



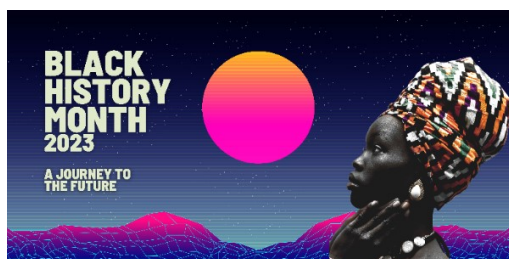
FAIRNESS COMMISSIONER

COMMISSAIRE À L'ÉQUITÉ

THE OFC NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2023

FEBRUARY IS BLACK HISTORY MONTH



Thanks to the Ministry's Anti-Racism Team for the banner image designed by Maya Guerrero.

Every February, people across Canada participate in Black History Month events and festivities that honour the legacy of Black people in Canada and their communities.

The 2023 theme for Black History Month is: **"A journey to the future"**. This theme represents both an opportunity to engage in open dialogue and a commitment to learn more about our Black communities in Ontario and Canada and how they continue to shape our society.

The Office of the Fairness Commissioner (OFC) would like to take this opportunity to feature two individuals who have helped to shape our office by offering their guidance and support throughout the years.

- In 2007, **Jean Augustine** was appointed as the first-ever Fairness Commissioner for Ontario. In this new role, she was responsible for ensuring that Ontarians with professional credentials from foreign countries would have fair access to regulated professions and trades in Ontario.
- **Mabel Opoku** has devoted 15 years of her career to our office most recently as Business Operations Advisor. She has been lived through several changes in the mandate of our office and brings a wealth of experience to her work.

THE HONOURABLE JEAN AUGUSTINE, P.C., C.M., O.ONT, C.B.E.



Jean Augustine's story is a testament to the power of hard work and devotion in pursuit of social justice.

Jean was born in St. George's, Grenada in 1937. In 1960, she immigrated to Canada where she began her incredible career. She led many social causes and served on the boards of such distinguished organizations as York University, The Hospital for Sick Children, the Stephen Lewis Foundation and Harbourfront Corporation. Jean also served as the National President of the Congress of Black Women of Canada

In 1993, Jean made history as the first African Canadian woman to be elected as a Member of Parliament (MP). She served with distinction winning four consecutive elections. In 2006, she decided to pursue other pursuits.

As an MP, she served as Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, Minister of Multiculturalism and the Status of Women; Chair of the Foreign Affairs and International Trade Committee; Chair of the Human Rights Committee, three-time Chair of the National Women's Caucus. In Jean's last year in Parliament, her peers elected her as Deputy Speaker of the House of Commons. Amongst her notable achievements was securing unanimous legislative support to pass a historic motion designating February as Black History Month in Canada.

In 2007, Jean was appointed the first-ever Fairness Commissioner for the Province of Ontario, a role in which she would set new regulatory standards for clarity, openness and more streamlined access to employment conditions for foreign trained professionals until her retirement in 2015.

Today, Jean continues in the work to help improve the human condition. She remains involved with community activities including co-chairing the 100 Accomplished Black Canadian Women recognition and database, and the Jean Augustine Centre for Young Women's Empowerment. She also funds three annual scholarships – at George Brown College for single mothers; at Centennial College for young entrepreneurs; and at Humber College for students in the community studies program.

For her full bio can be found by clicking [Biography of Jean Augustine](#).

The OFC is eternally grateful for her foundational work in our agency and proud to share her inspirational story.

MABEL OPOKU, BUSINESS OPERATIONS ADVISOR



On November 23, 2022, Inside OPS, a provincial government internal communications platform, posted an article featuring the OFC's own Mabel Opoku regarding her participation in the Career Development Program (CDP).

The CDP is a year-long program that aims to support participants by taking an inclusive approach and applying an Anti-racism, Anti-black racism, and Anti-indigenous racism lens to career development. CDP participants are paired with program hosts that act as mentors throughout their journey.

Read about Mabel's experience and what she had to say about her career development journeys so far.

Nov 23, 2022

Posted by Inside OPS

Bio: Mabel's diverse work background includes business and investment experience in the financial services industry, fundraising in the non-profit sector and work experience in the Ontario provincial government. Her educational background is in business administration, computer programming, and system analysis. Mabel is also taking part-time courses at the University of Toronto, in Women and Gender Studies and Equity Studies to satisfy her passion for equity.

She has served in varied capacities with a number of volunteer organizations including the United Way, Staff Association. Mabel has also served as President of the Zambian-Canadian Organization and is currently the Chair of the Twikatane Benevolent and Cultural Association of Canada, (TBCAC), formed to promote mutual understanding, good governance and cater to the general welfare of the community.

Q&A with Mabel

Q: Why did you decide to join the CDP?

A: I joined the program for assistance in enhancing my skills in my current role as well as assistance with navigating organizational ladders as I continue on my journey to my career goals. I needed assistance in my career planning and in understanding how the whole hiring process in the OPS works.

Q: What has been the most valuable aspect of being in the CDP?

A: The mentors, who take time out of their busy day to assist us with career objectives. I am motivated to carry on in my desire for career advancement. The tools and resources offered have greatly improved my confidence in staying on track and not giving up.

Q: How do you believe this program will support you with future career goals?

A: The Career Development Program is a great asset because it will help me gain personal insights into my strengths and development needs. This program will give me the ability for career advancement when the opportunities arise. It will also assist me in expanding my professional network.

Q: Where do you see yourself in the next two years?

A: I look forward to learning new skills and improving my knowledge to advance my career. I will be looking for opportunities to expand my responsibilities towards my goal.

2021 FAIR REGISTRATION PRACTICES (FRP) REPORTS

The OFC would like to thank the regulated professions and health regulatory colleges for submitting their 2021 FRP Reports. Our compliance analysts have been reviewing these reports to identify best practices and emerging trends. The contents of these reports will also help us to plan our ongoing work with regulators and to refresh our corporate priorities.

We will be sharing details regarding our 2022 FRP report in the coming months.

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