



African Heritage Month Statement

February - African Heritage Month

Every February, Canadians from all walks of life celebrate the heritage, traditions and culture of Canada's Black community.

Unifor joins with people of African heritage and other Canadians to celebrate African Heritage Month. The month of February is a nationally recognized opportunity to acknowledge, reflect upon our collective past as well as a time to appreciate and learn about the contributions people of African descent have made to their communities and the country as a whole.

The House of Commons in December 1995 and the Senate in February 2008, officially recognized February as African Heritage Month, although people of African descent have been an important part of Canada's workforce and its communities since the 17th century.

Today, Black History Month is celebrated in many countries around the world. All month long festivities and events will be taking place across the country. Although the contributions of African-Canadians should be celebrated all year round, February is a time where we focus our attention on the role the Black community has played in our history and the contributions they have made to make Canada the diverse and prosperous country that it is today.

The road to equality and dignity is a long one - it is also filled with proud and powerful leaders from African Diasporas. Conditions for working people have benefited from the commitment of individuals like Bromley Armstrong, who as a Toronto-area UAW member in the late 1940s and 50s, challenged discrimination in housing and restaurants. Bromley also lobbied for the Fair Employment Practices Act and Fair Accommodation Act, and researched the identity of domestic workers brought to Canada in order that they could access Canadian pensions.

Stan Grizzle played an active role in the organizing of the Car Porters Union. The efforts of Bromley Armstrong, Stan Grizzle and many more helped to educate and raise the profile of black workers enabling them to have a stronger presence within the trade union movement.

Black History Month is also an opportunity for all of us to speak out against racism and for the strengthening of human rights for those of African heritage, and for all people of colour in Canada.

Unifor is committed to continue protecting and promoting human rights - for everyone.

Unifor is proud to work with people of African descent as we build a stronger, more diverse labour movement and country.