

BLACK HISTORY MONTH | CELEBRATING DR. DAURENE LEWIS

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Dr. Daurene Lewis (1943–2013) | Agent of Change | Remembered as Canada’s first Black female mayor and for her dedication to health care, the advancement of women in business and the betterment of race relations.

A descendent of Black Loyalists, Daurene Lewis was born in Annapolis Royal, Nova Scotia where she was elected mayor in 1984, making her the first Black mayor in the province, and the first Black female mayor in Canada. Winning the election in a town with only 13 Black residents was an exceptional achievement at the time. As Dr. Lewis explained, “the Black vote did not put me in.”

Dr. Lewis led a rich and exemplary life, excelling in politics, health care, academia and the arts. At a gathering to dedicate a plaza in her name in 2018, Nova Scotia Premier Stephen McNeil referred to her as a Renaissance woman with a personality that “made you come alive.”

Early in her career, Dr. Lewis practised as a registered nurse and taught nursing. Later, she served as executive director of the Centre for Women in Business at Mount Saint Vincent University and then became principal at Nova Scotia Community College. She sat on the board of directors for Canada Post, the Governor General's Order of Canada Advisory Council and the Premier's Council on the Economy. Dr. Lewis also served on the board of governors of the Maritime Conservatory of Performing Arts.

Recognized with an honorary doctorate from Mount Saint Vincent University for her humanitarian work, Dr. Lewis also received the United Nations Global Citizenship Award. Other distinctions include the Canadian Progress Club Halifax Woman of Excellence award, the Halifax-Cornwallis Women of Excellence Award for Public Affairs and Communication, a YMCA-YWCA Volunteer Award; a Queen Elizabeth II Golden Jubilee Medal, and the Black Business and Professional Association's Harry Jerome Trailblazer Award. Dr. Lewis is recognized on the Nova Scotia Black Cultural Centre Wall of Honour and was named a member of the Order of Canada.