

Advancing DEIA:
Tailoring your
Approach to fit your
Municipality



NOVA SCOTIA
HUMAN RIGHTS
COMMISSION

Timeline of Human Rights in Canada & NS

1918

NS Franchise Act gives women the right to vote (Racial Exclusions)

1948

UN Declaration of Human Rights Asian-Canadians can vote

1954

Legal segregation in NS Schools ends

1955

Fair Employment Practices Act in NS

1956

Equal Pay Legislation is enacted provincially and federally

1959

Fair Accommodations Act in NS

1960

Indigenous Peoples get the right to vote

1962

Halifax Advisory Committee on Human Relations

1963

Nova Scotia passes its first Human Rights Act

1967

Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission is established

1977

Status of Women Act and the Canadian Human Rights Act passed

Timeline of Human Rights in Canada & NS

1981

Dec 10 is declared Human Rights Day in NS

1982

Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

1982

Source of Income added as a PC to NS HRA

1986

Mental disability added as a PC federally and provincially

1989

Royal Commission on the Donald Marshall Jr. Prosecution

1991

PCs added Aboriginal Origin, Age, Family Status, Irrational Fear of Contracting an Illness, Marital Status, Political Affiliation, Sex, Pregnancy, Sexual Orientation

1998

New regulation allows for increased enforcement of BOI Monetary Orders with Supreme Court of NS by NSHRC

1999

Marshall Decision (I) of the Supreme Court of Canada affirms Treaty Rights of Mik'maq to fish, hunt and gather. Marshall Decision (II) emphasized that the treaty rights could only be limited for conservation reasons or other compelling and substantial public objectives.

Timeline of Human Rights in Canada & NS

2005

Canada is the 4th country to recognize the right of same sex couples to marry

2008

Harassment and its definition is added to Act; 1 year time limitation introduced

2009

Mandatory Retirement is eliminated under the Act

2010

Viola Desmond is pardoned, and the Government issues an apology

2017

The Commission celebrates its 50th year & the Nova Scotia Accessibility Act was passed

2022

Dismantling Racism and Hate Act established in NS

2021

Government of NS Designated August 1st as Emancipation Day in recognition of the Slavery abolition Act (1834) which ended the enslavement of African People across the British Empire

2024

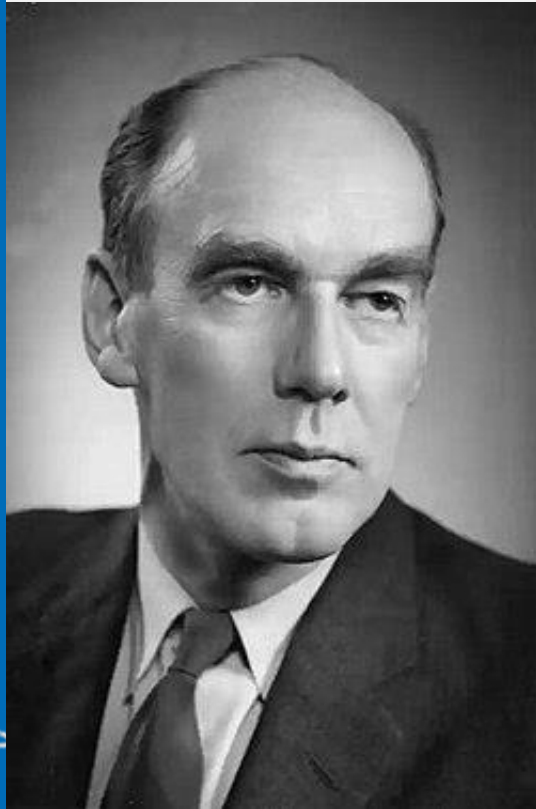
On September 30th, Nova Scotia's Court of Appeal confirmed concurrent jurisdiction, reinforcing the rights of unionized workers to submit issues to the NSHRC

2025

On February 27, government announced plans to modernize the way the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission

Key Leaders in Commission History

Robert Stanfield



- Hailing from Truro, Nova Scotia, he was elected Premier in 1956 and made human rights, particularly for African Nova Scotians, a priority during his next eleven years as premier.
- leader of the Official Opposition and leader of the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada



Key Leaders in Commission History



Gordon Earle




Dr. Rev. William
Pearly Oliver

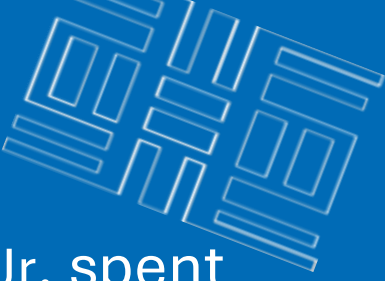


Carrie Mae Best





The Courage of Donald Marshall Jr.



Donald Marshall Jr. spent 11 years in prison for a murder he did not commit, largely due to racism in Nova Scotia's criminal justice system.

In 1989 the Marshall Inquiry investigated this miscarriage of justice and recommended a Race Relations Division be created within the Human Rights Commission.



Discrimination under the Nova Scotia Human Rights Act

Discrimination

Treating an individual or members of a particular group differently (***by intention or otherwise***) based on one or more of the ***protected characteristics (perceived or actual)*** in the Nova Scotia *Human Rights Act*, which results in a disadvantage to that person or individuals.

Filing a Complaint

For a discrimination complaint to be accepted under the *Nova Scotia Human Rights Act*, the alleged discrimination must:

1. have occurred within a ***prohibited area*** under ***provincial jurisdiction***;
2. be connected to a ***protected characteristic*** and;
3. have occurred ***within one year*** of the filing of the complaint.

Prohibited Areas

1. **At work** – whether you're applying for a job, working, or leaving a job.
2. **When accessing services** – like shopping, going to school, or using public transportation.
3. **In housing** – renting a place to live or staying at a hotel.
4. **Buying or selling property** – like a home or land.
5. **Volunteering** – including being accepted or removed from a volunteer role.
6. **In media** – such as discriminatory ads or broadcasts.
7. **Joining professional groups** – like unions or trade associations.

Protected Characteristics

- Age
- Race
- Colour
- Religion
- Creed
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Gender identity
- Gender expression
- Disability
- Irrational fear of contracting an illness
- Ethnic, National, or Aboriginal origin
- Family status
- Marital status
- Source of Income
- Political belief, affiliation
- Association
- Harassment
- Sexual harassment
- Retaliation

1

Inclusion Starts with Representation

2

Equity Requires Structural Change, Not Just Good Intentions

3

Inclusion Is Ongoing Work, not a One-Time Workshop

4

EDIRA is not a side project. It's the foundation of everything we do.



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www.humanrights.novascotia.ca