



## MEDIA RELEASE

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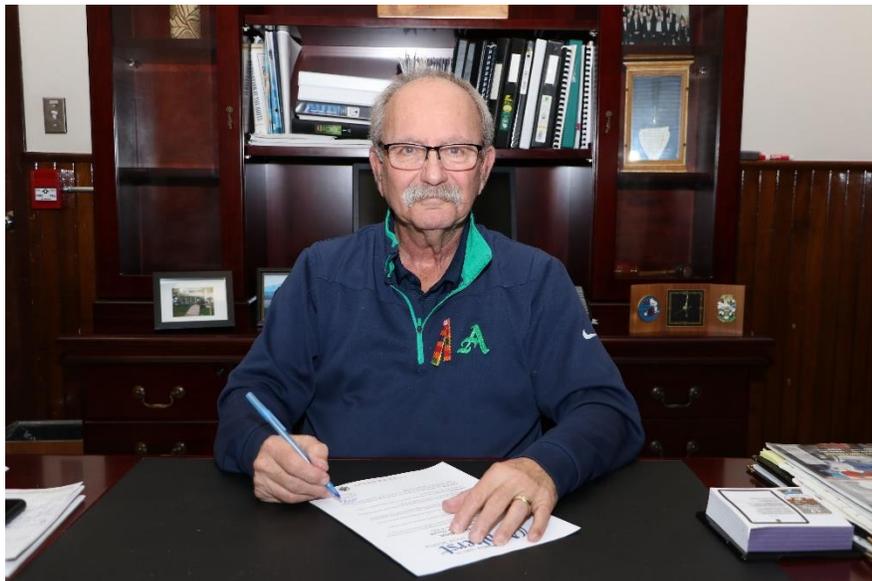
**RE: African Heritage Month proclaimed in Amherst**

**AMHERST, Nova Scotia** – February has been proclaimed African Heritage Month in the Town of Amherst.

In signing the proclamation on behalf of council on Friday, Jan. 29, 2021, Mayor David Kogon noted the theme for this year's African Heritage Month was Black History Matters: Listen, Learn, Share and Act.

"The theme is very appropriate because Black history does matter," Kogon said. "It is something we must be willing to hear, share and learn from."

He noted Amherst's Black community has contributed greatly to the community over the years, though that contribution has not always been recognized.



**MAYOR DAVID KOGON SIGNS A PROCLAMATION ON JAN. 29, 2020, DECLARING FEBRUARY AS AFRICAN HERITAGE MONTH IN THE TOWN OF AMHERST. (TOM McCOAG / TOWN OF AMHERST)**





Kogon said last year's Black Lives Matter movement showed the world those contributions need to be recognized and "now is the time to act to ensure equality and inclusivity."

"We must all commit ourselves," he said, "to working together now, to learn from our shared history – the good and the bad – so that we in Amherst can truly say that we in this town, this province and this country, as the great Martin Luther King Jr. said, judge people "not by the colour of their skin, but by the content of their character."

While African Heritage Month is recognized nationally in February as a way to tell the stories and struggles faced by this province's African-Nova Scotia community, the struggles faced by members of the Black community continue to be part of the daily lived experience for persons of African descent in Cumberland County, Elizabeth Cooke-Sumbu, executive director Nova Scotia Works CANSA, said.

"Like most people of African descent, we strive everyday to overcome adversity, created through no fault of our own," Cooke-Sumbu said. "It's a legacy we bear."

This year's theme has caused much discussion within the community in recent months, she said.

"As a community, we have had to reflect on the phrases, 'Say their name' and 'Black Lives Matter,'" Cooke-Sumbu added. "Every ancestor has a story. We all have a responsibility to learn that story so the history that has a negative impact can be changed.

"This creates a community of healing, so we can all embrace the many achievements of our Black community together."

Because of COVID-19, the public, in-person events normally held to celebrate African Heritage Month cannot be held. As a result, a virtual program is being developed that is scheduled to be released on Feb. 5, 2021, at 11:45 a.m.

It will include statements from local politicians, the signing of African Heritage Month proclamations by the town and the Municipality of the County of Cumberland and some entertainment.





“Through word and music, we hope to demonstrate that we have a shared history, and we wouldn’t be here without everything and everyone that’s been part of this Cumberland County region since 1750,” Cooke-Sumbu said.

A virtual concert is also being planned. The date of its release will be announced in the near future.

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