

Black Health Collaborative Space



Bernice Carnegie Redmon 1917 - 1993

The Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario Collaborative Spaces embody equity, diversity and inclusion – fostering belonging and advancing community-centred health for all through dialogue, partnership, evidence and advocacy.

The Black Health Collaborative Space honours Black excellence, recognizing their lived and living experiences, leadership and enduring contributions to health and healing.

Bernice Carnegie Redmon made a historical breakthrough in 1945 when she became the first Black registered nurse (RN) in Canada. Starting her pioneering career in public health nursing in Nova Scotia, she went on to become the first Black RN hired by Ontario's Victorian Order of Nurses (VON), ultimately serving as its Acting Director.

Born in Toronto in 1917 of Jamaican descent, Bernice entered a field shaped by white norms and Victorian views of womanhood confronting systemic barriers designed to exclude people of colour. At that time, Canadian nursing schools did not accept Black students as hospitals were unwilling to hire Black nurses. Despite the obstacles,

her determination to pursue her lifelong ambition was unwavering, leading her to cross the border into the United States and face a new reality of segregation.

Diligent and accomplished, she was offered two scholarships before graduating from the Saint Philip Nursing School in Virginia in 1944. Thanks to her courage and perseverance, Canadian nursing schools started accepting Black students in the late 1940s, paving the way for increased inclusion and racial equality within the profession.

Bernice and her husband Nathan Redmon lived in North York for the duration of their lives. They raised one son in their family-built home located just three blocks from her childhood residence near Yonge and Sheppard in Toronto.



Bernice Carnegie Redmon

Scan to learn more about the honoree



Muralist

Phillip Saunders

Scan to learn more about the artist

