




The Law Society of  
Upper Canada

Barreau  
du Haut-Canada

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## Apr 9, 2008

More than 100 people participated in the "Routes to Freedom: Reflections on the Bicentenary of the Abolition of the Slave Trade," held March 14 to 16 at the Faculty of Law, University of Ottawa.

Legal academics, historians, political economists and writers from around the globe gathered to talk about the issue of slavery from a variety of perspectives at this multi-disciplinary conference.

Organized and chaired by Joanne St. Lewis, Law Society benchler and assistant professor of law at the University of Ottawa, the two-day event featured presentations, a mini film festival, youth forum, Law Society reception, and more.

The Ontario government sponsored the conference.

The event culminated in a gala fundraiser chaired by actor and activist Danny Glover, who chairs TransAfrica Forum, an African American human rights and social justice advocacy organization.

Funds raised from the gala will be used to establish two scholarships, the first for an Ontario law undergraduate and the second for a doctoral candidate from Africa that will be named in honour of Mr. Glover.

For more coverage of this landmark event, watch for the spring issue of the *Ontario Lawyers Gazette*. As well, followup of the conference will include a dedicated issue of the *Ottawa Law Review* for selected papers presented at the conference, a DVD of the conference, an academic publication, and curriculum materials for high schools.

### Reducing Inequality



*The story of the 200 years since the slave trade was abolished is the story of the incremental, often glacially incremental struggle for equality for Blacks in Canada and in the United States. ... We may not be able to say the battle for equality has been completely won, but we can say that an enormous amount has been done to reduce inequality.*

- The Honourable Justice Rosalie S. Abella, Supreme Court of Canada, gives historical, legal perspective on slavery in the United States and Canada at a special reception hosted by the Law Society, in conjunction with the Canadian Association of Black Lawyers, the Black Law Students' Association of Canada and the University of Ottawa's Faculty of Law. The reception was a featured event of the Routes to Freedom international conference.

### Conference Panellists



*Slavery existed on Canadian soil for over 200 years, yet little awareness of this history remains. This writing out of slavery from the historical narrative was accomplished so successfully that in contemporary Canada, few Canadians are aware of this history.*

- Tamara Extian-Babiuk, Ph.D. candidate, Department of History, Duke University

**From left:** Dr. Afua Cooper, Historian, Poet and Co-ordinator of the Ontario Bicentenary Initiative; Yvonne Brown, Women and Gender Studies, University of British Columbia; Tamara Extian-Babiuk, Ph.D.



candidate, Department of History, Duke University; Professor Hakim Adi, Research Professor, History of Africa and the African Diaspora, School of Arts, Middlesex University, UK.

### **Making the Invisible Visible**



The Book of Negroes *performs multiple functions in making the invisible people, visible.*

- Dr. Afua Cooper, Historian, Poet and Co-ordinator of the Ontario Bicentenary Initiative, introduces Lawrence Hill, author of the award-winning *The Book of Negroes*.

### **Black Loyalists**



The Book of Negroes is a 150-page document kept by the British military in 1783, recording the names and biographical information of 3,000 African-Americans who had served the British on the losing side of the American Revolutionary War. Having lost the war, the British are pulling out of Manhattan... But Manhattan is an island, it is highly policed by the British Navy and it is virtually impossible, if you are black, to escape Manhattan at the end of the American Revolution, unless you can prove that you served the British during the war - man or woman. And if you can show this, your name is entered into The Book of Negroes. It is the first time in the history of North America, that thousands of Black people are publicly, formally documented. ... This is American history and it is also utterly Canadian history because these 3,000 African-Americans sailed to Canada, primarily to Nova Scotia and became known as the Black Loyalists of Nova Scotia.

- Lawrence Hill at book signing for *The Book of Negroes* after his keynote address at the Routes to Freedom conference in Ottawa.

### **Women and Slave Resistance Panel**



*Before the law of abolition, there was the law that created and maintained the trade: military law, maritime law, insurance law, acts of navigation, and so on. The slave trade needed the law to exist and thrive.*

- Professor Rebecca Hall, S.J. Quinney College of Law

**From left:** Professor Camille Nelson, School of Law, Saint Louis University; Professor Rebecca Hall, S.J. Quinney College of Law, University of Utah; panel moderator and University of Ottawa Professor Lucie Lamarque, Gordon Henderson Chair, Human Rights Research and Education Centre, University of Ottawa; Professor Marlene Thelumsa Rémy, Department of Sociology, Collège Boréal de Toronto; Dr. Aoua LY-Tall, Research Associate Institute of Women's Studies, University of Ottawa and Research in Residence, Institut des Etudes Africaines, Université Mohamed V-Soussi, Rabat, Morocco.

### Resilience Through Education



*Regardless of the laws - be it the Black Law, the Fugitive Act, the Slavery Act - the history of this particular country and what Blacks have been able to do in this country, calls for our recognizing some of those heroes that brought us to where we are today. And the string that has worked to our being as resilient as we have been over this period of time has always been education.*

- Jack Braithwaite, Bencher, Law Society of Upper Canada and Counsel, Weaver Simmons LLP, from his paper, "Heroes of Yesteryear: Education and Resilience."

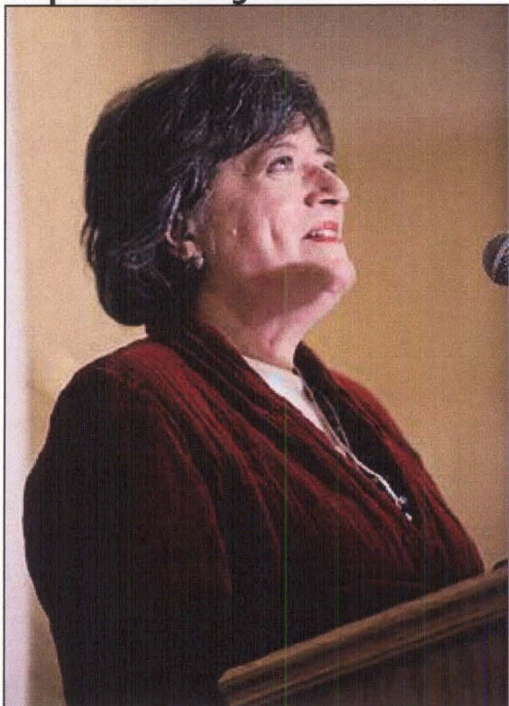
### Reception



**From left:** The Honourable Justice Rosalie S. Abella, Supreme Court of Canada, and Constance Backhouse, Distinguished University Professor, University Research Chair, Faculty of Law, University of Ottawa, and Bencher, Law Society of Upper Canada. The two were at the special March 14<sup>th</sup> reception.



### Important Obligation



*Both The Law Society of Upper Canada and its members have a particular and important role in working to ensure that the administration of justice and our legal institutions are free of discrimination. We have an obligation to uphold the rule of law and advance the cause of justice.*

- Janet Minor, Bencher, Law Society of Upper Canada and Chair, Equity and Aboriginal Issues Committee addresses the March 14<sup>th</sup> reception.

### Embodies Social Activism

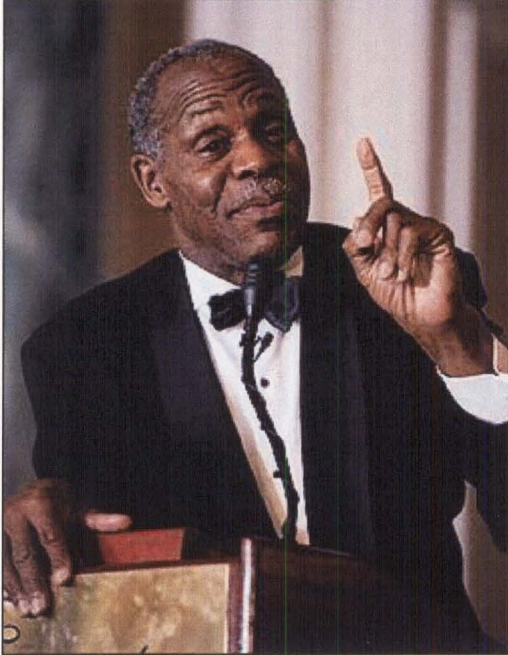


*One of the questions I was asked at the press conference was why Danny Glover? And I want to share the answer I gave them. It wasn't because he was a movie star. That wasn't what topped my list in terms of selecting him. It was actually his work with the TransAfrica organization, because dealing with issues of the slave trade, I thought, who did I believe embodied the social activism, the level of engagement and with the stature to engage people in the African diaspora and outside of our community on this issue, and he was the first person I thought of.*

- Bencher Joanne St. Lewis in her introduction of noted actor and activist Danny Glover.

**From left:** Joanne St. Lewis, Conference Chair, Bencher, Law Society of Upper Canada, and Professor, Faculty of Law, University of Ottawa; Danny Glover, actor and activist; and the Honourable Jean Augustine, P.C., M.P. The three are shown at the Routes to Freedom Endowment Fundraiser Gala at the Fairmont Château Laurier on March 15, 2008.

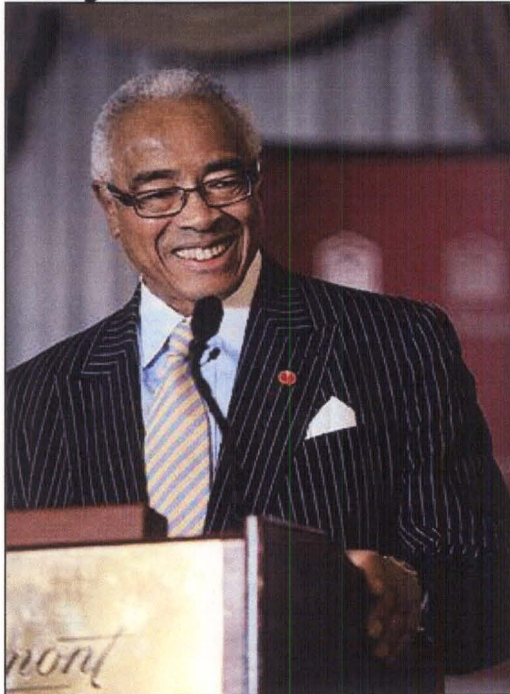
### **Celebrated Actor & Activist**



*When we think about this commemoration... I imagine there are some people who would say, 'I hope this is over soon. Can't they get over this whole thing of slavery?' And perhaps if we were talking about the 300 years since the abolition [of slavery] we might be talking about the human race... not only the issue of race. As W.E.B. Du Bois said, 'The question of the 20th century is the issue of race.' And it seems it is the question of the 21<sup>st</sup> century as well.*

- Noted actor and activist Danny Glover delivers the keynote address at the Routes to Freedom Endowment Fundraiser Gala in Ottawa on March 15.

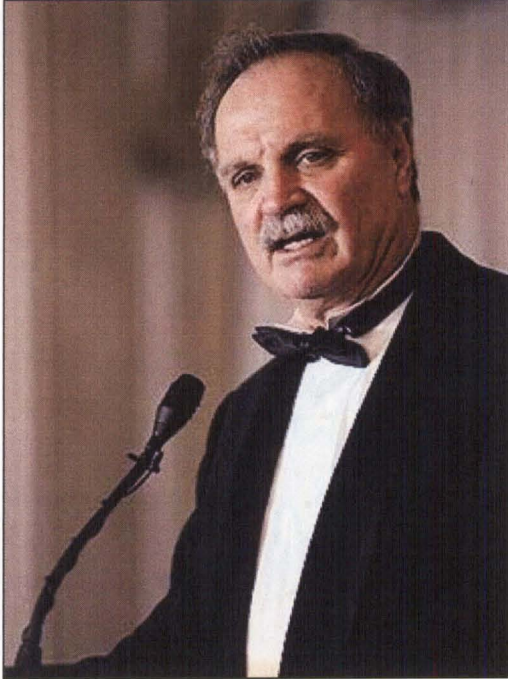
### **Giving Back**



*The 'route to freedom' is also accomplished by giving back. And so when you can have someone who flew in from Los Angeles with very little sleep; has to be on an airplane tomorrow morning ... and is prepared to come here and assist the law school and the University of Ottawa with the endowment fund, by lending his name and his prestige to it, that's giving back.*

- Nova Scotia Senator Donald H. Oliver, Q. C., thanks noted actor and activist Danny Glover for his keynote address at the Routes to Freedom Endowment Fundraiser Gala on March 15.

### **At the Forefront**



*We've worked very hard to develop not only our social justice profile, but our social justice content... and Joanne St. Lewis has been at the forefront of that initiative.*

- Bruce Feldthusen, Vice President pro tempore, University Relations, University of Ottawa, welcomes guests and thanks colleague Professor Joanne St. Lewis at the Routes to Freedom Endowment Fundraiser Gala on March 15.

**Photography by Greg Teckles, Teckles Photography Inc., Ottawa**

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