



October 27, 2021

Dr. Andrea Douglas, Cikiah Thomas and Delvina Bernard announced as panelists for November 1 pre-conference event for 2023 Universities Studying Slavery Conference

Halifax | In anticipation of the 2023 Universities Studying Slavery (USS) Conference hosted by King's and Dalhousie University, together and in partnership with the Black Cultural Centre of Nova Scotia, an online pre-conference event will take place November 1, 2021, on the theme of *Slavery and Reparations: African Nova Scotia, Canada and Beyond*. The event will begin with a panel discussion at 3 p.m. AT that will feature Dr. Andrea Douglas, Cikiah Thomas and Delvina Bernard. The keynote lecture, taking place at 6 p.m., will be delivered by distinguished academic Professor Sir Hilary Beckles. Dr. Afua Cooper will be the Discussant.

Sir Hilary Beckles

A distinguished academic, Sir Hilary Beckles is a global public activist in the field of social justice and minority empowerment who has achieved recognition internationally for his academic contributions and leadership expertise. He has lectured extensively in Europe, the Americas, Africa and Asia and has published over 100 peer-reviewed essays in scholarly journals and over 13 books on subjects ranging from Atlantic and Caribbean History, gender relations in the Caribbean, sport development and popular culture. In 2007 he was awarded Barbados' highest national honour when he was made a Knight of St. Andrew for his contributions to "Higher Education, the Arts and Sports." He has received numerous honorary doctorates from around the world and in 2021 he received the Martin Luther King Jr Global Award for Peace and Freedom. Sir Hilary is Chairman of the CARICOM Reparations Commission, Advisor on Sustainable Development to former United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, President of Universities Caribbean, and Chairman of the Caribbean Examinations Council.

Dr. Andrea Douglas

Dr. Andrea Douglas is the Director, Jefferson School African American Heritage Centre. She was recently appointed to the Governor's Commission to Study Slavery and Subsequent De Jure and De Facto Racial and Economic Discrimination. She is also the co-chair of the President's Commission on the Age of Segregation at the University of Virginia and sits on Monticello's Advisory Committee on African American Affairs as well as the state's History of Lynching in Virginia Working Group. She has served on the City of Charlottesville Blue Ribbon Commission on Race, Monuments and Public Spaces, the University of Virginia's President's Commission on Slavery at the University and was chair of the city's PLACE Design Task Force. She holds an MA and PhD in art history from the University of Virginia and an MBA in arts management and finance from Binghamton University, NY. Douglas has taught graduate and undergraduate classes in African American, contemporary, and art theory, and has published exhibition catalogues and scholarly articles. From 2004–2010 she was Curator of Collections and Exhibitions and Curator of Contemporary Art at the University of Virginia Art Museum.

Cikiah Thomas

Cikiah Thomas is chairperson of the International Working Committee of the Global African Congress, which is campaigning for governments to issue an apology and reparations for slavery. Based in Toronto, Cikiah is a longtime community activist and a former public servant. He was an active participant at the United Nations World Conference against Racism held in South Africa in 2001. In 2002, Cikiah was a key planner of the African and African Descendant World Conference Against Racism. The Global African Congress (GAC) was created out of that Conference. Cikiah was elected its chair in 2002 and has continued in the role. The GAC strives to accomplish its goal of equitable distribution of global resources by demanding reparatory justice, advocating for policies that combat institutional racism, and working to ensure respect for all Africans everywhere. As chair of the GAC, Cikiah developed strategies to link with trade unions, youth, women, farmers, students and professionals. Now organized in 20 nations, its constitution is considered by many to be a model for Pan-Africanism in the 21st century.

Delvina Bernard

Delvina Bernard is currently a PhD candidate at Saint Mary's University with her dissertation topic examining reparations and models of reparatory justice for historic inequities including slavery and economic underdevelopment. She is also Mount Saint Vincent University's Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility (EDIA) Advisor, a continuation of the vocation that has shaped her life's work. Delvina is a sixth generation African Nova Scotian who traces her Canadian ancestry to the Black United Empire Loyalists of 1783 and the Black Refugees of 1812. She has been instrumental in the growth and development of the Canadian Afrocentric education movement and is a recognized advocate for Indigenous rights, gender equality and social equity for marginalized populations.

Dr. Afua Cooper

Afua Cooper, PhD has been at the forefront of mobilizing multidisciplinary knowledge about Black Canadian Studies. She is the country's leading expert on slavery and freedom and further, is trained in Black Canadian history, the history of the African Diaspora, and Decolonizing studies. A professor in the Faculty of Arts and Social Science at Dalhousie University, she is Director of the *Black People's History of Canada* Project and holds a Killam Research Chair. Her book *The Hanging of Angelique: The Untold Story of Slavery in Canada and the Burning of Old Montreal* broke new grounds in slavery studies, and the history of Black Canada. Afua was the coordinator and chief knowledge officer of the Ontario Bicentenary to Abolish the Slave Trade Act and for that endeavour, oversaw 33 projects that pertained to slavery and freedom in Canada. Afua has curated and co-curated eight exhibits on slavery in Canada and the African Diaspora. She chaired the scholarly panel that investigated Dalhousie University's relationship to race, slavery, and anti-Blackness and was the lead author of the subsequent document *Report on Lord Dalhousie's History on Slavery and Race*. Afua was recently appointed the Canadian UNESCO representative for the United Nations' Slave Route Project. An academic leader, between 2011 to 2017, Afua held the James R. Johnston Chair in Black Canadian Studies. She also founded the Black Canadian Studies Association and served as its chair for 10 years. An author of young adult fiction, her novels have received national and international awards. Additionally, Afua is a sought-after speaker and a prominent public intellectual. A celebrated poet, Afua is one of the founders of the Canadian Dub Poetry movement and has published six books of poetry including the award-winning *Black Matters*. She is the recipient of the Portia White Prize, Nova Scotia's highest artistic recognition.

Attendance at the November 1 event is free and open to the public. Register to receive the [Zoom link here](#).

The 2023 Universities Studying Slavery Conference will run from October 18-21, 2023. As a major international conference on slavery's role in higher education and its legacies, which include the international movement for reparations and redress, this is the first USS conference to be held outside of the United States. It will also be the first USS conference to foreground the history of slavery in Nova Scotia and Canada, and the experience of African Nova Scotians particularly.

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About Dalhousie University

Dalhousie University is Atlantic Canada's leading research-intensive university, a key driver of the region's intellectual, social and economic development for over 200 years. Located in the heart of Halifax—in the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq—with an Agricultural Campus in Truro/Bible Hill, Dalhousie is a truly national and international university, with more than half of our 20,000 students coming from outside of the province. Our 6,000 faculty and staff foster a diverse, purpose-driven community, one that spans 13 faculties and conducts more than \$194 million in sponsored research annually.

About the University of King's College

Established in 1789, King's College is Canada's oldest chartered university and is associated with Dalhousie University. A small and extraordinarily lively academic community located in Halifax, (Kjipuktuk) Nova Scotia, King's is known nationally and internationally for its highly acclaimed interdisciplinary programs in the humanities, including its renowned Foundation Year Program, its professional programs in journalism and its fine arts program in creative writing.

About The Black Cultural Centre for Nova Scotia

The Black Cultural Centre for Nova Scotia, established in 1983 as a provincial museum and community gathering place with a mandate to Protect, Preserve and Promote the rich history of one of Canada's founding cultures. People of African descent have called Nova Scotia home since the 16th century and have made a significant impact as the birthplace of Black Culture and Heritage in Canada. The Centre features exhibits and artifact collection that shares this little known history, through programs, displays and outreach, both provincially and nationally.

For more information please contact:

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