

**Black History Month Launch
Deputy Mayor Michael Thompson
February 5, 2019**

Good evening.

I'm honoured to join you here today as we celebrate Black History Month.

Black Canadians have contributed to every facet of our society. We know about Harry Jerome, the world's fastest man and one of our greatest athletes.

Mary Ann Shadd, the first female publisher in North America and founder of the abolitionist paper called the Provincial Freeman.

Lucie and Thornton Blackburn,
Underground Railroad refugees
known for their tireless work for the
abolition of slavery and for operating
the first ever cab in the City of
Toronto.

And of course, William P. Hubbard,
the first Black politician elected to
office in Toronto. Whose portrait I
hang proudly in my office as a daily
reminder of how far we have come.

Our predecessors have paved the
way for where we are today not only
as a community but as a society.

Black History Month is an opportunity to celebrate this progress and to share the stories of our history. But it is also an opportunity to acknowledge how far we still have to go.

Our youth are dying to gun violence at an alarming rate, our children are at a disadvantage in the classroom and we are being disproportionately stopped by police on our streets.

It is our shared responsibility, today, to decide how each and every one of us will be a part of shaping the future.

The Black Community is not alone in this change. We have the support of a Mayor known for his unwavering commitment to diversity and inclusion in all aspects of City life.

We have the dedication of City staff like Aina-Nia Grant and her team's work on the Anti-Black Racism Action Plan.

Or Stefany Hanson and her work on the Youth Equity Strategy. And Tamasha Grant for her work on the City's new Youth Violence Prevention strategy.

And of course, we have all of you. By joining the Black Staff Network, you are already playing a vital role in the betterment of the future. I commend you all, for the work you are doing for our community and our City.

I now have the pleasure of introducing our Mayor and ally, John Tory to the podium.

A recipient of both the Harry Jerome Award and the African Canadian Achievement Award he is highly regarded for his commitment to our City's many diverse communities.

Please welcome our Mayor, John
Tory.