canadian hired. During his time as a Special Constable, he faced many inequities, and he still came in to work every day. He now holds the rank of Superintendent/Manager for Special Constables for the TTC.

Despite negative comments and ridicule, Tennyson performed his job with pride and passion. After years of hard work, Tennyson became an acting Supervisor to cover off shifts and assist where needed. He ultimately gained a full-time position as an Acting Supervisor with the Fare Inspectors. This position propelled him and gave him a new life. He became a coach officer for new constables. Many of his trainees later became supervisors or were hired by police agencies. He was a mentor to so many and continued to push through any challenges he faced.

More opportunities presented themselves as new department heads ensured fair promotional processes and a healthy working environment. Under his leadership as the Superintendent/Manager for Special Constables, he implemented new procedures and processes, including the Coach Officer Program and making it part of the promotional process. He then added a prerequisite to become an acting supervisor and subsequently a full-time supervisor as part of the promotional process. This was necessary for individuals to demonstrate that they put in the necessary work. He led by example and never complained.

Tennyson Ramsay displayed exemplary professionalism over a prolonged period. He is known in his organization as a leader and has displayed a high degree of integrity, commitment and courage in the performance of his duties.

Program Innovation Award Recipient



Enyinnah Okere

Enyinnah is a civilian employee within Edmonton Police Service (EPS) as the Chief Operations Officer for the Office of the Chief of Police. Enyinnah provides executive and organizational level governance, strategic planning and management for the service. He began this role in September 2023, after three years as Chief Operating Officer of the EPS' first Community Safety and Wellbeing Bureau (CSWB).

Enyinnah is a driver of change within the EPS and the larger community and was instrumental in the development of a new strategic plan which updated training and how the EPS communicates with diverse communities. He developed practicums that pair recruit officers with partners who serve our vulnerable populations, and created the Nîsohkamâkewin Council to address inequalities and barriers faced by Indigenous Peoples in policing.

In 2020, as the Chief Operating Officer (Deputy Chief) of the Community Safety and Well-being Bureau—a first of its kind—he focused on developing the right community partnerships to help remove both chronic offenders and vulnerable populations unnecessarily entrenched in the justice system.

In January 2021, Human-centred Engagement and Liaison Partnership Unit (HELP) was established with the vision of diverting vulnerable individuals from unnecessary involvement with the criminal justice system and into the social supports they require.

In late 2022, with proven results, Enyinnah successfully lobbied the Government of Alberta to provide funding to embed HELP Teams in all EPS Patrol branches across Edmonton, along with a triage system to manage the complex needs of those struggling with addictions, mental health and homelessness.

The EPS HELP Teams were awarded the 2022 Alberta Justice and Solicitor General Community Justice Award in the 'Innovation' category for its collaboration between police officers and agency navigators to direct vulnerable individuals into needed human services rather than further involvement with the criminal justice system.

Trailblazer Award Recipient



Wesley Erskine

Staff Sergeant (Retired) Wesley Erskine graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from York University and later completed leadership training courses.

Staff Sergeant Erskine was hired by the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) in 1989. His passion for policing stemmed from a movement to change the perception that young Black men are drug dealers. To him, policing is an honourable profession.

In 1992, Staff Sergeant Erskine was seconded to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and was made a Coroner's Constable to assist with the Raymond Lawrence Inquiry. The final report submitted to the government concluded that visible minorities, particularly African Canadians, experienced discrimination in policing and the criminal justice system.

Staff Sergeant Erskine was promoted to Sergeant and served at the OPP's Toronto Detachment. He took assignments, including Security Manager at Osgoode Hall and as a recruiter in the OPP's Uniform Recruitment Unit.

A people-oriented person, Staff Sergeant Erskine was seen as an excellent role model who positively influenced individuals considering a policing career. An innovative leader, he encouraged and supported colleagues who were new to the organization and blazed a trail for others to follow.

After being elevated to the rank of Staff Sergeant and Executive Officer to a Deputy Commissioner, Staff Sergeant Erskine worked in several departments at the OPP, including the Offender Transport Unit and Community Safety Services.

Prior to his retirement, Staff Sergeant Erskine was assigned to the Office of Professionalism, Respect, Inclusion and Leadership as the Community Engagement Lead for hate-motivated incidents and crime. He boldly spearheaded change with a transformative initiative that internally tracked hate crimes while maintaining a positive outlook.

Staff Sergeant Erskine received several awards, including the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal, the Commissioner's Citation for Bravery and the Commissioner's Coin for Leadership. He also received the Police Exemplary Service Medal.

Legacy Award Recipient



Patrice Vilceus

Mr. Patrice Vilceus is Commander of the Professional Relations Division at the Service de police de la Ville de Montréal (SPVM)—the City of Montréal Police Service.

Since joining the service 30 years ago, Mr. Vilceus has remained true to his values, leading a tireless fight against inequity and injustice. His commitment to equality and respect of differences is a source of inspiration not only for his colleagues within the SPVM, but also for young members of the community. As a mentor and a godparent, he plays a critical role in educating and supporting these young people, tendering advice to them as well as giving them hope and motivation to follow in his footsteps.

His outstanding leadership in the Groupe d'Action pour le Respect de la Différence (GARD)—the Action Group for the Respect of Differences—demonstrates his determination to foster an inclusive environment within the SPVM. He has shown the courage to express himself about things the way they are, to face challenges upfront and to implement significant changes that benefit everyone.

Furthermore, Mr. Vilceus embodies hope for future generations of police officers from the Black community. Thanks to his deep desire to make the SPVM a truly inclusive service, he is paving the way for a new era of justice and equity within policing.

For all these reasons, Mr. Vilceus is the ideal beneficiary of the Legacy Award 2024. His legacy, one that is characterized by leadership, respect for differences and a long-term commitment to inclusion, will continue to inspire and to guide our organization and our community for the years to come.

A.B.L.E.'s Work is More Vital than Ever

by Dr. Joe Couto - Director of Government Relations and Communications for the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police



The Association of Black Law Enforcers (A.B.L.E.) represents more than just a professional organization—it embodies a powerful force for change within the fabric of our justice system. To me, A.B.L.E. stands as a beacon of progress, advocating for representation, equity and justice in law enforcement. Its work is crucial in shaping a future where police services are truly reflective of the diverse communities they serve. This mission is not only meaningful but essential for building trust between law enforcement and marginalized communities.

One of the reasons A.B.L.E.'s work is so important is its impact on the construction of police identity, a concept I have explored in my academic research. The identity of police officers and others in the justice sector is shaped by the cultures, experiences and values that officers bring with them to the profession, as well as the deeply rooted, traditional police culture. In a field where police identity has historically been homogenous, A.B.L.E. plays a vital role in ensuring that Black officers can contribute their unique perspectives and experiences to policing. This helps to challenge stereotypes, reduce systemic biases and foster a more inclusive law enforcement culture.

The work A.B.L.E. does in mentorship and education is particularly vital. By supporting the professional development of Black officers and encouraging young people from underrepresented communities to pursue careers in law enforcement, A.B.L.E. helps to break down systemic barriers and create pathways for success. This, in turn, enriches policing by introducing new voices and ideas that are critical for effective community policing.

I am proud to support A.B.L.E. because its vision aligns with my belief in the importance of equity in all sectors of society, especially policing. In a time when communities are calling for reform and better accountability, A.B.L.E.'s efforts to diversify law enforcement and promote fairness in the justice system are more necessary than ever. The organization's dedication to empowering Black law enforcers ensures that the next generation of officers will serve with empathy, understanding and integrity, reflecting the true values of justice and community care.

A.B.L.E. continues to inspire me, and I am honoured to support its vital mission.

Pioneering New Opportunities

Brooke Chambers



Brooke Chambers once held the title of the youngest recruit ever hired by the Ontario Provincial Police at the age of 19. She also stood alone as the sole Black female officer in the service among 4,535 members, 224 women, 31 First Nations and 23 racial minorities. She was appointed at a strategic time in OPP history during the celebration of the 15th year of women becoming officers.

Her nearly nine-year law enforcement career was marked by a series of pioneering undertakings where ingenuity, collective effort, community involvement and advocacy took centre stage. She found it exhilarating; each day presented itself as an exciting escapade, a true case of learning on the fly.

She left university and a spot as a point guard on the Ryerson Varsity Women's Basketball Team after being approached to consider policing by the highest-ranking Black officer in the OPP, Staff Sergeant Jay Hope. She jumped at the chance to pursue this male-dominated career that offered pay equality and the chance for advancement. Brooke filled out the OPP application and immediately began to study to ensure she would meet the qualifications. Well-read as an environmental science major and incredibly fit as an elite athlete in track and field, basketball and bodybuilding, she qualified with outstanding marks in all areas.

The OPP wanted to see Brooke included in the 15-year celebration of women and consequently reversed her onboarding schedule. She started in the field as a traffic officer and attended the Ontario Police College four months later.

On the first day on the job, Brooke was met with reluctance to train her from the entire platoon. Despite his brief tenure and barely past his mid-twenties with just a year and a half of experience, Constable Morgado stepped up to become her coach officer. When queried, Brooke remembers him as committed and supportive in guiding her through the challenges of learning to be a cop. As many officers commented, she was young enough to be their daughter and just old enough to drink.

Fortuitously for her, Downsview, labelled as one of the busiest and consequently least sought-after detachments in Ontario, became her initial placement. This, however, aligned with her preferences perfectly. She yearned to be in Toronto, close to family and friends, surrounded by people who appreciated her unique presence. She often waved as she passed by in her cruiser.

Her journey was not without its share of challenges. As a young, Black, female officer in a field dominated by mostly seasoned veterans, she often found herself at the intersection of scrutiny and skepticism. Yet, Brooke approached these obstacles with a mixture of determination and diplomacy. She recognized that her presence in the force was more than just a personal achievement; it was a statement of breaking barriers for all women, particularly women of colour. Her role required her to navigate the intricacies of law enforcement and the nuanced dynamics of being a trailblazer in a traditionally narrow-minded and patriarchal environment.

Despite the demanding nature of her role, she never wavered in her commitment to community engagement. When approached by the OPP to assist in recruiting efforts, she agreed without hesitation to participate in speaking engagements, being photographed for marketing materials, attending career fairs, being interviewed for news articles and assisting all those wanting to be police officers.

Brooke's efforts extended to other areas in the community, including A.B.L.E. She assisted with the first Annual Scholarship Awards Ball 32 years ago and attended many balls in subsequent years with family, friends and colleagues. For Brooke, policing was not solely about law and order but about building bridges and fostering trust. She saw the badge not just as a symbol of authority; it was a conduit for connection. In every interaction, whether with colleagues, civilians or suspects, she sought to embody a holistic approach to policing—one that was as much about listening as it was about enforcing.

Community engagement came naturally to Brooke, the daughter of Bernice Carnegie, co-founder of the Herbert H. Carnegie Future Aces Foundation and granddaughter of Dr. Herbert H. Carnegie, a Canadian hockey icon and 2022 Hockey Hall of Famer. Her family background in unifying community was ingrained in her from childhood. And so, when the founding members of A.B.L.E. wanted to implement a scholarship program, they consulted with a veteran in community giving—Brooke's mom, Bernice.

It was a hard decision for Brooke to leave policing after having embraced many roles, including coach officer, high school liaison officer, policy and planning in the Solicitor General's Office, fraud investigation and the training of correctional officers. Brooke loved every position, but none more than training.

After the birth of her daughter, Kyla, in 1996, Brooke did not return to duty. Instead, she resigned, not knowing she was suffering from undiagnosed postpartum depression and other serious chronic conditions. Motherhood and taking care of her health became a priority. This defining moment changed her life's direction personally and professionally. Several years following her policing career, Brooke was diagnosed with a mental illness. Learning to effectively manage and cope with life's daily challenges has become one of her assets. As a result of this lived experience, she found the courage to carve out a niche in the mental health field as an advisor, speaker, trainer and consultant.

Brooke's tenure as an officer paved the way for her active engagement in 2018, where she played a pivotal role in advocating for mental health resources. Her compelling discussion at Parliament Hill catalyzed her subsequent appointment by the Federal Minister of Health to serve on the Ministerial Advisory Council for Mental Health. This position, in turn, opened doors for her current advisory role with the Chronic Disease Prevention Division at the Public Health Agency of Canada. As a member of the Working Group for the Mental Health of Black Canadians Fund, she has overseen the allocation of $10 million of funding to 23 Black-led mental health organizations across Canada, with an additional $4 million set for distribution in the coming years. Her commitment to mental health advocacy is further demonstrated through her work as a trainer, which equips front-line healthcare professionals with skills to excel in peer support and recovery, enriching the community's mental well-being. In addition, she is the Community Mental Health Advisor for The Pause Technologies Inc., an AI-enabled technology company customizing experiences tailored to the unique needs of women embracing menopause.

Brooke remains a strong advocate for women in policing, and her training and years of experience in the service have paved the way for her to open doors of opportunity for others.

Paving The Way for Black Women in the OPP

Laura Karsseboom (Emery)



Laura Karsseboom spent 30 years protecting communities as a police officer. Retiring in July 2019, Laura's contributions to policing and her historic milestones have lifted and paved the way for other Black and racialized women to take on leadership positions in law enforcement.

Highlighting a significant point in her professional career, in 2004, Laura was the first Black female to be promoted to the rank of sergeant with the Ontario Provincial Police.

Her amazing accomplishment was highlighted in an article at the time by Ron Fanfair. Enjoy reading that article below.



OPP gets first Black female sergeant

Article by Ron Fanfair

Laura Emery is the first Black woman to hold the rank of sergeant with the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP). She was promoted earlier this month, "I am absolutely elated," declared a delighted Emery who was in Toronto last week for the National Black Police Association and Association of Black Law Enforcers march and memorial service. "I have accomplished one of my most sought after goals and I am very proud of what I have done.

"I know that this new position might present some expectations and I am quite prepared to meet them and to prove that I am worthy of this historic appointment. I have worked hard and will continue to work hard to advance my career and make a difference in the communities in which I serve."

Born in Toronto to a Cree mother and Black father, Emery was adopted by a Dutch couple and spent her first eight years in this city and Brampton before relocating to Barrie. A graduate of Georgian College, she taught briefly before pursuing a law enforcement career.

"Spending 18 months as an auxiliary officer reinforced my belief that policing was a career I should vigorously pursue," Emery, a 17-year police officer, said. "I sent out applications to various police forces and was accepted by the Alliston Police Department."

The Alliston Police Service was disbanded in 1992 and taken over by the OPP.

Deputy Commissioner Jay Hope played a key role in Emery's promotion.

[...] "she has a significant period of policing under her belt and is aptly qualified for the position. To those who say we don't have qualified people for these positions, I say shake the bushes and you will find them. I did that and I am happy to have her under my command," said Hope.

Emery, who has served as a court officer, acting platoon sergeant, and coach officer, says she has found policing to be quite a fulfilling career.

"One of the reasons I became an officer is that I wanted to give something back to the community," she explained. "I think there is no other profession that offers you this opportunity than being in law enforcement. It's a rewarding career and one that I always encourage young people to consider as a career option."

Expanding Our Support for A.B.L.E. Members

The numbers are startling.

A study reported by The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health found the following:

- 52% of law enforcement and public safety professionals reported moderate to severe stress.
- 88% reported moderate to severe anxiety.
- 87% reported moderate to severe depression.

What may be more shocking is that a study by the Canadian Institute for Public Safety Research and Treatment found that civilian members were more likely to display mental health-related symptoms (32.8%) compared to uniform public safety personnel (22.7%).

Careers in law enforcement and public safety involve complex work that challenges even the most resilient among us. The higher risk of experiencing occupational stress injuries because of regular exposure to traumatic incidents leaves us vulnerable.

We also know that A.B.L.E. members are not just affected by operational injuries but can be harmed by organizational stress and culture. Add in our intersectionalities of race, gender, religion and other factors, and it is clear that we need trauma-informed resources that can help support our members, as these experiences not only affect us but can have a profound impact on our families, friends and loved ones.

Over the years, A.B.L.E. has played a vital role in supporting our members' mental and emotional well-being. Still, we recognize that we must do more to connect and share our experiences in safe, trusting, empathetic and comfortable spaces.

This is why A.B.L.E. has launched a Peer Support Network.

When A.B.L.E. was established in October 1992, it was on the principle of being a force for positive change in the areas where our members lived and worked.

The A.B.L.E. community, including members from many law enforcement and public safety organizations, is vital to our collective strength. Our diversity spans corrections, police services, municipal, provincial and federal governments, the judiciary, and many others. Our Peer Support Network will provide our members with a listening ear and a conduit to necessary help. It can assist you in navigating the mental health supports in place at your organizations and even assist you in finding the right professional help. We know that peer support can help resolve issues before they escalate to crisis levels and can also empower people who are suffering from mental health issues to improve their self-efficacy.

For our members who have reached out to us for support when their days have felt the darkest and heaviest, we are committed to building more capacity to support you.

A.B.L.E. is excited to build this network across the country, and we look forward to connecting with our members more about this essential initiative in the near future.

We can end the stigma. We can collectively advocate for change. We can ensure A.B.L.E. members are well.

Uniting Passion and Purpose

Constable Andre Johnson



Since his first A.B.L.E. Scholarship Gala in 2013, Andre Johnson was struck by the power of safe spaces for racialized law enforcement members and allies to gather and celebrate their successes. As a proud A.B.L.E. member, Andre has been a part of the Annual Scholarship and Awards Gala Planning Committee for several years. A.B.L.E.'s investment in racialized youth resonates with Andre's passion for youth empowerment, inspiring him to continue his dedicated involvement.

From a young age, Andre's dream was to follow in the footsteps of his family members in Jamaica who were police officers. Born in North York and raised in Brampton, Andre's summers in New York City with his aunties, where he frequently heard the sirens of the New York Police Department (NYPD), further fueled his passion. This early exposure to the calling of service led him to his career as a police officer.

Andre joined the Waterloo Regional Police Service (WRPS) in late 2011. His journey to WRPS started after graduating from the University of Guelph with a Bachelor of Arts and Sciences degree, minoring in psychology: brain and cognition, and political science. During his career, Andre has served in various roles, including neighbourhood policing patrol, school resource officer, public information officer and uniform recruiting.

Since August 2024, Andre has been a pivotal part of the WRPS Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Unit, with a portfolio internally focused on member support and engagement. This role gives Andre a unique vantage point to encourage membership from among Black and Racial Minority Law Enforcers and persons and organizations interested in furthering A.B.L.E.'s objectives. Andre's role in EDI will highlight efforts in the WRPS EDI Strategic Plan of a secure and supportive workforce, leadership that reflects Waterloo Region, access to a diversity of available talent and diverse-competent members. He looks forward to supporting the WRPS Strategic Goal of centering wellness, development, empowerment and respect in all that WRPS does to ensure members thrive.

Andre further personifies A.B.L.E.'s goals of providing information, support, counselling and professional advice through his leadership in peer support initiatives, which is a testament to his commitment to the well-being of his colleagues. As a former long-time member of the Peer Support Team, he was one of two co-coordinators who ran and built a team of approximately 70 members. Their role is crucial in helping individuals who experience work-related critical incidents, career challenges and personal issues that could impact their well-being. Andre's fervour for mental wellness and supporting others also led him to complete his Master of Arts in Counselling Psychology at Yorkville University in 2024. When not at work, Andre

continues to be a servant leader as a registered psychotherapist (qualifying) and focuses his counselling practice on trauma and racial trauma, grief, anxiety, depression, PTSD, low self-esteem and general life stressors.

Andre has also lent his expertise in strategic communication from his years as a public spokesperson and media relations officer for his police service as part of a working group to build an A.B.L.E. corporate communications strategy focused on enhancing government relations and advocating for social and professional change.

Andre was a Torstar's Community Advisory Council member, meeting with politicians, Torstar leadership and community agencies to discuss police-media relations to ensure our unique stories are shared.

Andre truly embodies the spirit of A.B.L.E., where his passion, purpose and persistence drive him to leave law enforcement and his communities better than he found them.



A Trailblazer in Law Enforcement

Staff Superintendent Kelly Skinner



Staff Superintendent Kelly Skinner is a life-long investigator who discovered her passion for criminal justice at a very young age. The goal became clear after being inspired to join the service in 1998 by retired officer Terry James, the first Black female officer in Toronto Police Service history to perform the full duties of a police officer. Terry, who later became Kelly's mentor, introduced her to the Association of Black Law Enforcers (A.B.L.E.), shaping the foundation of Kelly's career.

Kelly's educational journey reflects her commitment to excellence. She obtained a diploma in Law and Security from Sheridan College and earned Bachelor of Arts in Criminal Justice from the University of Guelph-Humber. She is now overseeing the East Field Community Safety Command, which encompasses eight uniform divisions in the East End of the City of Toronto.

With a wealth of experience in uniform policing, Kelly developed an extensive background in various forms of investigation. As she moved through Major Squads, Kelly honed strengths in authoring and executing Part VI affidavits; search warrants; investigation of serious violent crimes; drug investigations and the gathering of gang intelligence. Kelly has led a number of uniform divisions and was a Duty Senior Officer for the Toronto Police Operations Centre (TPOC).

Kelly's dedication to fostering strong relationships and collaboration between law enforcement agencies and communities is evident through her involvement in the service's Police and Community Engagement Review (PACER) 2.0 committee and her role as a member of the Board of Directors with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Toronto. Kelly is also a long-time member of A.B.L.E., where she was a former Executive Board Member and an A.B.L.E. 1996 Scholarship Award Recipient.

Kelly firmly believes in the importance of collaboration between law enforcement agencies and the communities they serve, which leads to increased trust and positive outcomes.

"This is a significant achievement," said Kelly on being the first female Black officer to reach the rank of Staff Superintendent. "My family's support has played a crucial role in my journey and promotes the importance of a strong support system. It also highlights the progress being made towards diversity and inclusion within our Service and, hopefully, this inspires other young women—particularly those of colour—to aspire to leadership roles within law enforcement where we are under-represented."

Kelly's story is one of resilience, dedication and a vision for a more inclusive and collaborative future in law enforcement. Her achievements pave the way for the next generation of leaders to reach new heights.

Inspiring and Leading Others

Constable Melanie Moulton



Constable Melanie Moulton attended Fanshawe College in London, Ontario, to study Music Industry Arts Production and Interactive Multi-Media. Melanie's first career was in music production and is a self-taught creative painter.

Melanie began working in law enforcement as a Court Officer for the Toronto Police, and went on to become a police officer with the Durham Regional Police Service (DRPS) for 15 years.

Melanie is experienced in various roles such as uniform patrol, homicide investigations, criminal investigative bureau, school liaison and equity and inclusion unit duties.

Melanie has always been committed to inspiring young Black girls to pursue a career in policing, by visiting schools and participating in student conferences in Durham Region to share her policing journey.

Over the past three years, Melanie served as a Liaison Officer in DRPS Youth In Policing Summer and Winter Initiatives, interacting with more than 500 youths during that time.

Melanie is the most tenured Black female officer at DRPS, and is committed to promoting diversity within law enforcement.

She credits A.B.L.E. to have reinforced the importance of focusing on purpose and passion over promotions and not forgetting why she joined law enforcement, as that foundation is crucial in guiding her actions.

Being a Black female officer, constantly being the sole or one of the few in many settings, Melanie credits A.B.L.E. to providing opportunities to envision, aspire and achieve a more influential and significant outlook than she thought possible for herself.

Passion, Purpose, and Persistence: A Secret World Brought to Life

Amar - District Supervisor, Canadian Security Intelligence Service



Amar was born and raised in the Prairies to Guyanese parents. He first began serving his community as a teacher, and after over a decade of shaping young minds, he joined the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) in 2011 as an Intelligence Officer in Ottawa. Amar's diverse career has taken him across the country and around the world, spanning the full breadth of the national security mandate. In 2022, Amar was promoted to Supervisor and now leads a team investigating various threats. We would tell you more but, well, you know…

Amar has always been passionate about building and fostering an equitable workplace, especially when he often didn't see himself reflected in the leadership ranks of the department. One fateful day, while on a return trip to Ottawa, Amar was struck by what many believed to be a lack of progress in executing equitable hiring practices. It was at this point that he decided that meaningful change was needed, so he, along with his trusty sidekicks, embarked on a new mission: to raise awareness and unite the many employees who also wanted change but didn't have a voice or venue to do so. The BIPOC Network was born, and with it came a common purpose that resonated with members and allies alike.

Here is where A.B.L.E. comes in. Amar and others were already familiar with A.B.L.E. and its mandate, so they quickly invited A.B.L.E. President, Jackie Edwards, to speak with the Service Director and leadership team to demonstrate what excellence in advocacy looks like and inspire them to strive for meaningful change. This led to engagement with the head of Human Resources and was preceded by an in-person discussion with the head of the Toronto office. Amar and the team have also attended the annual A.B.L.E. career fair, which is a crucial step towards bringing CSIS out of the shadows and attracting the next generation of diverse talent.

If you say anything about Amar (and people have lots to say about him), everyone will agree that he is persistent! A more fitting word might be relentless or fearless. When people said no or wouldn't give him the time of day, he found another way to get the message to the right decision-maker to be heard. Difficult conversations had to take place, and he never shied away from them, taking the time to sit with anyone who needed him in their corner.

Today, the journey continues. The BIPOC Network sparked something in his organization if nothing more than setting an example that you can change a few hearts and minds with the right people, the right message and a professional approach. We can proudly say that several more affinity groups are all advocating for the same thing: change.

Amar is a member of A.B.L.E. and will continue to be inspired by and surround himself with the trailblazers and transformational leaders that make up the association.

Pioneering Inclusive Leadership and Wellness Across Borders

Jasmine Tatem - Interim Director of Trade Operations for Division of the CBSA



Jasmine Tatem is a dynamic leader serving as the Interim Director of Trade Operations Division for the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). As a member of the executive team, she oversees a team of over 300 employees, guiding the largest regional division within the agency. Prior to this, Jasmine served as the District Director, managing medium-sized airports in the Region of Waterloo, Hamilton, Billy Bishop, as well as the GTA Mail Processing Centre. She focused on staff development and advancing the CBSA's broader enforcement and border management mandate during her tenure.

A champion of innovation and personal growth, Jasmine thrives in coaching others and nurturing their professional personal journey. She believes in achieving career success without sacrificing wellness—a rare balance in high-pressure law enforcement environments. Her approach has earned her a reputation as mentor who inspires others to seek both professional excellence and personal fulfillment.

With over 32 years of public service, Jasmine's most rewarding experiences include travelling across Canada to recruit and engage CBSA officers. These opportunities to network with colleges show a commitment to promoting frontline service while proudly representing intersecting communities.

In recent years, Jasmine has worked tirelessly with local and national CBSA leaders to foster anti-racism awareness and support mechanisms within the workplace. She led an innovative approach to addressing the workplace impacts of systemic racism through a Black-focused wellness workshop. This initiative not only provided validation and permission for employees to self-advocate but also offered resources for ongoing mental health support and built a sense of community among participants. Her commitment to 'lift as you lead' defines her leadership philosophy and reflects her dedication to inclusive and compassionate leadership.

Beyond her professional accomplishments, Jasmine is a writer (of opus in progressu), exploring storytelling and podcasting as creative outlets. She earned a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from the University of Manitoba. She later pursued a Bachelor of Education from Brock University and an Master of Education in Adult Education from the University of Toronto. Jasmine attributes her pursuit of excellence to her Jamaican heritage and credits her parents, as well as her children, as sources of courage and inspiration.

Jasmine acknowledges the pivotal relationships she has cultivated with mentors, including members of the Association of Black Law Enforcers (A.B.L.E.), who played a significant role in helping her navigate the complexities of people management while striving for operational success. For Jasmine, A.B.L.E. represents a vital community where law enforcement professionals can find shared understanding and support despite their varied focus areas. She commends A.B.L.E. for its ongoing commitment to investing in the future of diverse communities through its scholarship programs, mentorship initiatives and unwavering advocacy. This sense of belonging and shared mission has been instrumental in shaping her leadership journey and approach to community building.

Bridging Cultures and Building Trust – The Journey of Four Nishnawbe Aski Police Officers

In the heart of Northern Ontario in the Nishnawbe Aski Nation, four remarkable individuals are redefining what it means to serve and protect. As members of the Nishnawbe Aski Police Service (NAPS) and the Association of Black Law Enforcers (A.B.L.E.), these officers are not just enforcing the law—they are building bridges, fostering racial harmony and working tirelessly to change narratives. Their stories are a testament to the power of cultural pride, passion and persistence.

Constable Elie David-Gnahoui
A Journey of Multiculturalism and Connection

Born in Abidjan, Cote D'Ivoire, Elie David-Gnahoui immigrated to Canada in 2012. With a background in psychology and police foundations, Elie has worn many hats, from teaching French and chess to developing a passion for judo and fitness. His journey brought him to Thunder Bay, where he joined NAPS in May 2024 and graduated from the Ontario Police College (OPC) on September 11, 2024.

Elie's multicultural background and deep desire to connect with First Nation communities drive his commitment to excellence. He believes that serving with passion and purpose yields tangible results, staying true to Robert Peel's principles. Elie's story is one of dedication to high standards and continuous improvement, aiming to make a significant impact on the communities he serves.

Constable Jeremy Bailey
Fostering Positive Change Through Shared Histories

Jeremy Bailey was drawn to a career in policing by a desire to make a meaningful impact. His interest in serving Indigenous communities is rooted in the similar histories of Black and Indigenous peoples, both of whom have faced systemic oppression and profound hardships.

One of Constable Jeremy Bailey's most significant achievements is taking part in the Indigenous healing circle, which exemplifies community-focused policing. This circle was created to divert a group of youth from facing criminal charges for the first time. The initiative was a collaborative effort involving a restorative justice worker and an elder, to guide these young individuals onto a more positive path.

The healing circle provided a space for the youth to reflect on their actions, understand the impact on their community and find ways to make amends. This approach aligns with restorative justice principles, which focus on repairing harm and fostering reconciliation rather than punishment.

By involving community members and elders, the healing circle also reinforced cultural values and traditions, making the process more meaningful and impactful for the participants.

Jeremy's belief in the power of community and restorative justice is evident in this initiative, highlighting his commitment to not only enforcing the law but also fostering healing and positive change within the community.

Jeremy's story serves as a powerful reminder of the resilience and rich cultures of both Black and Indigenous communities. His work is a testament to the power of restorative justice and the importance of fostering positive change through understanding and collaboration.

Constable Nickolson Farray
Inspiring Youth in Remote Communities

Nickolson Farray is a member of the Nishnawbe Aski Police Service, working primarily in the Kashechewan reservation, a fly-in community. Constable Farray has also worked in Attawapiskat, Moose Factory, Fort Albany, Wahgoshig and Constance Lake. These First Nation territories face unique challenges due to their isolation. Nickolson's goal as a police officer is to inspire positive change and promote a "growth" mentality, especially among the youth in these remote areas.

Constable Farray was born in Toronto Parkdale and later lived in Kingston and Galloway within Scarborough, known

for its high crime rate and drug-related activities. Despite these challenges, Nickolson has always strived to better himself. Meeting individuals who shared valuable life perspectives helped shape him, and he believes that with patience and persistence, a growth mentality can be passed on to others.

As a D.A.R.E. officer for Nishnawbe Aski Police, Constable Farray is dedicated to educating youth about drug abuse resistance education and instilling in them a mentality that will help them become valuable and successful assets to their communities. Nickolson aims to be a positive role model and inspire positive change from within.

Constable Uchenna Orakwelu
Building Trust Through First Impressions

Affectionately known as Constable Miles, Uchenna Orakwelu's journey from Nigeria to Thunder Bay is marked by a passion for service. After becoming a Canadian citizen, he joined NAPS and has served diligently for six years. His commitment to public safety and professional excellence earned him a role as a recruiting constable.

Miles believes in the power of first impressions and the importance of building trust through every interaction. His dedication to community engagement and public safety has left a lasting impact, proving that one person's passion and commitment can make a significant difference.

A Shared Vision for Reconciliation

These four officers embody the core teachings of A.B.L.E.: cultural pride, racial harmony and the importance of building bridges. Their journeys highlight the essential reconciliation pieces, acknowledging Indigenous and police history. Through their work, they are changing narratives and fostering a future where trust and understanding prevail.

Their stories are not just about enforcing the law—they are about making a difference, one community at a time. By working with passion, purpose and persistence, Elie, Jeremy, Nickolson and Miles are paving the way for a more inclusive and harmonious future.



Pictured from top to bottom:
A.B.L.E. Member Constable Elie David-Gnahoui, A.B.L.E. Member Constable Jeremy Bailey with a community member, A.B.L.E. Member Constable Nickolson Farray with children in his community and A.B.L.E. Member Constable Uchenna Orakwelu

From Jamaica to Orillia – A Journey to Mentoring, Inclusion, Trailblazing Changes in Policing

Staff Sergeant Shernett Williams



Staff Sergeant Shernett Williams' journey is one of resilience, leadership, and passion for creating positive change in policing. Originally from Jamaica, Shernett always wanted to be a teacher. But after immigrating to Canada, she discovered that a career in policing offered her an opportunity to inspire and be a role model, particularly for diverse candidates interested in a career in law enforcement.

In 1993, upon completing her studies in a Law and Security program, Shernett joined the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) as the sole Black woman in a cohort of 100 new recruits. Over the years, she has steadily advanced through the ranks of the organization, demonstrating exceptional dedication and leadership.

Shernett started her career as a patrol constable with the Aurora OPP Detachment, where her love for teaching shone through as she trained officers across Ontario to use a new program that digitalized investigative notes.

She was later seconded to the OPP's Campbell Report Implementation project where she became an instructor for the PowerCase™ software, which was developed in the wake of the investigation into serial killer Paul Bernado. The software is a revolutionary tool designed to assist investigators, finding links between unsolved crimes by centralizing evidence collected at crime scenes. Shernett spent three years training officers from various policing agencies, ensuring that every service in Ontario had



the expertise needed to leverage this essential tool in major criminal investigations.

In 2003, she transferred to the Recruitment Unit, helping to find the next generation of uniform officers. Shernett has interviewed as many as 1,500 aspiring police officers. There, she merged her enthusiasm for education and mentorship with her interest in diversity and inclusion, and in 2020, she was promoted to an 18-month secondment as Acting Staff Sergeant, leading diversity coordination within Uniform Recruitment.

In this role, she devoted special attention to reviewing previously rejected applications from racialized candidates by providing a fresh perspective and working to enhance OPP recruitment practices to reflect the province's diverse communities.

Shernett was awarded Chinese Law Enforcement Member of the Year for her efforts in providing support and mentorship to aspiring officers in the Chinese community. She has also received the OPP's Ginette Hince Award for recruitment excellence, awarded to a recruiter who demonstrates enthusiasm, diligence, inner strength and respect toward both colleagues and the public.

Shernett also currently serves as co-chair of the OPP Highway Safety Division Inclusion Council, helping to build trust within communities and deepen the OPP's understanding of the different cultures that it serves.

In 2023, she was awarded the Commissioner's Coin for her leadership in the re-implementation of the OPP Cadet Program to attract and recruit members to support Indigenous communities.

She was promoted to the rank of Staff Sergeant in the Corporate Communications Bureau, where she is co-leading the planning of the Association of Black Law Enforcers (A.B.L.E.) Scholarship and Awards Gala. For the first time in its 32-year history, the A.B.L.E. Gala is being hosted in partnership with the OPP and the OPPA—a testament to Shernett's dedication to building partnerships and creating meaningful change.

Staff Sergeant Shernett Williams has been a long-time supporter of A.B.L.E., since its inception in 1992, and she is very thankful for A.B.L.E.'s advocacy to empower Black law enforcement professionals. Her story is one of perseverance and a steadfast belief in the power of mentorship to inspire future generations.



A Commitment to Others Over Self

Detective Sergeant Mishael Yearwood



Mishael Yearwood gets it.

As a leader formally recognized within the OPP, with the rank of Detective Sergeant, Mishael Yearwood's understanding of leadership extends beyond the confines of his police service. His influence is felt not only within the force but also in the broader community.

His journey began with a diploma in the Police Foundations program at Durham College in 2014, followed by a certificate in Advanced Law Enforcement and Investigations. His career with the OPP started in 2016 as a Collision Reporting Centre Clerk. His determination to become a police officer led to his appointment as a Provincial Constable with the OPP, where he was assigned to the Toronto Detachment of the Highway Safety Division.

Over the years, Mishael has made an effort to create and preserve a positive work environment by encouraging those he has worked with and mentored. His early days of mentoring for the Big Brothers and Big Sisters of Canada are a testament to his dedication. Through his work with the organization, he provided support to numerous youths, and for one young male in particular, he provided guidance, support and companionship as the youth navigated socio-economic challenges.

In 2020, he became a Detective Constable in the Divisional Crime Unit, where he furthered his investigative skills on several benchmark occurrences across the division and as part of joint forces operations.

Continuing to hone his skills and experiences, Mishael was promoted to Area Crime Detective Sergeant for the Highway Safety Division in February 2024. He has supported initiatives through the Highway Safety Division Inclusion Council, the Office of Professionalism, Respect, Inclusion and Leadership and external organizations within the community.

He focuses on bridging the gap between police and local residents through volunteering to paint government housing, revitalizing local churches and assisting with charity events. His ability to connect with people of all ages and backgrounds has been instrumental in building trust and collaboration between the OPP and the community.

Mishael truly embodies A.B.L.E.'s objective to promote racial harmony and cultural pride within the law enforcement community. Well known for his approachable, friendly personality, Detective Sergeant Yearwood helps other officers achieve their very best personally and professionally by assisting them in setting goals and mentoring them in their career aspirations within the OPP. He consistently exemplifies professionalism, dedication and teamwork in all he has accomplished.

An Unwavering Supporter of A.B.L.E.

Diane A. Brown



Diane A. Brown started her law enforcement career with the Toronto Police Service as a Court Officer at the Old City Hall courthouse on June 25, 1991.

During her career, she was assigned to several postings, including 311 Jarvis, College Park, Superior Court, Toronto East, and Toronto North courthouses. Diane was part of the Special Deployment Unit (SDU) and had the opportunity to manage some very high-profile court cases at the Superior Court. She also acted as a cell and liaison supervisor before being promoted to the supervisor rank in 2019. She was known as the Court Officer with boundless energy and was very helpful in keeping things running smoothly as part of her job.

In August 2000, the National Black Police Association (NBPA—U.S.) held its Annual Education and Training Conference in Toronto. Diane's Association of Black Law Enforcers (A.B.L.E.) volunteered during the week-long event, transporting delegates and dignitaries to and from events across the city. This is just one example of the support Diane provided A.B.L.E. over the years. Diane's significant contributions, championing, and unwavering support of A.B.L.E. have helped make us who we are.

In 2016, Diane was recognized with the 20-year Peace Officer Exemplary Service Medal, a testament to her dedication and service. In 2021, Diane was once again recognized with the 30-year Peace Officer Exemplary Service Medal, further solidifying her status as a respected figure in law enforcement. In June 2022, Diane was honoured by the Ontario Women's Law Enforcement (OWLE) for 30 years in law enforcement, a recognition of her significant contributions to the field.

Diane often said that her most significant achievement in life was being a mother to her daughter, Tylene. Her love and dedication to her daughter were evident in every aspect of her life. This personal aspect of Diane's life, her role as a mother, was a testament to her character and added a layer of warmth to her professional persona. Diane's honesty and directness were her trademarks, and she was a source of light and warmth to all who knew her.

In March 2023, Diane was called home to be with her Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Her passing left a void in the lives of her family, friends and colleagues, but her memory lives on.

A.B.L.E. salutes Officer Diane A. Brown for her professional, community, and personal contributions above and beyond what could ever be expected.

A Friend, A Champion

Jolyon Thompson



Jolyon Thompson grew up in Georgetown, Guyana, before finding the love of his life, Megan Welsh, while being a 17-year-old student at the University of Toronto's Trinity College. The pair would go on to get married and have two sons.

After graduating from Trinity College with a degree in psychology and volunteering for the John Howard Society, Jolyon took a job as a probation officer in the Cobourg courthouse, just east of Toronto. He spent his career within the Ontario Public Service, working in Corrections and, most recently, as a Probation and Parole Area Manager within Community Correctional Services for the Ministry of the Solicitor General, based in the Don Mills area of Toronto.

Jolyon's passion for life, youth, and community betterment made him a beloved member of A.B.L.E. Jolyon often counselled young people in trouble with the law. As part of his job, he worked tirelessly to capture the attention of offenders with unrelenting optimism and held them to account. He was also a coach to many, including the Centennial College varsity badminton team, mentoring young people

Tribute to a Community Giant

Louis March



On July 30, 2024, esteemed community elder and tireless advocate Louis March joined the ranks of our revered ancestors, those who dedicated their lives to the struggle for justice and upliftment of Black communities.

Louis March was a beacon of hope and a voice of compassion in the fight against gun violence. In a city of nearly 3 million, Brother Louis—as he was affectionately known to A.B.L.E.—was a highly respected presence in the fight for community safety and social justice. Brother Louis devoted his life to addressing systemic inequalities, uplifting marginalized voices and fighting for the rights of Black youth to live their lives in safety.

Immigrating to Canada from Jamaica as a young man, it wouldn't be too long before Brother Louis began what would be a life of community service. While pursing post-secondary studies, Brother Louis was becoming a familiar face in the late 1970s, working on initiatives to help and support Black youth. He soon joined the African Canadian Heritage Association (ACHA), an organization dedicated to providing educational, historical, cultural and nutritional programming for Black youth, parents and families. Brother Louis would go on to play a key role in the ACHA, including sitting as Director of Communications for many years.

Over the years, Brother Louis worked with many organizations in support of uplifting and empowering Black communities.

in sports and life. He was a gold-medal competitor, coach, umpire and nationally accredited referee.

Within his office, Jolyon Thompson exemplified his award for Leadership and Excellence in Diverse Change Achievement in Correctional Services. Through his work, he showed a commitment to the values of diversity, inclusion, and social justice beyond the routine expectations of his role. Jolyon worked to break down barriers and increase inclusive practices related to their work and the clients within the Ministry's system. Jolyon also had a significant and enduring impact on those he worked with and beyond.

Jolyon was the Community Service Co-Chair for the Ministry of the Solicitor General's internal affinity support group for racialized individuals working within corrections entitled C.U.R.E. (Council for Unity and Racial Equality).

Jolyon's commitment to C.U.R.E.'s mission of creating and sustaining a healthy, inclusive, diverse, and effective workplace in Corrections is abundantly evident.

Sadly, our dear friend Jolyon Michael Arrindell Thompson passed in February 2023.

In 2013, following two shocking and brazen public shootings at Toronto's Eaton Centre and at a community barbecue in Danzig neighbourhood located in the East End of Toronto, Brother Louis' work and focus would become crystalized in a mission to eradicate gun and gang violence, ensuring safe communities for all through the founding of the Zero Gun Violence Movement (ZGVM). Brother Louis led with love and grew ZGVM from seven supporting organizations into a network with over 40 organizational partners, all working together to address the root cause issues that led to the proliferation of gang and gun violence.

Brother Louis' deep and abiding devotion to seeing healthy, thriving and safe communities was his guide. He worked with families impacted by gun violence, and supported perpetrators of violence in seeking the necessary supports to change the trajectory of their lives. A brilliant and empathetic organizer, he could be found around policy tables advocating to politicians for community investments, at community tables calling for programs, frank conversations and solutions or quietly around kitchen tables, holding space for grieving families. His genuine and authentic nature drew people towards him and inspired them to join the Movement and support his work.

In 2021, A.B.L.E. was proud to join ZGVM, alongside the Jamaican Canadian Association, the Black Health Alliance, the Black Creek Community Health Centre, Destiny Gospel Centre and the Global Jamaica Diaspora Council-Canada in advocating to the City of Toronto to establish and invest in a gun and gang violence prevention strategy, leading to the establishment of the recently launched Violence Prevention Toronto Office.

A mentor to youth, a friend to many and a respected elder in the community, Brother Louis has left us with an incredible legacy to carry forward, rooted in love and the demand of safe communities for all, not just some of us. A.B.L.E. is grateful for the time spent working with Brother Louis and is committed to ensuring that his work will continue until the day that it is fully realised.

Sleep well, Brother. You have more than earned your rest.

A.B.L.E. Connects
















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