



Community Remembers Dr. Geraldine Browning at African Heritage Month Launch

Feb. 5, 2026

It was a bittersweet celebration when distinguished guests, Council, staff and community joined together for the Municipality's annual African Heritage Month Proclamation Event this year.

The evening began in a familiar fashion Feb. 4, with the unified beats of the IMANI drummers signalling the start of the formal event. The crowd in Council Chambers rose as dignitaries took their seats and settled following the collective signing of "O Canada" and Andre Roberts' powerful performance of "Lift Every Voice and Sing."

Mayor Dave Corkum thanked all in attendance for gathering to reflect on the importance of African Heritage Month.

"The month invites us to acknowledge the contributions of people of African descent, past and present, in our region throughout the province and across the country," said Corkum, delivering opening remarks.



The late Dr. Geraldine Browning was honoured at the Municipality's African Heritage Month Proclamation Event. A full video recording of the event is available online [here](#).

Remembering Mrs. B

A framed 8-by-10 photo of community activist

Dr. Geraldine Browning smiled back at the crowd from the front of the room. Dr. Browning, fondly known to many in attendance as "Mrs. B.," passed away on Dec. 31, 2025.

Santeano Barrows, a local Grade 8 student, led a libation ceremony dedicated to Dr. Browning's influential legacy.

"Today we lift up the life and legacy of Dr. Geraldine Browning, a daughter of African Nova Scotian communities, a leader shaped by faith, service, and an unshakable commitment to all people," said Barrows.

“She carried her community with her into every room she entered. She understood leadership as a responsibility to advocate, to organize, to build systems that serve rather than exclude.”

Barrows shared that Dr. Browning’s work in administration, education, healthcare and community development opened doors and inspired others to lead.

“She showed us that excellence and humility can coexist, that change requires both strategy and heart. We pour this libation in gratitude for her,” he said.

“May her legacy remind us to serve boldly, to lead with integrity, and to remain accountable to the communities that raised us and the ancestors upon whose shoulders we stand. May we walk forward carrying her lessons, grounded in faith, guided by purpose, and committed to justice.”

Remembering the past, moving forward

Lt.-Gov. Mike Savage attended the Proclamation Event with his wife, Her Honour Darlene Savage.

“We are honoured to be able to play a small part in celebrating the legacy, the resilience, and the creativity of African Nova Scotians and the people of African descent, a community whose history is deeply interwoven with the story of our province and our country as a whole,” said Savage, offering remarks as a guest of honour.

“...Through the arts and culture, business, education, and connections with elders, we see powerful expressions of identity and joy that have profoundly shaped our shared history.”

Savage stressed the importance of remembering the “four centuries of struggle and achievement” when reflecting on the experience of the African Nova Scotian community in this province.

“For a long time, race played a big role in where you lived, in what schools your children attended, and other basic services,” he said.

African Nova Scotian Affairs Minister Twila Grosse spoke about the provincial theme for African Heritage Month in 2026 – “Strength in Unity – Moving Forward with Purpose, Prosperity, Power and Progress” – in a video message prepared for the event.

“Progress is not built alone. It is built in relationship across generations, across communities, and through shared responsibility,” said Grosse.

“Unity allows us to honor our differences while still walking the same road. Your work reminds us that unity is not just a value, it's a practice. And it's through that practice that real change happens.”



Lt.-Gov. Mike Savage delivered remarks at the Municipality's African Heritage Month Proclamation Event Feb. 4.

Fighting for future generations

Robert Ffrench, Chief Executive Officer of Valley African Nova Scotian Development Association (VANSDA), asked the crowd to recognize the contributions of human rights advocates who, like his mentor Dr. Browning, pushed hard for progress for future generations.

“It was a collection of local community members from various walks of life, all willing to put their efforts, their time, and their commitments to making things better for all of us,” said Ffrench.

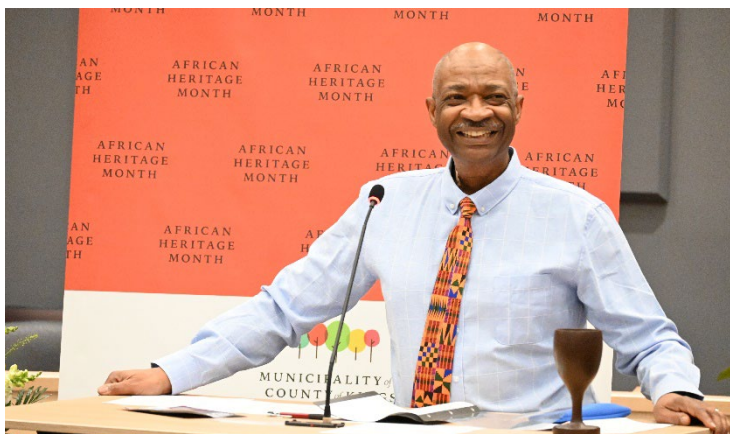
“...They fought the fights necessary to advance the opportunities and level the playing field for all who have benefited today. This does not mean things are great - nor perfect. They are not. But consider where we would be without those efforts.”

Krishinda McBride, Coordinator of African Canadian Education Services for Annapolis Valley Regional Centre for Education, asked youth in attendance to remember their roots in their own pursuits of progress.

“Progress is not a destination. It is a relay race. Just as Dr. Geraldine Browning and others have built the infrastructure for your success, we look to you to take the baton,” McBride declared.

Alemnesh Sanche-Spencer, a student with Horton High’s Africentric Cohort, spoke of the importance of feeling seen, supported and encouraged.

“Our stories matter and... excellence is part of who we are.”



Robert Ffrench, Chief Executive Officer of Valley African Nova Scotian Development Association (VANSDA)



Distinguished guests at the African Heritage Month Proclamation Event gather for a photo: Coun. Robbie Hiltz, Coun. Christina Sappington, Coun. Tim Harding, Coun. Peter Allen, Deputy Mayor Everett MacPherson, Lt.-Gov of Nova Scotia The Honourable Mike Savage, Her Honour Darlene Savage and Mayor Dave Corkum.