



Jamaican**Canadian**Association

The Jamaican Canadian Association (JCA) is to deliver programs and services, provides a physical hub, and to advocate to improve the well-being and equity of Jamaican, Caribbean & African-Canadian communities within the Greater Toronto Area

For Immediate Release

August 19th, 2018

Bromley Armstrong: Tireless Fighter for the Underdog and for Just Causes.

A Tribute by Past Presidents of the JCA on the Passing of Mr. Armstrong.

Dr. Vincent G. Conville, Roy G. Williams, Valarie Steele, Miah Bailey, Herman Stewart, Audrey Campbell and Barry Coke.

The Jamaican Canadian Association (JCA) is saddened by the passing of their past president and one of the founding members of the organization in 1962, Mr. Bromley Armstrong, CM, OOnt who made his transition on Friday August 17th, 2018. He was the third president of the JCA, serving from 1971-1972.

Bromley Armstrong, a Jamaican by birth (born in 1926), immigrated to Canada along with his brother George in 1947. Not unlike a Marcus Garvey type figure, he immediately recognized the evil of discrimination, and its impact on Black and other minority groups in his new society. His early job was at Massey Ferguson. He got himself involved in the Trade Union Movement. As a member of the (UAW) Local 439, Bromley became a leader in the Canadian Trade Union as a Shop Steward.

Mr. Armstrong was not insular in his quest for social justice. He was appointed by the Ontario government as one of its earliest Human Rights Commissioners when the Commission was created in 1961. As a Commissioner, he was not only an advocate for the Black community, but a strong advocate around the Commission Table for First Nation peoples.

Bromley made many personal sacrifices in his tireless pursuit of social justice. He was a true champion of human rights. He played a leading role in the formation of many community organizations such as the JCA, the Urban Alliance on Race Relations and the Black Action Defense Committee (BADC).

In addition to being a foundation member of these organizations, Bromley's social activism got him involved with the Black Business and Professional Association, the Canadian Ethno-cultural Council, the National Council of Jamaicans and Supportive Organizations of Canada, and the Project for Advancement of Childhood Education (P.A.C.E.), among numerous other community groups.

For his tireless efforts to bring about social justice in Ontario, and by extension in Canada, Bromley was rewarded with many awards and distinctions. Among these are:

- Order Distinction of Jamaica
- Member of the Order of Canada
- Order of Ontario
- Honourary Doctor of Laws Degree York University.

As reminisced by **Past President Dr. Vincent G. Conville**, “The *Dresden Story* ranks among one of Bromley’s greatest involvements. On learning that racial segregation was rampant in Dresden, the home of Uncle Tom’s Cabin, and that the town’s 20% Black population was banned from most public places, Bromley and Ruth Lor Malloy, led a sit in at Kay’s Café. It was a dangerous escapade. It however, got national publicity, and was the beginning and the end of racial segregation in South Western Ontario.

Bromley has certainly left a positive mark on the society by leaving it a better place than he found it.”

Dr. Vincent G. Conville

JCA’s First and Past President Roy G. Williams recalls, “Bromley was one member of the team that went to Ottawa to confront the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration to reform the then racist Immigration Act. He participated in test cases to highlight racist ‘no room available’ practices of landlords in Toronto and he ‘sat in’ at Morley McKay’s restaurant in Dresden to not be served because he was Black, which led to anti-discrimination legislation for a full range of services. As he was the chief architect of the Advocacy role for the JCA, Mr. Armstrong was dauntless and dogged in fighting against racism, discrimination, injustice and inequality in all its forms. When not fighting for better policing and social justice he was the most affable and jovial human being. To get a proper flavour of the man please browse through his biography, several copies of which are in the JCA library, titled “Bromley Armstrong, Tireless Champion for Just Causes.”

Rest in peace, Brother Bromley. You have fought valiantly for a better country for all of us.”

Roy G. Williams

Per **Past President Valarie H. A. Steele**, “Another GIANT has left us and our community is poorer for it. Bromley has left us a rich legacy that no one can erase, particularly in the areas of human rights, immigration, labour relations and community activism. His mentorship of several current community activists is legendary. As a community that is underserved and discriminated against, perennially, we must continue the resistance and honour him that way.

My sincere condolences to his family. REST IN PEACE, Bromley Armstrong, your foot prints are all over this place.”

Valarie Steele

Past President Miah Bailey added “Bromley will be missed by the entire Afro Canadian Community of Canada and others. Not only was he a Founding Member of J.C.A. and a Past President, but as a Stalwart in all areas of Social Activism in Canada via other Organizations such as the National Council of Jamaicans and Supportive Organizations in Canada Inc. of which he was the Founding President; Trade Unions.; National Black Coalition of Canada; just to name a few.; many will be grieving.

May his soul rest in peace.”

Miah Bailey.

On hearing of Bromley’s passing, **JCA Past President Herman Stewart** had many fond memories.

“My first face to face interaction with Bromley was back in 1981. I was then a union organizer appearing before an Ontario Labour Board hearing and Bromley was one of the tribunal members. As soon as the hearing was adjourned for lunch Bromley came over and introduced himself and that interaction changed my life for good.

Not long after that first meeting Bromley not only convinced me to join the JCA, but at the first membership meeting that followed he nominated me to run for a position on the JCA Executive Board.

I am very pleased that I am a recipient of the Bromley Armstrong Award, given out each year in recognition of Bromley's contribution to the labour movement.



While our community is saddened by his death we will cherish all the positive things that happened over the past seven decades that make not only our community, but society in general, a better place for all.

Herman Stewart

Past President Audrey Campbell states, "Bromley Armstrong was fearless in his pursuit of civil rights. He laid the ground work for future generations to follow.

We are eternally grateful for his sacrifice.

Audrey Campbell.

As well, **Past President Barry Coke** had this to say: "Mr. Armstrong was a stalwart in our community and was instrumental in shaping the community into what we are today.

We are standing on the back of this giant.

Barry Coke

Adaoma Patterson, the current President of the JCA says, "I am saddened to learn of the passing of Bromley Armstrong. I am honoured to have worked with him and learned many leadership lessons from him. His life was a true example of service and community building. Bromley played an important role in Toronto's Black community and did much to advance civil and labour rights.

The JCA family extends our heartfelt condolences to the all of the Armstrong family and friends.

Adaoma Patterson, on behalf of the JCA Board of Directors

The JCA will share funeral details as they become available.

Media contact Email: communications@jcaontario.org

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