



COUNCIL OF AFRICAN PROFESSIONALS





## CONTENTS

3 Editorial

4 Greetings

12 President and Board

21 Speakers

15 Articles

45 Award  
Categories

Catalyst 47

President 50

Leadership 52

Youth Leadership 66

Volunteer 69

Entrepreneur 73

87 Supporters

88 Advertisement



COUNCIL OF AFRICAN PROFESSIONALS



# EDITORIAL TEAM

## Chief Publisher

Adejisola Atiba  
(Lady ABHA)

## Editorial Team

Derrick Amo Amin  
Efuange Khumbah  
Immanuel A-Okoroafor

## Photography & Videography

Rest Assured Consulting Inc  
Kizo Pixels  
Lyft Pixels

## Publishers

Efuange Khumbah  
Dr. Ebere Morgan  
Derrick Amo Anim  
Olugbenga Fakoyejo  
Pastor Adebola Banjo

## Public Relations

Claire Nsong  
Stella Agomuo  
Gbagharim Agbonlahor  
Tunde Adebola  
Sade Akhigbe  
Dienye Meshileya  
Halima Nganso  
Dr. Ayoade Adeyemi  
Ivory Li  
Esohe Adams  
Folake Omitrin  
Rochele Padiachy

## Graphics Design

Rest Assured  
Consultant Inc.  
DGV Mobility

**Email:** [info@cnpngo.ca](mailto:info@cnpngo.ca)

**Website:** [www.cnpngo.ca](http://www.cnpngo.ca)





Premier of Ontario - Premier ministre de l'Ontario

November 16 – 18, 2023

### A MESSAGE FROM PREMIER DOUG FORD

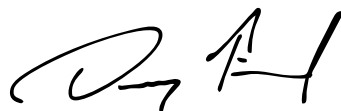
Warm greetings to everyone taking part in third annual Power of Inclusion Event and Awards Ceremony.

Ontario is proud to be home to many professionals who have roots in Nigeria and other parts of Africa. Through their skills and talents, they have made their mark in every field — and made our province a more vibrant, diverse and prosperous place.

Many thanks to the Council of Nigerian Professionals for hosting this event. This is an opportunity to promote inclusion and foster dialogue between the African Canadian community and industry leaders. Know that your work will help African Canadian professionals find opportunities and succeed in Canada.

By working together, we can build a strong, resilient Ontario, now and in the future.

Best wishes for a successful event.



**Doug Ford**  
Premier



CONSTITUENCY OFFICE  
16 Hugh Lane  
Milton, ON L9T 2C6  
T: 905-693-7046



OTTAWA OFFICE  
830 Valour Building  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6  
T: 613-992-7046

ADAM VAN KOEVERDEN, M.P.  
MILTON

**October 16, 2023**

Dear Adejisola Atiba and the Members of the Council of Nigerian Professionals,

I am writing to extend my warmest congratulations to you and the entire Council of Nigerian Professionals (CNP) team on the occasion of your third annual Power of Inclusion Event and Awards Ceremony, themed "Catalyst for Change."

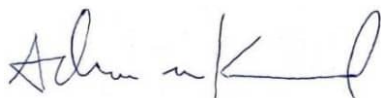
It's with great admiration and enthusiasm that I commend your exceptional dedication to empowering and fostering a brighter future for Nigerian and African professionals in Canada. Since its founding in 2018, CNP has demonstrated unparalleled support, training, and mentorship to assist thousands of members within our communities. Your programs designed to aid new immigrants, international students, and business owners have significantly contributed to the overall quality of life for many individuals, making a lasting impact on the Canadian society.

I wanted to especially express my heartfelt gratitude to, Adejisola Atiba, for your extraordinary leadership, and to all the dedicated volunteers and board members who have tirelessly worked towards creating a space that fosters community, inclusion, and empowerment. Your advocacy and steadfast commitment to this are paving the way for a more prosperous, inclusive, and equitable Canada for all its citizens.

As the event unfolds, I extend my best wishes for a tremendously successful Power of Inclusion Event and Awards Ceremony. Congratulations to all the well-deserving award recipients, and a special thank you to the inspiring speakers who are generously dedicating their time and wisdom to support this important initiative. Your collective efforts are shaping a brighter tomorrow for our communities.

May the Power of Inclusion Event and Awards Ceremony be a resounding success. I look forward to continuing to witness the positive impacts of your endeavors, and celebrating the remarkable achievements of CNP and its members. Thank you for your unwavering commitment to the socioeconomic and political empowerment of people of Nigerian and African professionals in Canada.

Warmest regards,



Adam van Koeverden, M.P. for Milton



**Greetings from Michael Coteau  
Member of Parliament**

November 17, 2023

**Greetings:**

On behalf of the residents of Don Valley East, I am honoured to bring greetings and congratulations on the occasion of the second annual Power of Inclusion event organized by the Council of Nigerian Professionals (CNP).

Founded in 2018, the CNP has been committed to the socio-economic and political empowerment of Nigerian and African professionals in Canada by assisting thousands of its members with programs designed to support new immigrants and international students, by providing assistance for business owners, and amplifying the overall quality of life for our communities.

Thank you to everyone involved with the Council's remarkable work.

Yours truly,



**Michael Coteau  
Member of Parliament  
Don Valley East**





Nathaniel Erskine-Smith, M.P.  
Beaches-East York

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Dear Torontonians and visitors,

August 2023

It is an honour to welcome you to the third annual Power of Inclusion Event and Awards Ceremony - Catalyst for Change.

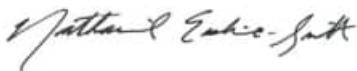
This event, hosted by the Council of Professional Nigerians (CNP), aims to amplify the voices of BIPOC leaders and members from across Canada. Catalyst for Change is the 3rd annual event, and is a 3-day intercultural dialogue and educational event that will feature 20 speakers from various culture and industry backgrounds from the GTA and other Canadian provinces. There will also be performances from Afro-Canadian, Caucasian, and Indigenous artists from Southern Ontario.

I admire the work that the CNP undertake to serve our diverse communities here in the GTA and across Canada, including hosting valuable cultural events.

This annual Event and Awards Ceremony has required a tremendous amount of effort, organizing and hard work. On that note, I would like to thank the organizing team and the volunteers who ensure that such a wonderful event can take place.

Please accept my best wishes on this festive occasion.

Sincerely,



Nathaniel Erskine-Smith

**Constituency Office**  
1902 Danforth Ave  
Toronto, ON  
M4C 1J4  
416 467 0860

**House of Commons**  
802 - Justice Bldg.  
Ottawa, ON  
K1A 0A6  
613 992 2115





# MP PAUL CHIANG

## MARKHAM-UNIONVILLE

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November 11th, 2023

### Power of Inclusion Event and Awards Ceremony

As the Member of Parliament for Markham-Unionville, I am honoured to extend my heartfelt congratulations to the Council of Nigerian Professionals (CNP) on hosting your third Annual Power of Inclusion Event and Awards Ceremony, Catalyst for Change.

I am pleased to recognize the important work of the Council of Nigerian Professionals, and their President Adejisola Atiba have undertaken, offering mentorship and support to Nigerian and African professionals in Canada. Your commitment to providing this integral support not gives members of our community the opportunity to enhance their skills and capabilities but also recognizes the importance of their involvement and contribution in professionals spaces across a wide range of industries. It is with great pride that I acknowledge the positive impact you are making on the lives of countless professionals and our community as a whole.

Catalyst for Change promises to be an opportunity can come together, learn from each other, and be inspired. It is through events like these that meaningful connections are formed, and opportunities for growth and change are realized.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to President Adejisola Atiba, and all the members of CNP who worked tirelessly to make this event possible. I look forward to seeing your organization continue to prosper and reach even greater heights in the years to come!

Sincerely,



**MP Paul Chiang**  
Markham-Unionville





*Shaun Chen*

Member of Parliament / Député  
Scarborough North / Scarborough–Nord

November 18, 2023

### **A Personal Message from MP Shaun Chen**

As the Member of Parliament for Scarborough North, I am pleased to extend my warmest greetings to the attendees of the Catalyst for Change: Power of Inclusion Event and Awards Ceremony.

This event celebrates the contributions of Canada's diverse community leaders as they carve their space in Canada's business environment. Our country is made stronger by the work of local communities to support the innovation and entrepreneurial energy shared across our diverse communities.

I commend the organizers for their work in making today's event possible. As Canadians, we are truly blessed to live in a nation that embraces multiculturalism and inclusion.

Please accept my best wishes for a most successful event.

Sincerely,



Shaun Chen  
Member of Parliament  
Scarborough North







## Catherine Fife

MPP Waterloo

Council of Nigerian Professionals  
750-2 Robert Speck Pkwy  
L4Z 1H8 Mississauga

**RE: Congratulations on your Second Annual Power of Inclusion Event**

October 5, 2023

Dear Adejisola,

As Member of Provincial Parliament for Waterloo, I would like to congratulate you on your second annual Power of Inclusion Event and Awards Ceremony.

The work you have done since 2018 to support, train, and mentor people of African heritage in Canada is so important to ensure the ongoing success of businesses and professionals across Ontario.

The Power of Inclusion event is an excellent opportunity to showcase the amazing work your community has been working towards over the last year. Your efforts in combatting Anti-Black Racism, Islamophobia, Antisemitism, Homophobia, and others are valuable work and the folks on the forefront of your efforts deserved to be recognized. The mentorship projects for international students and newcomers to Canada assist in the improvement of quality of life.

Please don't hesitate to reach out to my community office with any issues or concerns that we may collaborate on. My office can be reached by phone at 519-725-3477 or by email at [cfife-co@ndp.on.ca](mailto:cfife-co@ndp.on.ca).

Sincerely,



Catherine Fife, MPP  
Waterloo

Constituency Office  
100 Regina St. S., Suite 220  
Waterloo, ON N2J 4A8  
Ph: 519-725-3477 | Fax: 519-725-3667  
Email: [cfife-co@ndp.on.ca](mailto:cfife-co@ndp.on.ca)

Queen's Park Office  
Room 370, Main Legislative Bldg.  
Queen's Park, Toronto ON M7A 1A5  
Ph: 416-325-6913 | Fax: 416-325-6942  
Email: [cfife-qp@ndp.on.ca](mailto:cfife-qp@ndp.on.ca)





**DAISY WAI, MPP**  
Richmond Hill

**Constituency Office:**  
9555 Yonge St., Suite 409  
Richmond Hill, ON L4C 9M5

## **A Message from Daisy Wai, MPP**

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Power of Inclusion Event & Awards Ceremony**

**November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023**

As the Member of Provincial Parliament for Richmond Hill, I am pleased to extend my warmest congratulations to the Members of the Council of Nigerian Professionals on your upcoming 2nd Annual Power of Inclusion Event & Awards Ceremony on November 18th, 2023.

This momentous event carries immense significance, both in celebrating and advancing the Power of Inclusion, and in profoundly enriching the cultural tapestry of our community. The active participation of members from diverse backgrounds, including representatives from the Council of Nigerian Professionals, beautifully showcases the true essence of our society—where cultures intertwine, unite, and flourish.

Your collective dedication to empowering Nigerian and African professionals is truly commendable. Through your relentless efforts, you provide invaluable support, mentorship, and opportunities, fostering a thriving community that paves the way for personal and professional growth.

I would like to congratulate the Council of Nigerian Professionals once again on your 2nd Annual Power of Inclusion Event and Awards Ceremony. Thank you for your invaluable contributions to fostering inclusivity and mentorship. Wishing you continued success in all your future endeavors, both for the CNP and this remarkable event. May your efforts lead to even greater achievements and positive impacts in the years to come.

**Sincerely,**



**Member of Provincial Parliament,  
Richmond Hill**

# To Make A Better World

By Adejisola Atiba (Lady ABHA)

Why do we do the things we do.  
It takes a lot to put anything together.  
Why do we bother, why are we here.  
My take, I feel we all have this innate desire to make things better for the other guy.  
We all want to be relevant and leave the world better than we met it.  
That right there is the long and short story of CNP, and the evolution to CAP.  
The way we try to change the world is what differentiates us, my hope is that we get to that change one day in the not too far future.

So, what am I doing to see the change I want. The wise word of Rumi comes to mind; "Yesterday, I was clever, so I wanted to change the world. Today I am wise, so I am changing myself."  
I came to Canada almost 19 years ago.  
I was certain that getting a job in my career would be a no-brainer, oh boy, was I wrong?  
I was literally told that because of my race, I would not get a job in the bank.  
They were right, and any normal person would have believed that, but I am wired differently, (but not everybody is), some took that to heart, and they gave up on their career, a loss to them, and a huge loss to Canada.  
I started volunteering as an assistant English teacher, but I was still looking for opportunities.  
I kept applying for various roles, and I must have sent out over 100 resumes.  
I was taken to a bank to open an account, in the process, the account manager was trying to get to know me, and when he learnt I was a banker from my home country, he asked why I was not

working for a bank.  
Deep down, I did not want to answer him, but I kept reminding myself that opportunities show up from diverse places, and so I told him my experience so far.  
He was very emphatic, and he said he could introduce me to someone who just got hired, if I don't mind. Of course, I don't mind.  
I was introduced to a Nigerian, Modupe, she advised me on what she did, and I did the same, and it landed me a part-time customer service role at RBC.  
I could have refused the job, because it meant starting from the scratch again, but my past experiences made me stronger as I have come to see every glass as refillable.  
I took the role. "Life happens to everyone of us, our current situation does not define us, with some intentionality and grit, we can be who we want to be".  
By being open minded, and proactively reaching out to leaders' colleagues, I studied for my certification as a Personal Financial Planner (PFP) and completed it as a customer service representative.  
I spent 3 years in the role.  
So, if my experience can help someone feel a lot better, do things faster, help them to understand the system, then that is what I will focus on.  
And so, the journey with CNP started a little over 5 years ago. We knew our why, we suffered, like a ship with no sail, it was a miracle that most of us survived, and so we wanted to do better for the next Nigerian coming in. And we did do better.  
CNP has been instrumental in building

relationships, initiating meaningful connections, building businesses from ground-up, holding thousands of people's

hands to believe in themselves through mentoring, supported job search, landing jobs in careers of choice, providing informational seminars, events, workshops, and the list goes on.

A lot more organizations in our space took a leave or two from us, we all have our niches, and we strongly believe the sky is big enough for birds to flex their wings, but we continue to be true to our vision, mission, and purpose.

As we continue the self discovery and self actualization journey, we soon realized that we need to collaborate within the people of African space. There is a need to break-down bridges and build up together. We realized that people from other cultures see us as one, but we see ourselves as different by virtue of the country we came from, or by languages we speak.

In Africa, there is no mention of Black History Month, but we know it is a part of our history, a past that refused to stay there, and so we purposed as an organization to learn more about it. Engage our youths to learn about it and bring ideas to leverage these experiences of the past, to build a better future. So, we started, Black History Event and Essay writing Competition. Supporting our youth to learn, and build on their secondary research skills, writing skills and presentation skills. They are rewarded with bursary for the effort they put in. We have been doing this event for four (4) years.

As the journey continued, we decided that speak-up against certain pre-conceived norms is the only way to make change happen. One of my

former bosses used to say that “if you are saying something and no one hears it is because you are not loud enough.”

We are professionals, so we are not loud, but we decided it is time to stand for what we believe in, advocate for Inclusion, for us, for our children and generations unborn. So, Power of Inclusion series was initiated 3 years ago.

It is an opportunity to bring many cultures in the Canadian ecosystem into our colorful world. Educate them about our cultures, learn about their cultures, and gain a better understanding of our differences. We are happy that it yielded the results we want, as we now have partners from other cultures and communities across Canada.

Power of Inclusion also focuses on celebrating excellence, by recognizing leaders doing great things in our communities. WE appreciate their dedication, and our hope is that this recognition will give them the strength to go on, and spur others into action.

As we continue to tell our story, it dawned on us, that we can do so much alone, but when we collaborate “we become unstoppable”. We agreed it is time to dig deeper into who we really are.

We agreed we all face the same barriers, and so it was unanimous to move forward by turning Council of Nigerian Professionals to Council of African Professionals. As much as we focus on our community, we are open and willing to support all cultures. This is evident with our volunteers and the various activities we do.

What have I said, to make change happen, it is not about changing the other person. It is about looking inward and making an intentional decision to do better, to change oneself. As the rippling effect will eventually change the world. Welcome to POI23, where we are changing the narrative, changing mindset, breaking down barriers one Power of Inclusion at a time.

## ABOUT

# Adejisola Atiba

(Lady ABHA)

TEDx Speaker | Author | DEI Advocate |  
Community-Leader.

A woman of many colors, energetic, passionate,  
loyal, and purposefully intentional.

A Community Manager with RBC and worked in  
Banking-Industry for 30+ years.

She was Manager, Financial Planning Associate,  
GTR, where she led a team of 53 Associates  
that supported 300 Financial Planners.

As a Branch Manager, she led her branch to  
senior manager level, was also a financial  
planner for 4 years, where she provided  
integrated planning advice to high-value clients.  
Adejisola moved into leadership because of her  
passion to build leaders.

An avid volunteer, and community geek. She  
volunteers with multiple organizations, and  
founded Council of Nigerian Professionals, and  
African Caribbean Council of Halton. She sits on  
the board of UWH&H, and she is the current  
President of Rotary Club of Milton.

She has multiple degrees, professional  
certifications and EMBA in Digital  
Transformation with DeGroote Business School.  
Her first book was published in 2022,  
“Authenticity: How My Why Me Moments  
Shaped My Life”.

A motivational speaker, EDI speaker, and  
lifetime coach.

She is married with children.

Website: [Ladyabha.ca](http://Ladyabha.ca)

Email: [ladyabha.ca@gmail.com](mailto:ladyabha.ca@gmail.com)



**Adejisola Atiba (Lady ABHA)**  
President and Founder, CNP Inc.



## Unity in Diversity as Council of Nigerian Professionals Transitions to Council of African Professional

I've been actively engaged with the Council of Nigerian Professionals (CNP) for a little over two years now. In this time, I've come to witness a dynamic community of talented professionals, defined by an unwavering commitment to inclusion, innovation, and a celebration of diversity that transcends borders, ethnicities, age, and experiences. In this article, we delve into the undeniable force of inclusion within CNP, its impact on the Black Community, and the organization's evolving role as it transitions into the Council of African Professionals (CAP).

Throughout history, people of African heritage have faced a range of challenges, from slavery and colonization to apartheid and the civil rights movements. During challenging episodes our people do not deliberate if they are Nigerians, Black Americans, Africans, African diaspora, Caribbeans, south Americans etc. we just identify with each as unity has always been our strength. It's our unity in diversity that has empowered us to overcome historic adversities, establish ourselves as productive members of our communities, and actively shape our future and that of future generations to come after us.

Inclusion within the Black Community goes far beyond mere rhetoric; it's a heartfelt commitment to creating a platform where every individual, regardless of their background - be it ethnicity, country of origin, language, or age - feels valued,

empowered, and proud of their heritage and cultural norms. It is admirable to witness how CNP embodies this commitment to embracing diversity, celebrating differences, and fostering a strong sense of mentorship and community engagement. It's not uncommon to hear CNP members declare, "No one I meet will go through what I experienced during my early days or years in Canada." This is usually in reference to anyone in the black community.

In the tapestry of the global Black community and their allies, CNP holds a distinctive position in Canada. Its members are leaders and pioneers in various fields, contributing not only to the narrative of black in Canada but also influencing the course of Black history worldwide. The strength of this concept lies not just in numbers but in the collective dedication to include everyone who shares the vision. CNP is akin to a mega-church where all voices harmonize to the chorus of the most popular song in the song book. Nelson Mandela's wise words, "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world," resonate deeply within CNP. The heart of CNP beats to the rhythm of continuous education and mentorship. Since its inception, CNP has offered free classes across various platforms, extending its reach even during challenging times, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. The organization harnessed modern-

day technology to offer free online classes, including languages, coding, mathematics, business courses, and nursing prerequisites. It's heartwarming to note that many of these courses were taught by non-Nigerians who wholeheartedly embraced the concept of inclusion and giving back to the community. As a non-Nigerian myself, I believe that this is a facet where all of us, irrespective of our backgrounds, can contribute. The world can become a smaller, more interconnected village if we exchange knowledge and experiences about ourselves and our neighbours.

CNP places a high value on empowering the next generation to ensure continuity, stability, and prosperity. The organization coordinates youth programs that transfer knowledge, skills, and access to opportunities, nurturing the potential of our youth. With initiatives focusing on youth entrepreneurship support, financial literacy, career guidance, leadership coaching, and an award-winning volunteer-mentorship program, CNP is nurturing the leaders of tomorrow. Furthermore, CNP has partnered with other institutions to address the pressing issue of mental health within the Black community.

As the years have passed, CNP has recognized that its community extends far beyond Nigeria's borders. It has transformed into a global institution, aligning with the wisdom of an African proverb that suggests, "If you want to go fast, go alone; if you want to go far, go together." This wisdom and progressive leadership have led to the birth of the "Council of African Professionals (CAP)," reflecting CNP's global impact and commitment to unity in diversity. CAP is an exciting journey that brings together professionals from the bustling streets of Africa and the Caribbean to the urban jungles of Europe and the Americas.

Together, we aim to break barriers, achieve greatness, and change the world.

In the spirit of unity in diversity, let's come together and pave the way for a brighter, more inclusive future for all Continental Africans, Diaspora Africans, individuals with African heritage, and our allies. The undeniable power of inclusion is a force that binds and propels the Black community, transcending geographical boundaries.

I will wholeheartedly encourage you to take this opportunity, along with your relatives and friends to consider joining CAP. Becoming a member of CAP promises a mutually beneficial opportunity.

Efuange Khumbah



Efuange  
Khumbah

# The change must begin with us



One of the more enduring definitions of leadership is the one put forward by John C. Maxwell which defines leadership as the ability to influence others. This means that having a leadership position or title is not essential to lead others effectively. Regardless of rank and file, each of us can influence others, when we recognize and celebrate our unique qualities - our identity, values, beliefs, skills - and apply them or collaborate with others to leverage the power of synergy for the benefit of the communities in which we live, work and engage.

A common challenge confronting many of us who are immigrants to Canada is the mindset that leads us to believe that we are inadequate to make the desired impact because we are (as some put it) 'only' a minority. While our numerical strength may be small compared to others, we must be determined to rise above self-limiting beliefs that only serve to curtail our capacities and limit our potentials. Today, more than ever before in the history of mankind, the world is seeing an influx of migrants across different geographies and many have defied the limitations (environmental and self-imposed) of their new communities to disrupt the system or bring positive change to their communities. In Canada for example, a young lady who immigrated from the Caribbean some decades

ago, was able to break several glass ceilings to join the legislative arm of the government where despite being in the minority, successfully advocated for and got the country to recognize the month of February as Black History Month in Canada. Thank you, Jean Augustine!

Stories like Ms. Augustine's and other immigrants like Frank Stronach (founder of Magna), Mihal Lazaridis (founder of Blackberry), Susur Lee (celebrity chef in Toronto) etc., provide verifiable proof that being an immigrant does not have to confine us to the backseat. Rather, we can turn the wheels of change for good and exert our influence in the community regardless of our heritage. Instead of buckling under the weight of situational factors that may seem to put us at a disadvantage, each of us must brace up and rise to the occasion and meet the moment with the intensity and urgency it demands, because our country is in deer need of men and women who can lead or be catalysts of positive change across sectors of the economy and our society. As we accept the responsibility for change through our individual and collective efforts, the results of our efforts will be evident to all and go a long way to change the somewhat unpleasant narratives about who we are or can achieve. In essence, we can become vanguards in leading our country into a new era of change.

However, it is important to recognize that being influencers or catalysts of sustainable change takes time, effort and purposeful action. For starters, those of us who are immigrants in the country need to embrace - not jettison - our identity, because this is what makes us authentic. Our perspectives which have been informed by our backgrounds and unique experiences are important in assisting us to contribute our quota to situations and challenges that have festered due to a one-sided view of those impacted by it.

The next thing is to seek to understand the culture and prevailing norms that our adopted country provides. Canada provides one of the most culturally diverse communities globally with one of the highest rates of immigration in the world. Our ability to adapt and be inclusive members of the community is vital, as we undercut our influence when we limit our associations and collaboration, only to people that talk and look like us.

As a member of the G7, Canada has a vibrant economy and provides a wide variety of opportunities for those seeking to become economically viable by pioneering or supporting various change efforts, inventions and initiatives. In addition, several training opportunities exist for those seeking to jumpstart their careers or branch into new industries. Developing proficiency in your field

of endeavor lends to your credibility and ability to influence others.

Armed with these capabilities, we can identify opportunities within our immediate community or circles of influence by initiating or partnering with others to bring light where inequities and/or inefficiencies have been the status quo. One of Canada's strengths is the value it places on volunteer efforts which provides a viable pathway to those who may not have a formal contract with the institutions or communities they seek to impart. The opportunities exist in our neighborhoods, children's schools, houses of worship, associations, offices, the list is seemingly endless.

Finally, as we take responsibility to be vanguards of the changes we seek in our communities, doing the most we can with the resources available or entrusted to us, our value as contributors will be enhanced. Also, doing this will ensure we are not just a footnote in the history of our country's growth but assets that will appreciate in value over time. As someone said, the best way to predict the future is to make it happen. We can do so through our ACTS (Accept your identity, Connect with the culture in Canada, Train to hone your skills, Step out to make impact).

Emmanuel (Tunde) Adebola  
IT & Business Consultant  
President, Alliance of Nigerian Entrepreneurs  
CNP Volunteer





## Dr. AYOADE ADEYEMI MC

Dr. Ayoade Adeyemi (also known as Ay Morgan) is a business strategist and management consultant with over two decades of experience in Human Resources, Enterprise Development, Marketing, and Project Management.

He's a recipient of numerous awards, to mention a few, the Global Mentor Award 2022, and the Rotary International Distinguished Regional Service Award.

He lectures at a college in Toronto, Canada. He belongs to the membership of many professional associations in Canada.

He's a Rotarian and an environmental sustainability advocate.



## Claire Nsong MC

Claire Nsong received her Bachelors of Education in Curriculum studies and teaching from the University of Buea, Cameroon. She is a certified Scrum Master with over 10 years of banking experience.

Claire is a teacher, coach, mentor and community leader. She is passionate about leading teams in their agile journey and currently working for a Crown Corporation. She also serves as a president of working for a Crown Corporation. She also serves as a president of Victoria Association Canada(Cameroon), Vice President of OPSA ( her alma mater) and volunteers with CNP facilitating French classes. Claire loves spending time with family, reading, cooking and hanging out with her girlfriends.

DAY



COUNCIL OF AFRICAN PROFESSIONALS

1

Sub-Theme: **Ignite Change**  
Thursday, November 16th, 2023

Catalyst for Change

Ola Ifidon is an ex-Accenture strategy, Business Architecture senior consultant, merit award graduate of Economics, an author, and the first Certified Business Analysis Professional in the province of Alberta.

She has over 20 years of experience in management and business consulting that span across various industries, including oil and gas, information technology, education, and banking.

An erudite scholar with a Cornell-Queen Executive MBA, Ola is an experienced professional, and leader in strategy, business analysis, business transformation, digital innovation, project management, stakeholder management, performance management, and business architecture, with a proven track record in delivering business results. She is the managing Partner strategy and business solutions at ValCon Inc, an Alberta based management and business consulting firm, where she helps businesses unlock the value within.

Ola is a life learner and passionate about knowledge transfer. She is currently enrolled at the McMaster's Director Program.

Her brand is rooted in multidimensional, strategic, and perspective, thought leadership to unlock value, and foster empowerment.

## Ms. Ola Ifidon

BUSINESS ARCHITECT, STRATEGIST  
& VISIONARY LEADER

**Moderator**

**Sub-Theme: Ignite Change**

Thursday, November 16th, 2023



## Rochelle Ivri

CITIZENSHIP JUDGES IN CANADA

Keynote  
Speaker

Judge Rochelle Ivri is 1 of 9 Citizenship Judges in Canada and is currently assigned to the Greater Ontario Area which includes Hamilton, Niagara, Kitchener, Windsor and London. She is a professor at Mohawk College and an adjunct professor at Queen's Law School. She is also the co-author of Tribunal Practice and Procedure (Emond Publishing)

Judge Ivri is deeply committed to community engagement and involvement, serving on various boards and committees in the past and present, while continuing to lend her knowledge and expertise to advance the needs of the community. She was awarded a Woman Who Rocks Award for Hamilton in 2019 and, in 2020 she was awarded the Leading Women, Leading Girls, Building Community Award for her work in Kitchener Centre. In 2021, Judge Ivri received the Lincoln Alexander Award by the Law Society of Ontario making her the first ever paralegal to receive this recognition in the awards' nearly 20-year history. In 2022, Judge Ivri was named one of 100 Accomplished Black Canadian Women for 2022, she was given the Rev. John C. Holland Award of Merit by the Hamilton Black History Council, and was also recognized as one of Canada's Top 100 Black Women to Watch of 2022 by CIBWE.

She is passionate about human rights, the Charter, and encouraging active citizenship and civic engagement to make communities thrive. She and her husband, Eldean, have 4 children aged 10 to 23."

Sub-Theme: **Ignite Change**

Thursday, November 16th, 2023





## Augustine Fischer

DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATION  
FEDERATION OF AFRICAN CANADIAN ECONOMICS (FACE)

Distinguished  
Guest Speaker

Augustine Fischer is the Director of Communications and Stakeholder Engagement at the Federation of African Canadian Economics—a seasoned Strategic Communications Leader with extensive experience spanning various industries and continents. With his wealth of experience in strategic communications and a passion for fostering meaningful connections, Augustine plays a pivotal role in advancing the organization's mission and enhancing its reach within the African Canadian community. Augustine has consistently demonstrated his ability to drive stakeholder engagement and enhance brand reputation throughout his dynamic career. His expertise in crafting compelling narratives and building solid relationships makes him an asset in promoting economic awareness and engagement among stakeholders of FACE. Augustine's journey into strategic communications began with a solid educational foundation. He pursued an MBA with a major in Marketing from Anglia Ruskin University in the United Kingdom, where he delved into the intricacies of consumer choices influenced by content marketing.

Armed with his academic prowess, Augustine embarked on a career that would take him across three continents and into various industries.

Augustine's global career was pinnacle when he joined Maersk, a multinational shipping and logistics giant, as the Communications Manager for Africa. He became a driving force behind several change management initiatives, steering the company through business transitions and cultural shifts.

Augustine's career continued to ascend as the Communication Site Head at Sanofi, Canada. Notably, he led a successful PR campaign to announce Health Canada's approval of a groundbreaking infant vaccine for the prevention of RSV disease called Beyfortus.

Augustine Fischer's journey as a Strategic Communications Leader has been characterized by a commitment to excellence, aligning communication with business objectives. He consistently demonstrates his ability to drive change, enhance brand reputation, and engage diverse stakeholders. His academic achievements and practical experience make him a dynamic and influential force in strategic communications.

Sub-Theme: **Ignite Change**

Thursday, November 16th, 2023

Rebecca Pang is the Vice President, Treasury Solutions, where she leads a team of specialists across Canada to deliver best-in-class cash management, payments and liquidity solutions to business owners and entrepreneurs. Prior to that, she was the Vice President, Commercial Financial Services at RBC where she led a team of front-line commercial account managers to support the growth of Canadian businesses by providing a full suite of banking products and services. Before leading sales teams, she was the Senior Director, US Strategic Business Development for RBC, where she led the development of strategic planning and investment initiatives for traditional and emerging U.S. banking sectors through innovation, mergers & acquisitions, and venture partnerships. Pang was the recipient of RBC Convention Award (for top 1% employee) in 2021 as well as RBC Global Citizen Award in 2020.

Prior to RBC, Rebecca has various progressive careers in China, Hong Kong, U.S. and Canada, including management consultant at McKinsey & Company in Hong Kong, Investor Relations Office for one of the largest telecom operators in China, Head of Retail Channel Analytics of CIBC, and Director of Investment Banking Mergers & Acquisitions team, among others.

Pang received an MBA from Stanford University's Graduate School of Business and BBA Professional Accounting from the Chinese University of Hong Kong. She also studied at Columbia University for a one-year exchange under the HSBC Scholarship. She has earned Certified Treasury Professionals, Chartered Financial Analyst and Chartered Business Valuators designations. Pang currently serves as the board of Toronto Zoo, board of Yee Hong Foundation, Advisor for the Ted Rogers Leadership Centre. She was previously appointed as the Dean Council Member for Ryerson University Ted Rogers School of Management and board of director of the Multiple Sclerosis Society Toronto Chapter.



## Rebecca Pang

VICE PRESIDENT, TREASURY  
SOLUTIONS

Distinguished  
Guest Speaker

Sub-Theme: **Ignite Change**

Thursday, November 16th, 2023



# Ntonghanwah Forchheh (PhD)

RESEARCH ASSOCIATE  
SENIOR BIOSTATISTICIAN

Distinguished  
Guest Speaker

Born in a rural village in Cameroon in 1964, N. Forchheh started school early at Catholic School Foreke Down. At the age of 10yrs, he completed class 4, left the village and parents. He went on to attend two more Primary schools, two secondary schools and the famous CCAST Bambili where I graduated as one of the best students in the country and earned a scholarship to continue study in Britain. So aged 19yrs, He left Cameroon for UK where he completed a BSc Statistics (University of London, UCL), MSc and Phd Statistics (University of Sheffield). In UK, he served in the executive and constitutional committees of the National Union of Cameroon Students, he was twice President of African-Caribbean student society in Sheffield, taught at the Black Access program, and was active in the Afro-Caribbean communities and pan African study groups.

After 9 years in UK and a PhD in Statistics, he headed back to Africa and accepted an academic position at the University of Botswana in 1992. During the next 26 years, he helped design the first Master Degree program in Statistics in Botswana in 1988 and the first PhD in 2010, served as the head of Department, Contributed to development of Statistics across the continent through the Statistics Commission for Africa, African Symposium for Statistical Development. He researched and published widely in pertinent issues concerning Botswana and Africa such as Child malnutrition, HIV, causes of death, productivity, stress, job satisfaction, education attainment, suicide ideation, impact of grieve and bereavement on student performance and many more. He served as Vice Chair and Chair of the Sub-Saharan Network of the International Biometrics Society and organized several biennial conferences of the group. He provided support to CODESRIA, taught and supervised students at the African Institute of Mathematical Sciences in Cameroon and Senegal campuses. Supervised dozens of graduate students including PhD Candidates many of whom have gone to serve very senior roles in their countries.

He relocated to Canada in 2019 and in the last 4 years, he has held Biostatistics research positions at York University and Queen's University (ongoing) and Biostatistics program development and teaching at University of Western Ontario. He is a member of several community organizations including Canadian Black Directorate, Canadian Black Scientists Network, Peel Family Health Community Advisory Board (CAB), Perspective Nation among others. In 2022, He was a nominee in Academic Category at the W.E.A.N Community Centre Black Excellence award in London Ontario.

For the next stage of Career, Forchheh is the founding Director of First Principles Consult (FP Consult) Inc, a statistics consulting, research, data analysis and training company that provides support to businesses, public and private organizations, researchers, students, government and development agencies. We are passionate about counting people in minority and marginalized communities so they too will count.

**Sub-Theme: Ignite Change**

**Thursday, November 16th, 2023**





## Michelle Penman

RBC SENIOR DIRECTOR  
CANADIAN BANKING OPERATIONS

Distinguished  
Guest Speaker

Michelle is an expert in Sales leadership, Coaching and Mentoring. She was a regional vice president for 6 years supporting the GTR, and a year with HR Shared Services.

Michelle joined the Canadian Banking Client Operations team, leading Personal and Business Lending teams. The team supports all of operations and the many professionals who fulfill the vast array of processes that fund, prepare, maintain, renew, close, adjust and investigate for all personal and business credit facilities. Her experience with RBC spans roles across Retail Markets, Learning, National Office and CB operations. One of the most unique opportunities was the Senior Director role at the Advice Centre; an area of RBC that continues to evolve at a rapid pace. Her other professional passions include leadership development, capacity management and embracing change when it brings value to employees and clients.

In the community, I am especially devoted to supporting The Mississauga Food Bank, sharing their Vision; A Mississauga where no one goes hungry.

Sub-Theme: **Ignite Change**

Thursday, November 16th, 2023



## Viviana Santibanez

FOUNDER OF VIVIR LGBTQ+

Distinguished  
Guest Speaker

Ola Ifidon is an ex-Accenture strategy, Business Architecture senior consultant, merit award graduate of Economics, an author, and the first Certified Business Analysis Professional in the province of Alberta.

She has over 20 years of experience in management and business consulting that span across various industries, including oil and gas, information technology, education, and banking.

An erudite scholar with a Cornell-Queen Executive MBA, Ola is an experienced professional, and leader in strategy, business analysis, business transformation, digital innovation, project management, stakeholder management, performance management, and business architecture, with a proven track record in delivering business results. She is the managing Partner strategy and business solutions at ValCon Inc, an Alberta based management and business consulting firm, where she helps businesses unlock the value within.

Ola is a life learner and passionate about knowledge transfer. She is currently enrolled at the McMaster's Director Program.

Her brand is rooted in multidimensional, strategic, and perspective, thought leadership to unlock value, and foster empowerment.

Sub-Theme: **Ignite Change**

Thursday, November 16th, 2023

DAY



COUNCIL OF AFRICAN PROFESSIONALS

2

Sub-Theme: **Inclusive Leadership**  
Friday, November 17th, 2023

Catalyst for Change



## Adijat Akinsipe

TALENT ACQUISITION STRATEGIST |  
DIVERSITY ADVOCATE

Moderator

Merging business and technical visions into high quality, cost-effective solutions while managing all risk factors.  
15+ years experience in the IT industry in various capacities ranging from Technical Support, Solution Delivery, Implementations and Project Management.  
10+ years Resource planning, talent acquisition and efficient strategic solutions.  
Implementation, training and development empowering teams to create seamless and effective delivery.  
Proven Technology solutions with a solid understanding of the Software Delivery Life Cycle.  
Facilitating business and technical requirements, building consensus among teams, vendors and liaising with internal and external partners.  
Proven ability to influence positive change and provide leadership in circuitous situations.

In summary, I am able to offer your company a blend of business and technology outside the box solutions.

Sub-Theme: **Inclusive Leadership**  
Friday, November 17th, 2023



## Hon. Justice Kofi N Barnes

JUDGE OF THE ONTARIO SUPERIOR  
COURT OF JUSTICE

Keynote  
Speaker

Mr. Justice Barnes is a judge of the Ontario Superior Court of Justice. Justice Barnes is a former judge of the Ontario Court of Justice. A native of Ghana, Justice Barnes is the first person born on the African continent to be appointed a judge in Canada.

Prior to his appointment he was a Deputy Director (Ontario Region) of the Federal Prosecution Service now the Public Prosecution Service of Canada.

Mr. Justice Barnes is the founding past President of the Canadian Association of Drug Treatment Court Professionals; founding President of the Association of Justice and Treatment Professionals and President of the International Association of Treatment Courts. In addition to his regular judicial duties, he designs and conducts training programs on solution-focused strategies and innovative approaches to justice.

Justice Barnes is the founder of the innovative Metro West Community Restoration Court in 2011 and the Durham Mental Health and Drug Treatment Court in Oshawa in 2006. He is also the co-founder of Canada's first Drug Treatment Court in Toronto in 1997: <https://youtu.be/tuGP6gU9CvM>.

Justice Barnes is the co-editor of People, Places and Things published by Friesen Press. Justice Barnes is the recipient of awards such as the York University Bryden Awards; the Trent University Distinguished Alumni Award; the Queen Elizabeth Silver Jubilee Commemorative Medal and the African Canadian Achievement Awards for Excellence in law

Sub-Theme: **Inclusive Leadership**  
Friday, November 17th, 2023





## Dr. Laura Mae Lindo

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Distinguished  
Guest Speaker

**Dr. Laura Mae Lindo** (she/her/elle) is a respected activist and educator who holds both a Masters and PhD in Education. Dr. Lindo is a knowledgeable advocate for the rights of womxn and girls, a respected ally to vulnerable communities, and, most importantly, a courageous public speaker, ready, willing, and able to speak to issues often left unaddressed. Her research includes an exploration of the use of humour to initiate discussions of race and racism in pre-service classrooms. Dr. Lindo has worked at Toronto Metropolitan University in the Diversity Institute as well as lectured at St. Francis Xavier University (Antigonish, Nova Scotia), the University of Prince Edward Island (Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island), York University (Toronto, Ontario), and Wilfrid Laurier University (Waterloo, Ontario). A former Member of Provincial Parliament for Kitchener Centre and Ontario's Official Opposition Critic for Anti-Racism and Equity as well as Colleges and Universities, Dr. Lindo was the inaugural Chair of Ontario's first Black Caucus. She is currently an Assistant Professor in Philosophy at the University of Waterloo (Waterloo, Ontario) and Founder and Director of the [e\(RACE\)r Institute](#) where she continues to put anti-racist theory into practice.

Sub-Theme: **Inclusive Leadership**  
Friday, November 17th, 2023

Hassaan has over 20 years of experience working in the public sector and is widely recognized as one of the leading innovators in his field. Since 2017, Hassaan has served as Conservation Halton's President and Chief Executive Officer, following progressive leadership positions with the organization. In his current role, he directs more than 170 staff responsible for managing natural hazards, monitoring local ecosystems, conserving natural resources, building climate resiliency, supporting sustainable development, and providing diverse communities in Ontario's fastest growing region with access to an 11,000-acre network of conservation parks for outdoor recreation and learning. He empowers colleagues in every department to deliver the highest possible standard of service to customers and clients, and to embrace a culture of innovation that thrives on collaboration.

Over the past seven years, Hassaan has focused on developing and implementing successive strategies to enhance the organization's operations and reaffirm its strategic vision and public mandate. Under his leadership, Conservation Halton has seen its brand and stakeholder relationships strengthened, its budgets realigned toward more sustainable fiscal strategies, and its public programs and services enhanced through employee- and customer-centric design and delivery. As an experienced change leader, Hassaan guides transformative initiatives across the organization to enable Conservation Halton's continued sustainable growth while reducing its reliance on public funding; it is one of the few public-sector organizations operating in its field today that supports most of its operations through self-generated revenues.

Outside of his leadership role with Conservation Halton, Hassaan is an advocate for digital transformation and sound policies that support sustainable development, healthy communities, and equitable access to greenspace in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area. His expertise in stakeholder engagement, change management, strategic communications, long-range planning, and public sector governance has led him to serve as an advisor to both provincial and municipal governments. Most recently, as the Chair of the provincial Conservation Authorities Working Group (2020-2022), Hassaan guided a coalition of 18 experts through strategic discussions with the province to provide input on significant regulatory changes affecting Ontario's 36 Conservation Authorities.

Hassaan holds a BSc (Hons) in Evolutionary Biology from the University of Toronto, an MSc in Science Communications from Queen's University (Belfast), and an MBA in Digital Transformation from The DeGroote School of Business at McMaster University, where he is currently completing Directors College. As an engaged alumnus, Hassaan serves as a member of the University of Toronto (Mississauga) Campus Council and enjoys teaching and mentoring in various capacities.



## Hassaan Basit

PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
CONSERVATION HALTON

Distinguished  
Guest Speaker

Sub-Theme: **Inclusive Leadership**  
Friday, November 17th, 2023



## Isabel Inclán

JOURNALIST | EDITOR-IN-CHIEF  
CORRESPONDENT

Distinguished  
Guest Speaker

Isabel Inclán Mexican-Canadian journalist with more than 20 years of journalist experience in Canada.

She has been a correspondent for the Mexican media El Financiero and the Notimex news agency. She has covered major international events, such as the North American Leaders Summit, trilateral NAFTA summits, the G-7 and G-20 meetings, as well as the TIFF and HotDocs film festivals.

She has been a contributor to New Canadian Media (since 2018), whose articles have been republished in the Toronto Star, Winnipeg Free Press, and Cambridge Today.

Since September 2022, she has been the coordinator of the Spanish Resource Center at Glendon College.

She is the host of The Essential channel (YouTube).

She worked from 2020-2022 as an editor-in-chief of the weekly Spanish newspaper Correo Canadiense and as a presenter of the TV channel CorreoTV.

She worked for seven years as a Press Attaché at the Consulate General of Mexico in Toronto.

She has a Master's degree in "Communication and Culture Program," a joint program offered by York University and Toronto Metropolitan University. Her thesis project is the short documentary "Latin American Women in Canadian Politics" which will be screened on October 6th, 2023, at the 23 edition of the Alucine Film Festival.

In 2017, she created, together with the Institute for Creative Exchange, the video "Canada 150-150 Mexicans", which was screened at five community events in Toronto and Ottawa.

In 2015, she was recognized as one of the Ten most influential Hispanics in Canada by the Hispanic Business Alliance.

Sub-Theme: **Inclusive Leadership**  
Friday, November 17th, 2023





## Rina Pillitteri

REGIONAL VICE PRESIDENT AT RBC

Distinguished  
Guest Speaker

As RBC's Regional Vice President in Greater Toronto Region. Rina Pillitteri is responsible for Personal Banking, Small Business and Financial Planning client segments. She leads an extensive successful team including, Community Managers, Branch Managers, and advisors through the implementation of strategic initiatives and pursuing community opportunities. A key focus is partnership with a diverse team of experts under the RBC umbrella and a commitment to providing superior customer experience and financial advice.

Rina has been part of the RBC team for over 35 years. She has held numerous leadership positions in Retail Banking, Commercial Financial Services and National Office.

In her previous role as National Director for Small Business & Women's Markets, Rina led the implementation of national strategies for small business, working with several partners and clients across the RBC network, domestically and globally.

Rina's community involvement and leadership is extensive and includes her receiving the Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Medal for Community Leadership. She was also the recipient of the National Congress of Italian Canadians Ontario Spirit Award. In 2019 was awarded the Global Citizen Award for her community commitment and volunteer efforts that span many years. Rina was also the recipient of the 2020 Italian Chamber of Commerce Award for Business Excellence and in 2021 she was honoured with the Order of Vaughan. In April of 2023, Rina was the recipient of the Vaughan Chambers Business Women's Excellence Award.

Rina served as the Chair of the Board of Directors for Mackenzie Health Foundation and has been part of Mackenzie Health since 2013. She is passionate about her leadership in helping to provide health care services to more patients and their families in the growing City of Vaughan and York Region at large and was instrumental in helping to make the Cortelluci Vaughan hospital a reality by helping to lead the \$250 Million Dollar Capital Campaign. In addition, Rina served as a director of the McMichael Art Gallery Foundation as Treasurer. In November of 2022 Rina was honorary Chair of the Vitanova Celebration of Life Gala. Rina is honoured to be co-chair for the October 2023 Canadian Italian Business Professionals Association annual Presidents Gala.

Rina's educational background includes accreditations with the Institute of Canadian Bankers, Canadian Securities Commission and Dalhousie University.

Rina lives in Kleinburg in the city of Vaughan with her husband Sal and two adult children, Richard and Julia and their family dog Harley.

**Sub-Theme: Inclusive Leadership**  
Friday, November 17th, 2023



## Sam Effah

RBC OLYMPIAN | MARKETING MANAGER

Distinguished  
Guest Speaker

Alberta native and Ghanaian-Canadian Sam Effah is a celebrated athlete, representing Canada in three World Championships, three World University Games, and two Commonwealth Games. Inducted into the 2021 Canada West Hall of Fame, he's a two-time Canadian Champion in the 100-metre and served as co-Chef de Mission for the 2022 Commonwealth Games in Birmingham, UK.

Passionate about sport, marketing, and entrepreneurship, Effah volunteers as an athlete ambassador with Right To Play and as a past Classroom Champions mentor, inspiring youth worldwide. In 2019, he appeared on The Amazing Race Canada Season 7, showcasing his resilience and storytelling abilities while placing second. In his professional life, Effah contributed to RBC Future Launch, helping young people prepare for the future of work. Now a manager on RBC's Brand Marketing team, he supports RBC Training Ground, funding future Olympians, and RBC's sports marketing initiatives, including Olympic Games campaigns.

Website: [www.sameffah.com](http://www.sameffah.com)

Instagram: @sam\_effah

Sub-Theme: **Inclusive Leadership**  
Friday, November 17th, 2023

DAY



COUNCIL OF AFRICAN PROFESSIONALS

3

Sub-Theme: **Catalyzing**  
Saturday, November 18th, 2023

Catalyst for Change



## Efuange Khumbah

SENIOR ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEER  
DS CONSULTANTS LIMITED

**Moderator**

Efuange Khumbah is an Environmental Engineer licensed to practise in Ontario. He is responsible for helping companies repair or prevent damage caused to the soil, groundwater and drinking water. He has managed environmental projects for the public and private sector across in Canada. He has served as pre-purchase environmental due-diligent expert in sectors such as automotive, aerospace, oil and gas, and mining industries. He has consulted for several institutions including the City of Richmond hill, City of Mississauga, City of Oshawa and Town of New Market. He is the founder and moderator of Perspective Nation and a volunteer of CNP.

Sub-Theme: **Catalyzing**  
Saturday, November 18th, 2023



## Harriet Thornhill

CHANCELLOR, TYNDALE UNIVERSITY,  
FORMER EXECUTIVE, RBC ROYAL BANK

Keynote  
Speaker

Harriet is a values-based business leader with extensive leadership and business experience with RBC Royal Bank at the international and domestic level.

With roots in Barbados, she joined RBC in Montreal and held progressive leadership roles of large teams in retail banking and Head Office. Her experience spans across Marketing, Talent Acquisition, Client Experience Strategy, Leadership Development and Sales Leadership. During a career of over 40 years she led multiple teams through transformational and unprecedented change while achieving differentiated employee engagement, client loyalty, and business results.

She is a community champion, having served on not for profit boards and advisory councils, an advocate and role model for DEI, and a sought after leadership coach. Harriet is the recipient of awards recognizing her contributions including:

- **100 Most Influential Black Canadians** – Afroglobal Television: 2022
- **Power of Inclusion Award** – CNP: 2021
- **Martin Luther King Award, Community Impact** – EFCCC: 2020
- **Youth Advancement Award** - BBPA Harry Jerome: 2017
- **Global Citizen Award** – RBC: 2017

Harriet retired from RBC in 2022 as Vice President, RBC Contact Centre, leading a team of 4000 employees in a multi-business, multi-geographical, distribution channel. Prior to her last role, she was the Head of Personal Banking for RBC Caribbean with responsibilities across 19 countries. She was a member of the Operating Committee responsible for setting the strategic direction for RBC Caribbean.

Harriet holds an MBA from Athabasca University, and a recent graduate of the ICD.D, Rotman School of Management, Directors Education Program.

Sub-Theme: **Catalyzing**  
Saturday, November 18th, 2023





## Brenda Halloran

DISTRICT GOVERNOR, ROTARY 7080  
2023-2024

Distinguished  
Guest Speaker

Brenda was the Mayor of Waterloo from 2006–2014 and during this time she collaborated with the Rotary Club of Waterloo to hold the Mayor's Annual State of the City Breakfast. This was a fundraiser and large community event showcasing the club and promoting Rotary.

Brenda is Rotary 7080 District Governor for 2023-2024.

Brenda has been involved with the Waterloo Club since 2006 as an honorary member till 2014 and then became a regular member in 2015. She was the President of her club in 2019-2020.

She has been presented with the Paul Harris Fellowship Award for her service to the community.

Brenda has been actively involved with committee's and fundraising events within her club. During her time as President, she worked with the other KW Cluster Presidents to create the Rotary Clubs of KW, Catch the Ace Lottery.

She is a consultant, sits on several community boards, is the Chair of Startup Canada and a wedding officiant.

Brenda is married to Fred Brandenburg who is a Rotarian and Past President of the Waterloo Club.

Sub-Theme: **Catalyzing**  
Saturday, November 18th, 2023



## Dapo Bankole

CANADIAN LEADER IN IMMIGRANT LIFE  
EDUCATION | TECHNICAL PROGRAM  
DELIVERY LEADER

Distinguished  
Guest Speaker

Dapo, a passionate, resilient, and purpose-driven first-generation Canadian immigrant, ignites success for newcomers through 'The Immigrant Life' initiative, dynamic public speaking, and volunteer work. With 22+ years of IT expertise, he's a master problem-solver in business analysis, project leadership, business process automation, and software product development.

His academic qualifications include a Master of Arts in Leadership, Postgraduate Diploma in Computer Science, and a Bachelor of Science degree in Biochemistry. Professionally, he is a Certified Management Consultant (CMC), a Fellow of the Institute of Management Consultants, a Project Management Professional (PMP), an associate with the ASK Method Company, as well as a John Maxwell certified Coach, Speaker, and Trainer. Dapo also held the Information Systems Professional of Canada (I.S.P) and the Information Technology Certified Professional (ITCP) of Canada designations with the Canadian Information Processing Society. As President of Mopheth Systems Corp., a black-owned tech enterprise in Calgary, Dapo drives innovation.

Dapo's impact extends to the boardroom, where he serves on Momentum's board, contributing to poverty reduction strategies in Calgary and the surrounding areas. His roles span Strategic Planning, Finance, and Tech Advisory committees. Additionally, he enhances Windmill Microlending's success as a board director on the Client Success and Growth Committee. As an advisory board member and the Alberta representative for the Prairie Centre for Excellence in Mentoring (PCFEM), he's dedicated to mentoring excellence. His notable past board roles include Vice President at Project Management Institute (PMI) Nigeria and Tech Committee Chair at Heritage Christian Academy (HCA) Calgary.

Sub-Theme: **Catalyzing**  
Saturday, November 18th, 2023



**Joshua  
Okoli**

INVESTMENT AND WEALTH ADVISOR

**Distinguished  
Guest Speaker**

Joshua's goals-based approach to managing wealth places your needs at the centre. We put your family's goal's first and utilize a full suite of resources through RBC to help you achieve your aims.

Raised by a mother who taught him the values of hard work and sacrifice, Joshua's life experiences have made him familiar with the challenges and obstacles faced in growing and preserving personal wealth. His experiences sparked a passion for helping people with similar stories achieve peace of mind and led Joshua to his current role in the financial services industry.

Joshua believes understanding is the foundation of relationships and works with individuals with whom he can relate to. He runs a successful practice helping professionals, athletes and members of the entertainment industry and their families to navigate the world of money. Joshua has also done extensive work with organizations across Ontario in promoting equity and accessibility for all.

Our philosophy of total wealth management encompasses investment management, wills and estates, tax planning, insurance and above all, a genuine, long-lasting relationship with clients. Starting with a simple chat, to determine fit.

A believer in ongoing education, Joshua obtained an honors Bachelor of Laws from a leading Irish university in which he majored in Tax Law, Corporate Law and Commercial Litigation. He also holds various industry designations from the Canadian Securities Institute and is in pursuit of the Chartered Investment Manager (CIM).

Joshua is happy to have a conversation and can be reached at 416-842-2104 and [joshua.okoli@rbc.com](mailto:joshua.okoli@rbc.com).

Sub-Theme: **Catalyzing**  
Saturday, November 18th, 2023





## Padmini Padiachy

MENTOR AND EDUCATOR

Distinguished  
Guest Speaker

As a young South African scholar, Padmini Padiachy realized the power of education. Apartheid in South Africa was an oppressive reality at every level of existence. Padmini turned to education and never diverted from that pathway. Her childhood experiences developed her resilience, perseverance and passion to challenge injustice, inequity and discrimination. With a career spanning over forty years in education, Padmini, now an administrator and school leader with the York Region District School Board, works passionately to create inclusive, anti-oppressive climates promoting Equity, Inclusion and Human Rights.

Padmini Padiachy has a Master's Degree in Education from Charles Sturt University, New South Wales, Australia. Among her Educational Leadership Certificates are The Executive Leadership Certificate from Schulich School of Business – York University, and Schooling for Critical Consciousness of Racism and Racial Injustice – Harvard Graduate School of Education, Harvard University. In addition, Padmini has a Principal's Development Course Certification through the Ontario Principal's Council, and Certification in a variety of Additional Qualification Courses through the Ontario College of Teachers.

As an educational leader, Padmini has worked as President of the Asian Educators' Network of Ontario, and Educational Partner of the Markham Race Relations Committee- "Many Faces of Markham" event, as well as International Human Rights Day in Markham. Padmini received the Leadership in Human Rights Education Award from Youth for Human Rights and Applause Award for Leadership in Human Rights Education from York Region District School Board. Padmini was a guest speaker at the United Nations – Youth for Human Rights Summit where she presented her educational leadership work on Human Rights, Equity, and Inclusion & Critical Consciousness.

As a school leader, Padmini recognizes the significance of representing and reflecting Canadian Diversity within her staff for students and families to see themselves reflected, valued and affirmed. Along with her collaborative school team, she implements innovative, responsive student-centered decision-making to promote optimal learning conditions, which disrupt narratives of marginalization, bias and stereotypes.

As a racialized woman, Padmini is continually inspired and motivated by the wisdom, values and teachings of her South African Heritage. The philosophies instilled in her by her teachers and elders, have shaped her human-centered approach to life and thus Inclusive Education. Padmini moves forward with strong resolve, to amplify a unified commitment by professionals, students and community, to affirm all social identities, imperative to inclusion. The success of one is the success of all. In the spirit of U B U N T U – I AM BECAUSE WE ARE..."

Sub-Theme: **Catalyzing**  
Saturday, November 18th, 2023



## Teniola Onabanjo

FOUNDER AND CEO OF  
MAKINGTHEMOVE

Distinguished  
Guest Speaker

Teniola Onabanjo is the founder and CEO of makingTheMove. As someone who moved from Nigeria to Canada to pursue her career, she has seen firsthand the difficulties faced by newcomers when moving to a new country. Over the years, she has provided support to various organizations (through workshops, 1:1 coaching) such as Council of Nigerian Professionals, Black Aspiring Physicians of McMaster, Restoration House Hamilton. She recognizes the importance of coaching, providing resources and connecting others to a network of industry professionals in the Canadian job landscape. The desire to broaden the support has led to the development of makingTheMove with a mission to connect skilled newcomers native to the African continent secure jobs pre and post arrival that mirror their skillset as they transition smoothly into Canada.

Teniola is also a Senior Manager, Inclusion Diversity and Equity at KPMG Canada, collaborating and innovating with teams and stakeholders to retain, increase and advance BIPOC talent.

Teniola has her undergraduate degree in Economics and Human Resources diploma from McMaster University.

Sub-Theme: **Catalyzing**  
Saturday, November 18th, 2023



COUNCIL OF AFRICAN PROFESSIONALS

POWER OF INCLUSION

# AWARD

CATEGORIES

- CATALYST
- PRESIDENT
- LEADERSHIP
- YOUTH LEADERSHIP
- VOLUNTEER
- ENTREPRENEUR

POWER OF INCLUSION



## TYPES AND RECIPIENTS

### CATALYST AWARD

- Justice Kofi N Barnes
- Hon. Charmaine A. Williams

### PRESIDENT AWARD

- Gbagharm Agbonlahor

### LEADERSHIP AWARD

- Cheryl Prescod
- Carlos E. Paz-Soldan
- Christen McIntoshont
- Serge Teunga
- Dami Eluyera
- Efuange Khumbah
- Evangeline Chima
- Funlayo Buraimoh
- Janvier kenmoe
- Maryam Muritala
- Sam Effah
- Sohail Nasser
- Teniola Onabanjo

### YOUTH LEADERSHIP AWARD

- Cyril Akwo
- Tomiwa Ademidun

### VOLUNTEER AWARD

- Claudius O Otegbade
- Olugbenga Fakoyejo
- OreofeOluwa Abraham Dimeji

### ENTREPRENEUR AWARD

- Ryan Knight
- Ade T. Ladeinde
- Folake Omitrin
- Neeran Kuni
- Obie Agusiegbe
- Afolake Hassan
- Olasumbo Awogbemi
- Sheldon D. Williams
- Olufunke Eytayo
- Tunde Eytayo



# Catalyst Award



COUNCIL OF AFRICAN PROFESSIONALS



## Justice Kofi N Barnes

Judge of the  
Ontario Superior Court  
of Justice



Mr. Justice Barnes is a judge of the Ontario Superior Court of Justice. Justice Barnes is a former judge of the Ontario Court of Justice. A native of Ghana, Justice Barnes is the first person born on the African continent to be appointed a judge in Canada.

Prior to his appointment he was a Deputy Director (Ontario Region) of the Federal Prosecution Service now the Public Prosecution Service of Canada.

Mr. Justice Barnes is the founding past President of the Canadian Association of Drug Treatment Court Professionals; founding President of the Association of Justice and Treatment Professionals and President of the International Association of Treatment Courts. In addition to his regular judicial duties, he designs and conducts training programs on solution-focused strategies and innovative approaches to justice.

Justice Barnes is the founder of the innovative Metro West Community Restoration Court in 2011 and the Durham Mental Health and Drug Treatment Court in Oshawa in 2006. He is also the co-founder of Canada's first Drug Treatment Court in Toronto in 1997: <https://youtu.be/tuGP6gU9CvM>.

Justice Barnes is the co-editor of People, Places and Things published by Friesen Press. Justice Barnes is the recipient of awards such as the York University Bryden Awards; the Trent University Distinguished Alumni Award; the Queen Elizabeth Silver Jubilee Commemorative Medal and the African Canadian Achievement Awards for Excellence in law.

## Hon. Charmaine Williams



### Legislative Assembly of Ontario

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In 2018, Charmaine Williams became the first black woman elected to Brampton City Council. As MPP, she will focus her efforts on making our streets safer, ensuring that families have access to the social and recreational services that they need and want, and advocating for an integrated transportation plan in the region.

Charmaine's beliefs, values, and courage to advocate for people are shaped by her professional and personal experiences. Prior to entering politics, Williams had a 19-year career as a certified Multi-Systemic Therapist, Behavioral Consultant, and Counselor. She has been a voice on behalf of families and children of all ages coping with domestic violence, mental illness, substance abuse, neglect, trauma, and other personal challenges. Charmaine has also worked with several therapeutic programs and organizations like Associated Youth Services of Peel, Youth Substance Abuse Program, Peel Children's Center, and the Reach Out Center for Kids in Peel and the Halton Region.



# President Award



COUNCIL OF AFRICAN PROFESSIONALS

## Gbagharim Agbonlahor

Team Captain at Lowe's Companies, Inc.



Gbagharim Agbonlahor is a skilled mechanical engineer with a passion for delving into the intricacies of football analysis. He graduated from Institute of Management and Technology, Enugu State, and furthered his education at Ambrose Ali University Ekpoma, Edo State. Gbagharim combines his technical prowess with a love for the beautiful game.

Outside of his professional pursuits, Gbagharim finds joy in volunteering and extending a helping hand to those in need. Whether it's offering his engineering expertise or contributing to community initiatives, he believes in making a positive impact beyond his field.

With a dynamic blend of technical acumen and a heart for service, Gbagharim Agbonlahor is not just an engineer; he's a dedicated individual weaving his skills into the fabric of both industry and community.

He has been an avid volunteer with CNP Inc for the past 3 years.



# Leadership Award



COUNCIL OF AFRICAN PROFESSIONALS



## Cheryl Prescod

Executive Director of Black Creek Community  
Health Center



With a career in non-profits spanning over 25 years, Cheryl Prescod has established herself as a dedicated leader in the health sector. As the Executive Director of Black Creek Community Health Centre and Co-Chair of the Northwestern Toronto Ontario Health Team, Cheryl wields her influence to shape health and equity policies that directly impact marginalized and vulnerable population groups.

She is committed to promoting social justice and health equity through her involvement with the Alliance for Healthier Communities' Black Health Committee, Canadian Mental Health Association-Toronto, York University's Community Engagement Centre and former Co-Chair of Ontario Health Toronto's Anti-Racism committee. Having a keen understanding of the strengths and needs of communities, Cheryl leads innovative approaches to health and is a driving force for positive change.

Cheryl has an academic background in biochemical sciences from the Universities of Toronto and Ottawa. She has gained valuable knowledge and leadership insights from institutions such as the Rotman School of Management, Schulich School of Business, and Harvard Business School.

The mother of three young adults, Cheryl values the care and support of her family.

## Carlos E. Paz-Soldan

Volunteers with Alma Children's  
Education Foundation



Originally from Peru, Carlos is an I.T professional and entrepreneur. He has worked with many companies, large and small in South America, Africa, and North America. Carlos also volunteers as the President of Hispanotech.ca, an association dedicated to the integration and success of Latin American technology professionals in Canada. He also volunteers with Alma Children's Education Foundation, which promotes education in remote regions of South America.

# Christen McIntoshont

National Small Projects and  
Customer Service Manager  
at Eaton corporation



Christen McIntosh is a dynamic and goal-oriented professional that leverages 24+ years of experience in steering mutually beneficial business partnerships, spearheading highly effective teams, and delivering innovative strategies to promote business growth. Proven success in monitoring projects and employee performance to expedite the realization of organizational goals. Adept at constructing effective communication plans to stimulate, excite and engage teams in alignment with corporate and societal initiatives.

Christen works for a global power solutions company called Eaton corporation as the National Small Projects and Customer Service Manager in Burlington, Ontario, Canada. As an Ambassador for Inclusion and Diversity, Christen supports direct reports, colleagues, and managers, by offering guidance on creating a culture of inclusion through effectively leveraging diversity among all employees and stakeholders. Christen believes that it is critical that representation of institutions, elected officials, organizations etc. reflect the makeup of our diverse populations across Canada and beyond. As an ambassador and I&D training she ensures managers and employees are culturally competent to serve the vast diversity, which is what continues to drive her passion and engagement.

Christen believes that now more than ever, is the time to discuss racial injustice and inequality within our societies. Christen believes that engaging in and encouraging others to value differences and share different perspectives within the community, workplace etc. will lead to greatness. Through this ongoing journey, Christen continues to collaborate with MP's, MPPs, elected officials, law makes, educational leaders, policy makers etc. for meaningful sustainable change to happen.

## Serge Teunga

President of 'GRAMEN



Serge Teunga, Ing., P. Eng., is member of the Professional Engineers Ontario (PEO) and the Ordre des ingénieurs du Québec (OIQ). He works as an engineer and IT consultant in many industries. Serge Teunga has been actively involved in community work for several years at regional and national levels. He is a current board member of 'La Table des ministères en français' of The United Church of Canada and president of 'GRAMEN: GROUPE D'AMITIE ET D'ENTREPREUNARIAT', an NGO which works through targeted initiatives in socio-educational development and the promotion of the entrepreneurial spirit among young francophones in the region of GTA.

## Dami Eluyera

Founder and Managing Director of  
Kind Republic Inc.



Dami Eluyera is the Founder and Managing Director of Kind Republic Inc. (dba. IMDOINGIT), an organization focused on advancing black excellence in career and business via mentorship, internship and training. She is also the Brand Director of A Brand New Thing Inc., where she helps new entrepreneurs build their brands and supports SMEs with the launch of new ideas and initiatives across Canada.

Through these two platforms, Dami supports two key groups that hold a special place in her heart; black young adults and immigrant entrepreneurs. By incorporating lessons from her MBA in Strategic Marketing and consulting experiences with brands like Loblaw and Walmart, Dami brings a wealth of knowledge to these groups with her books; *Making Dollars*, *A Guide for Africans Starting A Business Abroad* and *Before the Logo*, *A Workbook for Aspiring Brand Owners* and various programs such as mentorMatch and The Verdict.



## Efuange Khumbah

Founder and moderator of Perspective Nation



Efuange Khumbah is an Environmental Engineer licensed to practise in Ontario. He is responsible for helping companies repair or prevent damage caused to the soil, groundwater and drinking water. He has managed environmental projects for the public and private sector across in Canada. He has served as pre-purchase environmental due-diligent expert in sectors such as automotive, aerospace, oil and gas, and mining industries. He has consulted for several institutions including the City of Richmond hill, City of Mississauga, City of Oshawa and Town of New Market. He is the founder and moderator of Perspective Nation and a volunteer of CNP.

# Evangeline Chima

Found of Black Mentorship Inc. (BMI)



Evangeline Chima has nearly 20 years of expertise in offering transformational solutions to enterprises through information technology services, business analysis, process reengineering, digital transformation, and project management. In addition, she has extensive knowledge of DEI techniques, workplace safety and inclusion, coaching, and mentoring.

Her experiences with institutional racism and bias as a Black professional woman in Canada inspired her to found Black Mentorship Inc. (BMI). BMI inspires, assists, and mentors Black professionals as they strive to achieve their full potential, build community, and effect change. BMI is a prominent nonprofit charity organization dedicated to Black peoples' professional and personal development through education, mentorship, and skill development.

As part of her work, Evangeline helps organizations to create safe atmospheres where everyone thrives. She mentors community leaders, government representatives, youths, students, professionals, new entrepreneurs, and newcomers, earning her the nickname "Chief Mentor Woman." She sits on many Boards and Advisory tables, participating in community building and promoting change and safe, inclusive, equitable communities where no one is left behind.

Evangeline is an inspirator. A 2020 Canada International Black Women Excellence (CIBWE) Top Canadian Woman to Watch, Universal Women Network 2021 Women of Inspiration Black Leader Winner, and 2022 Queens Platinum Jubilee Community Service Award Winner - She has been recognized as a remarkable leader and pillar of strength in preparing the next generation of Canadian leaders by the Honourable Anita Anand, President of treasurer board and Member of Parliament Oakville. Evangeline is a highly sought motivational speaker and Moderator, among others.

Evangeline lives by the words of Maya Angelou, "Do the best you can until you know better. Then, when you know better, do better."

She is a devoted wife and mother of four boys...now young Men. Her proudest moment was seeing her four boys graduate this past June.

## Funlayo Buraimoh

Founder of Nigerians in Clinical Research/Pharmaceuticals in Canada (NiCRPCa)



Funlayo Buraimoh is an excellent Senior Clinical Project Lead with one of the foremost leading Clinical Research Organizations in Canada; With a remarkable 15-year career experience and track record in the field of clinical research, she is experienced in leading multi-regional global clinical trial studies, notably Northern America (US/Canada), Europe, West Africa and spanning the Asia-Pacific (APAC) region.

Originally from Nigeria, Funlayo moved to Canada in August 2018 and lives with her husband and two boys in Hamilton, Ontario. She is a community person and founder of Nigerians in Clinical Research/Pharmaceuticals in Canada (NiCRPCa), a community of over 100 Nigerians actively working in the Clinical Research/ Pharmaceutical space in Canada.

Funlayo's personal core values are being passionate, courageous, and strategic.

Funlayo has been recognized as a go-to resource person, problem solver and one with capacity to build authentic, credible, and trusting relationships with internal and external clients.

Outside of work, she loves hosting events, making sumptuous meals, and Karaoke.

## Janvier kenmoe

Business Representative  
with LiUNA Local 183



Janvier Kenmoe is a Civil Engineer by profession and a Business Representative with LiUNA Local 183, where he has been a member for 21 years. He has been a voice and advocate for many young black people in the construction industry and in their representation in the LiUNA Local 183.

He is also a member of the LiUNA African American Canadian Caucus (LAACC). As a member of the Caucus, Janvier is a volunteer with the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, a Mentor with Toronto Community Benefits Network and he supports a number of community based initiatives from fundraising to program development.

As the Director, Skill Development & Apprenticeship with ANCHOR - African-Canadian Coalition against Hate, Oppression & Racism, Janvier advocates for better treatment of Black youth in the school system. Janvier kenmoe is currently getting some of the African refugees who are getting settled into the community to get some trade training at our training centre for possible temporary or permanent job placements.

As a Civil Engineer, he is a professional blueprint reader in the high-rise sector in Ontario. He is married and a father of two boys.

# Maryam Muritala

Founder of Canada Vendors



Maryam Muritala is an internationally Trained Legal professional who was called to the Nigerian Bar in 2008. She worked in the Corporate Sector with various companies with a huge focus on Business and Technology law before relocating out of Nigeria. She is also a seasoned and Award-winning Entrepreneur, who has helped individuals launch successful businesses across different Continents. She currently works as a contract Manager.

When she got to Canada in 2016, she realized there was a gap in the Canadian BIPOC Business Community, for a structured platform to connect businesses and provide visibility. In 2017 she launched Canada Vendors in the City of Brampton, a Business Development and Advertising Hub which creates structured visibility for business owners using Digital marketing tools, business networking events, and Customized marketing campaigns.

During the Worldwide COVID-19 pandemic, business owners in the BIPOC Community were struggling with visibility and integrating technology into their business operations. She successfully created and hosted a virtual BRAND EXPO to connect Entrepreneurs across Canada, resulting in structured visibility for over 2,500 Business owners. During the Country-wide lockdown, She interviewed over 500 micro to small business owners on Instagram giving them structured visibility on Instagram.

She created and launched a mini-series on YouTube in 2021 titled "THE ENTREPRENEURIAL JOURNEY" spotlighting business owners across communities in Canada through personalized interviews. In 2021 when the Provincial lockdown was lifted in Ontario she relaunched "BRAND EXPO" into a successful business networking event that allowed entrepreneurs and community members to interact.

She was recently awarded one of the Top 100 Black Women to Watch in Canada in 2022 by Canada International Black Women Excellence for her contributions to the Business Community in Canada and Inspirational Citizen at the Brampton Citizen Awards and Innovation Award at the Black History Month Awards by the city of Brampton.



## Sam Effah

Manager on RBC's Brand Marketing team



Alberta native and Ghanaian-Canadian Sam Effah is a celebrated athlete, representing Canada in three World Championships, three World University Games, and two Commonwealth Games. Inducted into the 2021 Canada West Hall of Fame, he's a two-time Canadian Champion in the 100-metre and served as co-Chef de Mission for the 2022 Commonwealth Games in Birmingham, UK.

Passionate about sport, marketing, and entrepreneurship, Effah volunteers as an athlete ambassador with Right To Play and as a past Classroom Champions mentor, inspiring youth worldwide. In 2019, he appeared on The Amazing Race Canada Season 7, showcasing his resilience and storytelling abilities while placing second. In his professional life, Effah contributed to RBC Future Launch, helping young people prepare for the future of work. Now a manager on RBC's Brand Marketing team, he supports RBC Training Ground, funding future Olympians, and RBC's sports marketing initiatives, including Olympic Games campaigns.

Website: [www.sameffah.com](http://www.sameffah.com)

Instagram: @sam\_effah



## Sohail Nasser

Member of Executive Board of the PEO



Our District Governor for 2024-25 will be Sohail Naseer. Sohail joined Rotary Milton in 2010 and became President of the Club in 2012.

In 2014, he started his involvement in District activities and became Assistant Governor for the Halton Cluster. In 2017, he became the Director of Finance for the District. Sohail has been involved in many club-level fundraising and community service projects, including Rotary Youth Exchange, Students Advisory and the Online Auction.

Sohail has been involved in the PanAm Games including fundraising activities for the velodrome facility constructed in Milton. He has also served as chair and member of the Community Advisory Board of Maplehurst Correctional Facility in Milton. Sohail has served as a member of the Committee of Adjustment for the Town of Milton. His dedication to service has been officially recognized through an Ontario Volunteer Award from the Government of Ontario.

Professionally, Sohail is a licensed Civil Engineer. He is part of the Executive Board of the PEO (Professional Engineers Ontario), Oakville Chapter, and has served as Chair of that chapter.

## Teniola Onabanjo

Founder and CEO of makingTheMove



Teniola Onabanjo is the founder and CEO of makingTheMove. As someone who moved from Nigeria to Canada to pursue her career, she has seen firsthand the difficulties faced by newcomers when moving to a new country. Over the years, she has provided support to various organizations (through workshops, 1:1 coaching) such as Council of Nigerian Professionals, Black Aspiring Physicians of McMaster, Restoration House Hamilton. She recognizes the importance of coaching, providing resources and connecting others to a network of industry professionals in the Canadian job landscape. The desire to broaden the support has led to the development of makingTheMove with a mission to connect skilled newcomers native to the African continent secure jobs pre and post arrival that mirror their skillset as they transition smoothly into Canada.

Teniola is also a Senior Manager, Inclusion Diversity and Equity at KPMG Canada, collaborating and innovating with teams and stakeholders to retain, increase and advance BIPOC talent. Teniola has her undergraduate degree in Economics and Human Resources diploma from McMaster University.



# Youth Leadership Award



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## Cyril Akwo

President of Camer SC Toronto



Cyril Akwo is the president of Camer SC Toronto, a community non-profit organization that promotes diversity and inclusion through sports, arts, and culture. He advocates against anti-black racism and promotes community integration and social cohesion. During his tenure as president of Camer SC, he has liaised with various government and non-governmental organizations to raise funds to support community-building initiatives in Toronto. He has created connections between Camer SC and the Ontario Sports Network, The Canadian Race Relations Foundation, The Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture, and Sport, Canadian Tire Jumpstart Charities, and The Canadian Red Cross. This year, Cyril led the Cameroon-Canada Youth Sports Program, The Cameroon-Canada Challenge Cup, and the Arts and Culture Festival, which brought together 12 community groups from Ontario and Quebec and was witnessed by the Federal Minister of International Development, Honorable Ahmed Hussen.

# Tomiwa Ademidun

## Founder of Atila



Tomiwa Ademidun is the founder of Atila, A platform that helps youth get jobs using Mentors. Atila was founded in 2018 to help youth get access to education opportunities with scholarships. Tomiwa graduated with a double degree in Software Engineering and Business from the Ivey Business School.

While his program was very prestigious, it was very expensive and he graduated with over \$60,000 in student loans.

He spent a lot of time finding and applying for scholarships so as a software engineer he created a program to help him find and apply for scholarships more easily. He named this program Atila and made it available to other students.

To date, Atila has raised over \$50,000 in scholarships for youth and helped 5,000 students find scholarships for school.

In 2022, The Atila team noticed another pressing need within the youth for mentorship and employment and decided to focus on getting youth access to employment using mentors.

Atila's mission is inspired by people like Tomiwa's father, Olumide who was the head of IT for a telecommunications company in Nigeria and came to Canada and had to start from scratch packing cheese in a factory.

Despite all the accomplishments and relationships that Olumide had in Nigeria, it didn't transfer to his new environment in Canada.

This is the exact same problem many youth and recent immigrants face. They are in a new environment and their skills and relationships are not always recognized in this new environment.

Atila works with youth to help them bridge the experience, confidence, network, and skills gap to help them get jobs.

Atila is currently working on a contract with 4 other companies to offer 420 youth scholarships valued at \$8,000 each to receive technical skills and mentorship training to help them get jobs in product and project management, business analyst, software development and UI/UX design.

Tomiwa would like to thank:

1. The CNP for recognizing him for his efforts.
2. Mrs. Adejisola Atiba, also known as Lady Abha for being his mentor and teaching him many Yoruba proverbs.
3. His parents Olumide and Aramide Ademidun, his sisters Kitan and Tife Ademidun for their encouragement.
4. His Grandmothers, Mojisola Rufai and Victoria Ademidun for creating a strong family foundation.
5. The almighty God for the gift of life.



# Volunteer Award



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## Claudius O Otegbade

Director for Compliance  
& Chief Compliance Officer  
at WFCU Credit Union



Claudius O. Otegbade is the Director for Compliance & Chief Compliance Officer at WFCU Credit Union, a credit union based in Ontario, Canada. He is an experienced chartered accountant and financial crime consultant with over 14 years of working experience in anti-money laundering, forensic accounting, fraud investigation, and regulatory audits.

Prior to joining WFCU Credit Union, Claudius worked in the Forensics/AML practice of both MNP LLP and Grant Thornton LLP, two leading international professional services firms in Canada for over five years.

Claudius is a regular speaker at various financial crime conferences across Canada and a past board member of the Association of Certified Financial Crime Specialist (ACFCS), Toronto Chapter.

Claudius holds a bachelor's degree in Accounting and an MBA from two Nigerian universities. He is also a Certified Anti-Money Laundering Specialist (CAMS), Certified Fraud Examiner (CFE), Certified Financial Crime Specialist (CFCS), Certified Forensic Investigator (CFI), Certified Bitcoin Professional (CBP), Certified Cryptocurrency Investigator (CCI), and a graduate of the Fraud Examination and Forensic Accounting program at Seneca College, Ontario, Canada.

He is a fellow member of ICAN and the current Publicity Secretary of ICAN Canada District Society.

He is happily married with two boys.

## Olugbenga Fakoyejo

Senior Financial Advisor at Scotiabank



Olugbenga Fakoyejo is an accomplished Chartered Banker, Financial Planning and Corporate Finance Professional with over 18 years experience covering Financial Advisory, Strategic Planning, Investment, credit, Risk Management, Capital Markets Reviews, Business Development, Governance, Data Analytics and Decision Matrix Analysis.

He is currently a Senior Financial Advisor at Scotiabank

He Holds a bachelor and master's degree in Economics. An active Mutual Fund license and a certificate in Financial Service Advice.

He is passionate about building connections, relationship, collaboration, valuing the perspectives of others.

He is very active in community activities that promotes incredible conversations sharing of knowledge, resources, mentoring and coaching that is focused on helping and supporting immigrants thrive professionally and socially in Canada.

## OreofeOluwa Abraham Dimeji

Volunteer at Council of Nigerian Professionals



OreofeOluwa Abraham Dimeji is a remarkable 16-year-old student currently attending Craig Kielburger Secondary School, where he is a dedicated junior in the 11th grade.

OreofeOluwa's journey as a volunteer began at a remarkably early age in 2012 when he supported his family in volunteering with RBC Race for Kids, raising funds, and walking in support of mental health, thereby demonstrating a natural inclination for community service and a passion for making a difference.

Since then, OreofeOluwa has continued to leave his mark on the community by volunteering for various organizations, including Knights Table, and CNOY where he has contributed his time and efforts multiple times. He has been supporting non-profit organizations, like CNP (Council of Nigerian Professionals) and ACCH (African Caribbean Council of Halton), since their inception, 2018 and 2020 respectively, where he highlights his dedication to service, a quality that distinguishes him as compassionate and selfless individual.



# Entrepreneur Award



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## Ryan Knight

Owner of Detailing Knights



Ryan has built multiple businesses over the last 10 years and spends a great deal of his time leading and mentoring young entrepreneurs in the community. After starting a social enterprise Detailing Knights, a mobile waterless car cleaning company, Ryan was able to launch his first youth entrepreneurship program called Knighthood Academy.

Knighthood Academy was designed to help at risk youth in the community develop their leadership skills through an entrepreneurship bootcamp. Various youth with multiple barriers have accessed the program ranging from high school dropouts, past gang members, and those recently released from detention.

"I have realized that entrepreneurship is a tool that gives a level playing field to all those that want to partake. I envision helping youth all over the world experience entrepreneurship at least once during their learning journey.

To this end Ryan is an active board member with the Peel Learning Foundation. Helping to bring alternative resources to youth in the Peel District School Board.

Ryan has been named one of Brampton's top 40 under 40 and twice nominated for a Business Excellence Award by the Brampton Board of Trade in 2014 and winning in 2019. In 2013 Ryan won the Emerging Entrepreneur of the Year award from the Toronto Region Board of Trade.



## Ade T. Ladeinde

founder and creator of  
Adeba Connector



Ade T. Ladeinde is a young entrepreneur based in Toronto, Canada. She is the founder and creator of Adeba Connector, a multimedia chain that includes Connector Core Magazine, Correct Commerce, Adeba Connector TV, and more. Ade is passionate about supporting businesses, entrepreneurs, and entertainers, while also raising awareness about the numerous opportunities available in the immigrant community.

Throughout her career, Ade has received acknowledgments and awards for her endeavors. In 2019, she was honored with the Award of Excellence in Arts, Entertainment, and Community Service by Abedorc Awards. More recently, in 2021, she received the Personality Award of Excellence by Prestige Media Concept.

She is currently the vice president of 9ja Connect, an organization that caters to new immigrants in Canada helping them overcome the legality of proper documentation for better settlement. Now the current PRO for NCA GTA to help build and manage the image of the association.

Ade leverages her platforms, media coverage, magazines, and connections with local community organizations to assist new immigrants who are starting businesses in Canada or seeking to promote their services. She is dedicated to helping others succeed and promoting the growth and development of the immigrant community.

# Folake Omitrin

Owner of Eventsngiftsbyfolake



Folake Omitrin is an incredible woman who wears many hats and excels in every role she takes on. She is married to the amazing Adewale Omitrin and together they have three beautiful girls named Teniola, Tireni, and Tamiore. As a professional, Folake has over 20 years of experience in the IT Project Management field, making her a true expert in her field. She holds an MBA from Regis University, a Bachelor's degree in Information Management and Computer Science From Western Illinois University, Certified PMP from PMI, Certified Advance Early Childhood Educator, Certified Advanced International Event Planner and many more.

With her impressive skill set, Folake has successfully established her own businesses. She is the proud owner of Eventsngiftsbyfolake, where she creates unforgettable experiences for her clients. She also runs Loveteesnthings, a branding company that specializes in customization, promotional items, marketing, advertising, and branding solutions. Her commitment to helping others extends to Kidzfunfest, an organization that brings joy and fun to children through various events and activities. Lastly, Folake manages iThub, a platform that assists aspiring project managers in registering, studying, and successfully passing PMI exams.

Folake's passion for making a positive impact on people's lives led her to start her own non-profit organization called Herimpacts. Through this organization, she focuses on making a difference and being a blessing to humanity. Her selflessness and dedication to helping others are truly inspiring.

When Folake isn't busy conquering the professional world, she loves to travel and explore new places. Her adventurous spirit fuels her desire to learn about different cultures and connect with people from all walks of life. She finds joy in helping others and possesses a can-do attitude that has propelled her to great success in all aspects of her life.

In summary, Folake Omitrin is an extraordinary woman who has achieved remarkable success in her personal and professional endeavors. Her diverse skill set, entrepreneurial spirit, and passion for making a difference set her apart. Folake is an inspiration to all, and her positive attitude and determination are the driving forces behind her many accomplishments.

## Neeran Kuni

Founder of Ubuntu FX



Neeran Kuni is the founder of Ubuntu FX (Zulu and Xhosa for “I am because we are”), a company whose mission is “to create workplaces where you belong”. Neeran created Ubuntu a few months into the COVID-19 pandemic as he was determined to bridge gaps in service delivery when many families lost in-person services, by developing innovative, remote programs. Growing up as a child in South Africa during apartheid, Neeran witnessed the impacts of marginalization and intergenerational trauma. These critical experiences ignited a life-long passion to work with underserved and neurodiverse populations and to increase their quality of life by developing innovative, inclusive solutions.

In the first year of starting Ubuntu, Neeran was awarded a national grant with which he developed and delivered a virtual parent coaching model to seniors who were caring for their children with developmental disabilities. The following year, Neeran was awarded a start-up grant from DMZ, in partnership with Toronto Metropolitan University and American Express, with which he created a successful social enterprise for young adults with autism and advocated for inclusive workplaces with a passionate focus on neurodiversity. Through Ubuntu, in 2022 Neeran served as one of the directors of the ministry-funded Urgent Response Service, in which he provided strategic leadership to clinical teams working with families in mental health crises. In addition to Ubuntu, Neeran is currently the Director of Programs and Operations for a homeless shelter in Toronto where he is tasked with creating holistic programming for marginalized and unhoused populations.

Neeran has been described by his teams as a compassionate leader, given his kindness, commitment to staff motivation, and his mission of fostering a trauma-sensitive culture of collaboration and inclusivity. When he is not working, Neeran enjoys teaching his son how to play sports and he loves to DJ, especially Amapiano. Neeran is humbled to be receiving the 2023 Power of Inclusion: Catalyst for Change Entrepreneurial Award and he is sincerely grateful to the Council of Nigerian Professionals for their recognition of his work in the community.

# Obie Agusiegbe

Founder/CEO of EnvironFocus



Obie is a thought leader with 20+ years of experience in Environmental Management, Climate Change, Sustainability, Program Management and Project Management spanning different sectors in North America, Africa, and the United Kingdom. She is a Certified Environmental Professional under ECO Canada with an Environmental Manager designation and a GRI Certified Sustainability Professional with experience in building, developing and leading Environmental Social and Governance (ESG)/Net Zero programs, enabling strong global collaborations with key organizations to influence businesses in an organization's supply chain and drive improving metrics across sustainability initiatives.

Obie has a Master's degree in Clean Technology from Newcastle University, United Kingdom, a B.Sc. (Hons) in Chemistry from the University of Ibadan, Nigeria, a Graduate Certificate in Environmental Management from the University of Toronto, and a Certificate in Adult Education/Training and Development from Seneca College of Applied Arts and Technology, Canada. She wears hats as the multiple Founder/CEO of EnvironFocus, Founder/ED Of Sustainable Community Aid Network(SCAN), and Vice President of Black Women Professional Co-op. She is a Sustainability Advocate. Her Sustainability magazine - EnvironBuzz Magazine, is rated in the top 20 sustainability Magazines and 30 ESG magazines online. Environfocus has received numerous awards, including Best Intercontinental Sustainability and Environmental Management Social Enterprise 2023 .

As an avid volunteer, she has been on the board of various non-profit organizations, including the Rotary Club of Mississauga- Airport and the Ontario Sustainable Energy Association. She is the Sustainable Waste Recycling Community of Nigeria board President. She has chaired various environmental committees and mentors numerous students in her field.

Pastor Mrs  
**Afolake  
Hassan**

Managing Director of T&T Restaurant



A registered Nurse and Midwife with Federal Ministry of Health and retired as a Principal Nursing Officer(Matron) in 2006 and proceeded to Oman to work in the Ministry of Health as a Clinical Instructor in the Maternal and Child Health Care Department.

Came with her family into Canada as landed immigrants in February 2012. Now the managing director of T&T Restaurant(Crunchy Snacks and Nigerian Dishes)a subsidiary of J. Shammah Business services Inc.

She is an associate pastor of Fulfilled Life Evangelical Ministry Mississauga ON, Canada as she pastors alongside with her husband. She oversees the Daughters of Zion Women Ministry. Her bedrock and driving force of her faith is Matt 6:33 which is one of her favorite Bible quotes. A prayerful, dynamic preacher and teacher of the Word that ministers with passion and vigour at any given opportunity. Fearless and faithful to God's great commission to preach to all creatures.

She's a mom to 2 amazing children. She has a heart to communicate God's hope through the everyday moments of life - the good, the bad, the ugly, and the ones that take your breath away. A lover of every sunrise, forever needy of God's grace, this Nigerian /Canadian woman finds joy in the simple gift of each new day. Her slogan is "stay hooked on Jesus Christ and nothing less".



## Risikat Olasumbo Awogbemi

Owner/ Founder of SMTN international Inc.



Risikatu Olasumbo Awogbemi, is the Owner/ Founder of SMTN international Inc. SMTN is one of the leading value driven cargo companies in Canada, with branches in Lagos, UK and USA.

She graduated from Lagos State Polytechnic, majoring in Marketing. and holds three Post Graduate degrees, from Humber College Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning in Project Management, Lagos State University Ojo, Lagos State in Finance and Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, Ogbomosho in Transport Management. Currently, she is a certified Project Management Professional PMP.

In addition to her business experience, she is also the CEO/Founder of Advocacy Centre for Women and Family Matters. Advocacy Centre for Women and Family Matters is a Not-For- Profit, aimed at supporting women from various communities, Canada-wide and beyond in accessing counselling and protective services that empowers women and children to stand against violence.

She is very passionate about giving back to her community and humanity. She maintains an active participation in the Nigerian Canadian communities across the GTA, currently an executive member of the Nigerian Canadian Association(Treasurer). Award winner, Canada Vendors Business Personality of the Year 2021, Abedor Productions Award of Excellence 2022, Canada Vendors Entrepreneurship Impact Award 2022 and Afro Heritage Community Award of Excellence 2022.

## Sheldon D. Williams



The chair & co-founder of the Canadian Association of Black Insurance Professionals (CABIP).

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Sheldon D. Williams is a seasoned insurance professional with over 20 years' experience in the insurance industry. He currently owns and operates a licensee office of Nacora Insurance Brokers. His hard work, charisma, and true passion for his business has helped Sheldon's reputation as a qualified entrepreneur and insurance professional. Sheldon specializes in all facets of P&C insurance; he has the confidence and network to be a great problem solver.

A passionate community member, Sheldon is the VP of the Canadian Caribbean Association of Halton (CCAH), and the chair & co-founder of the Canadian Association of Black Insurance Professionals (CABIP).

## Olufunke Omobolaji Eyitayo

Treasurer on the board of  
the Association of Nigerians  
in Milton (ANIM)



Olufunke Omobolaji Eyitayo- PCP, MBA, FCA, Funke is a graduate of the University of Lagos, a Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants (ICAN), a member of the Chartered Institute of Taxation, Nigeria (CITN), a Qualified Payroll Compliance Practitioner, Canada and has an MBA in Finance from the University of Liverpool. Funke serves as a treasurer on the board of the Association of Nigerians in Milton (ANIM), volunteers on the board of several other Not For Profit corporations and consults for a number of organizations in various capacities as an experienced and result-oriented business support person with extensive knowledge of finance, accounting, taxation, audit, payroll & human resources, procurement and administrative/logistics functions. She is happily married with kids.

## Tunde Eyitayo

Financial and Management Consultant.



Babatunde Eyitayo is an experienced and highly motivated entrepreneur with over a decade of employed work experience in the financial industry and another decade in the world of setting up new businesses, working with SME's and existing/troubled firms. In the many years he has spent within his employment and consulting eras, he has taken up the responsibility for ensuring each firm continued as a going concern, highlighting flashing and red lights and identifying opportunities to improve their bottom lines.

His professional career has seen him head various Finance units of firms within various industries ranging from the Software and Information technology verticals to Advertising, Engineering, Cargo and Aviation and Finance ones and has opened them up to a whole lot of opportunities which has invariably given each firm a better chance of significant success.

Babatunde Eyitayo graduated from Obafemi Awolowo University with a B.Sc. in Accounting and an MBA from the same institution; he is also a Fellow Chartered Accountant with the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria and a member of the Chartered Institute of Taxation Nigeria; he is currently engaged as a Financial and Management Consultant.





# BLACK HISTORY MONTH EVENT

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# GROW YOUR BUSINESS WITH US

**Canadian Imperial Advantage (CIA)**, a non-profit organization dedicated to fostering social capital and economic growth for businesses, particularly startups, through tailored entrepreneurship support programs. Our initiatives focus on under-served and racialized communities, creating inclusive frameworks for business advancement. CIA offers comprehensive services through our Entrepreneur Center (CIAEC) and Newcomer Center (CIANC). Our programs encompass access to capital, business registration, mentorship, language support, employment services, and various specialized initiatives, including youth and women entrepreneurship programs.

## Our Mission

We empower black entrepreneurs and business owners, bridging gaps in funding, offering mentorship, and facilitating partnerships. With support from the Government of Canada and esteemed partners like Canford Institute of Technology, Scotiabank, and Edmonton Chamber of Commerce, we drive inclusive economic growth and job creation in our communities.

## Our Impact

Through our Black Business Advancement Project (BBAP), we provide crucial funding solutions, mentorship, networking, and training. We connect emerging entrepreneurs with seasoned mentors and offer a wealth of resources to ensure their success



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## BLACK BUSINESS ADVANCEMENT PROJECT (BBAP)

We assist Black entrepreneurs and business owners in gaining access to capital, mentoring, networking, financial planning, and business training. Our ecosystem connects Black-owned businesses, experts, networks, and resources while fostering mentorship between seasoned entrepreneurs and emerging Black business owners. We address funding challenges and access to venture capital.

## Canadian Imperial Advantage Entrepreneur Center (CIAEC)

- Access to capital
- Business Advisory Services
- Market research and information sourcing
- Grant program guidance
- Financial services
- Coaching & Mentoring / Networking Events
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- CEO Roundtable
- HER-conomy Initiative Program
- Youth Entrepreneurship Mentorship Program
- Newcomers Settlement Program

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
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## About us

EnvironFocus is your global environmental management and sustainability partner, headquartered in Canada. We work with organizations to reduce their carbon footprint and increase their positive social impact locally and globally.



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### Social Impact Services

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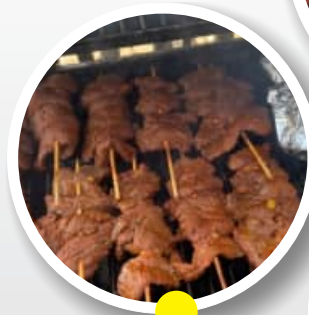
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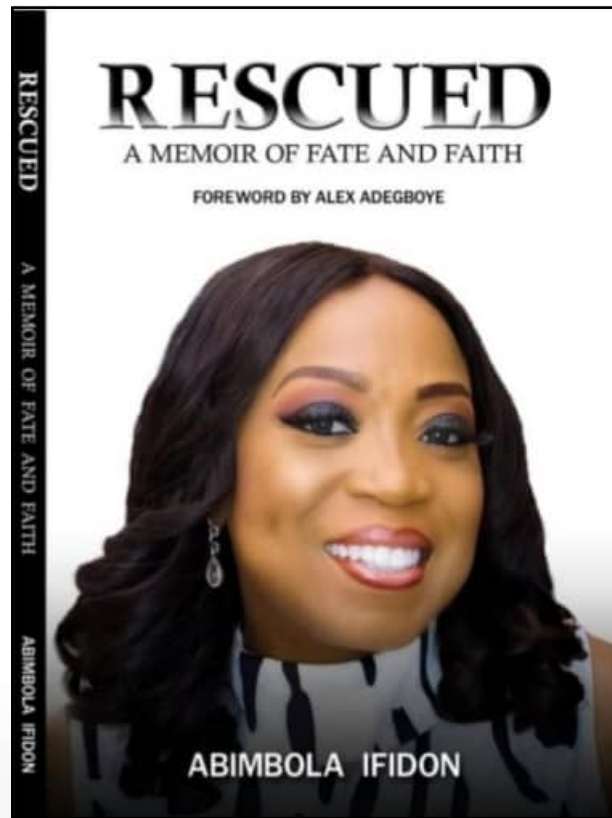
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