

# BLACK HISTORY MONTH | CELEBRATING BARBARA HOWARD

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**Barbara Howard (1920–2017) | Agent of Change | Remembered as the first Black female athlete to represent Canada in an international competition.**

Barbara Howard was born in Vancouver, British Columbia one of five children raised in the Grandview-Woodland neighborhood. She qualified to represent Canada at the British Empire Games at 17 years of age by breaking the British Empire record for the 100-yard dash by one-tenth of a second.

*The Globe and Mail* rated her one of the “best prospects” for the games, adding, “(R)eports from the coast say she is greased lightning, and her times bear out that fact.” In October 1937, she became a member of the Canadian team that would compete at the 1938 British Empire Games in Sydney, Australia.

At the games, Howard won silver and bronze medals in the 440-yard and 660-yard relays. She also sparked immediate and extensive media attention, and was a favourite among sports fans. As reported in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, “Barbara was a riot wherever she went, and the rush to get her autograph was exceptional.” *Australian Women’s Weekly* named her the “(m)ost popular girl in the Canadian team.”

The outbreak of the Second World War ended Howard’s dreams to compete at the Olympic Games, which were cancelled in both 1940 and 1944.

As a volunteer leader in the YWCA’s Canadian Girls in Training program, Howard participated in dances and entertainment for the Japanese Canadians impounded at Hastings Park, and visited the Japanese Canadian internment camp at Tashme, B.C.

Howard graduated from the University of British Columbia in 1959, and launched a 43-year career in education with her first teaching job in Port Alberni. She later returned to Vancouver where she taught a boys’ physical education class and went on to teach at various schools before retiring in 1984. She continued to serve the community as a member of the United Church in Richmond and at Burnaby’s Confederation Centre.

Barbara Howard is honoured in Canada’s Sports Hall of Fame, and the British Columbia Sports Hall of Fame and Museum.

The logo for mcmillan, featuring the word in a lowercase, sans-serif font. The 'm' and 'c' are in a dark red color, while the 'i', 'l', 'l', 'a', 'n' are in a lighter red color. The logo is positioned in the upper left corner of the page.

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