

*Opening remarks from the President, Dr. Leslie Oliver, at the Wall of Honour Induction*

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Honoured guests, Wall of Honour Inductees for 2010, members of the Black Cultural Society, Ladies and Gentlemen:

I will take a few minutes to do two things. First, I will welcome you here this evening on behalf of the Black Cultural Society and second, I will say a few words about my father, Dr. Rev. William P. Oliver and the significance of the Wall of Honour.

There are some Black Cultural Society Board members here tonight. I ask them to please stand as I welcome our guests to the Centre. On behalf of all of the Board members I welcome everyone here tonight to reflect on the Wall of Honour and to celebrate the work of our four new inductees. Also, if you have comments or suggestions for us, I invite you to pass them on to one of these board members; we are always looking for more good ideas.

We have seen a lot of activity here at the Centre over the past year. We have hosted visits by African-Canadian Artist Mr Robert Small from Toronto, Prince Kum'a Ndumbe III from the Cameroon, Rev. Jesse Jackson from the United States all providing inspiration and motivation to young people. We have hosted the Dr. Martin Luther King celebration sponsored by the Halifax Regional School Board and the William Hall National Stamp unveiling in partnership with Canada Post and the Canadian Navy centennial celebration and the Black Battalion celebration partnered with the Canadian Forces. These activities should help us pass on our heritage to our youth. All of these successes were led by our volunteer Board members and were carried out by our dedicated staff members. Permit me to point out our staff members tonight: Dr. Henry Bishop, Ms Ramona Hill, Ms Cary Beals-Downey and Mr Russell Grosse, all of whom are pleased to welcome you to this evening's celebration.

By the way, if you are not a member of the Black Cultural Society, we invite you to join tonight or be sure to visit our web site to get a membership package. We are proud preservers and protectors of a great heritage that would have been ignored and forgotten if the founders of the Society had not had the vision to build this Centre. We invite you to purchase a membership in the Black Cultural Society to share that well deserved pride and shape the future.

Tonight, you received donation envelopes. Please give generously. Your donation shows that you are serious about wanting this Centre to continue. So we welcome you and invite you to be part. Our staff members would be pleased to receive your donation envelopes. Of course, you may visit the donation section of our web site where you have another opportunity to contribute to the financial survival of this Centre.

A place like this Centre faces difficulty keeping the doors open, keeping the heat on, keeping the parking lot clear, cleaning the floors and preserving the treasures that we keep. We need your donations. Be generous!

I also invite all of you to attend our Anniversary celebration fund-raising dinner on April 17. Details are on the back of tonight's program. If you want to get seats for that evening, I suggest that you do it soon, before we sell out.

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Now let me speak for a few minutes about Reverend Dr. William Pearly Oliver and explore the purpose of this evening. My brothers Jules and Steven and I are humbly pleased to be associated with the Wall of Honour which is named in our father's memory. It celebrates people who are making stronger communities in Nova Scotia through their individual positive contributions to the lives of African Nova Scotian communities.

Our father believed that each of us can be an instrument for progress. He worked hard to make full educational opportunities available to all African Nova Scotian communities. He believed in treating people as we think they ought to be and helped them become what they are capable of becoming. That basic principle of leadership governed the work that he and our mother did in the church, Boy Scouts, CGIT, Free Masons, Canadian Legion, Adult Education and in founding new organizations. He worked hard to help found the NSAACP in 1945, the Black United Front in 1968, the Black Cultural Society in 1977 and this Black Cultural Centre in 1983. These new province-wide organizations supported communities throughout the whole province. That province-wide nature was similar to how Reverend Richard Preston had formed the African United Baptist Association of Nova Scotia in 1854. The impact of great leadership lasts for centuries. Speaking of which, I should point out that Dr. Oliver was born in 1912 and that the centenary of his birth is less than 2 years away in 2012.

Now we turn to our Wall of Honour. This is where we show off examples of African-Nova Scotian leaders who have improved the lives of their fellow citizens. We are proud to be able to tell the world that these people have prepared themselves and have overcome obstacles, to benefit the whole province.

On TV, we have all watched while Oprah Winfrey became an influential community leader, commentator and supporter of community projects. She set her personal goals on being the best and on helping others.

We often talk about the importance of "role models". Some role models are world-known, some are known across Canada and others are more local. Regardless of how widely they are known, each role model is important for young people. Our Wall of Honour provides over one hundred real role models that any Nova Scotian child could know. Boys and girls need to

visualize themselves as future leaders in whatever field they choose. We expect them to be smart, stay in school, complete an education and serve the community well. For that, we need to show them examples of successful lives, like our wall of honour inductees.

I look forward to congratulating our four new inductees into the Rev. Dr. William Pearly Oliver Wall of Honour in recognition of their outstanding community leadership.

Now it is time for me to sit down and enjoy the rest of this evening with you. I thank you for your kind attention.