

## **International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination event— *From “Racism to Resiliency”***

### **Guest speakers**



### **Andria Babbington—Toronto & York Region Labour Council**

Recently arrived from Jamaica and working as a room attendant at the Sheraton Centre Hotel, Andria Babbington had no idea what her co-workers were talking about when they suggested she assumed the role of shop steward.

Still in her teens and the youngest on staff, she witnessed first-hand some of the challenges hotel housekeepers were exposed to.

Complaints to management fell on deaf ears.

“They would say it’s not my business and I should look the other way,” recalled Babbington. “Most of the workers were immigrants and newcomers and we weren’t treated with respect by management and guests. They didn’t have a voice and they were afraid to speak out, fearing they might lose their jobs. I decided I wasn’t going to leave and, perhaps, the only way things were going to get better was if I stepped up.”

With support of co-workers and representatives of UNITE HERE Local 75 that has represented hospitality workers in Toronto and south-central Ontario since the 1890s, she took up the offer to become the shop steward, a position she held for 16 years until leaving the hotel in 2002 to work as a union organizer.

In 2021, Ms. Babbington made history as the first woman of colour to lead the Toronto & York Region Labour Council (TYRLC) - representing almost 220,000 unionized workers in Canada's largest urban centre.



**Dr. Andrew Allen**

**Faculty of Education—University of Windsor.**

**Anti-Racism Pedagogies Teaching Leadership Chair**

### **Research interests**

Race, Class and Gender and Issues of Social Difference and Marginalization in Education and Schooling, Urban Education, Critical Teacher Education and Negotiating a Critical Teaching Practice, International Service Learning, Critical Race Theory, Critical Anti-Racism, Developing Teacher Identity and Factors Contributing to and Affecting the Process of Learning to Teach.

Dr. Allen is the author of several scholarly works like:

Sharma, M., Allen, A. & Ibrahim, A. Eds. (2021). *Disruptive Learning Narrative Framework: Analyzing Race, Power, and Privilege in Post-Secondary International Service Learning*, Bloomsbury Academic Publishing, London.

Allen, A.M.A., (2020). The Complexities of Race, Racialization, Blackness and Africaness: Working to Decolonize My Teacher Education Program. In Dei, G. J. S., Odozor, E., & Jiménez, A. V. (Eds.). *Cartographies of Blackness and Black Indigeneities*. Stylus Publishing, LLC.

Allen, A. M. (2019). Negotiating University Teaching in Canada using Critical Race Theory: Having to Continually Prove Oneself in Academia. In Heaggans, R., & Frierson, H. T. (Eds.). *Diversity and Triumphs of Navigating the Terrain of Academe*. Emerald Publishing Limited.

Solomon, R.P.; Singer, J.; Allen, A.M.A.; Campbell, A. (2011). *Brave New Teachers: Doing Social Justice Work In Neo-Liberal Times*. Canadian Scholars' Press.

Allen, A. (2011). Improving the Education and Life Chances of African Canadians: A Vision for Preparing Students for the World of the 21st Century." In V. D'Oyley (Ed.) *Re/visioning: Canadian Perspectives of the Education of Africans in the 21st Century*. Toronto ON: Captus Press Inc., 77-88.

Allen, A. (2010). Beyond Kentes and Kwanzaa: Reconceptualizing the Africentric school and curriculum using the principles of anti-racism education. In *Anti-racism in education: Missing in action*, 327-342.

Allen, A. (2008). Learning to teach, learning to play the game: A case study of a minority teacher candidate teaching for equity, diversity and social justice. *Comparative and International Education*, 37(2).

Allen, A. (2007). Hitting too Close to Home: A Case Study of a Beginning Teacher's Struggle to Teach Critically (2007). In Killoran, I., & Pendleton-Jimenez, K. (Eds.). *Unleashing the unpopular: Talking about sexual orientation and gender diversity in education*. Wheaton, MD: ACEI.

Solomon, R. P., Allen, A. M., & Campbell, A. (2007). The politics of advocacy, strategies for change: Diversity and social justice pedagogy in urban schools. *Urban teacher education and teaching: Innovative practices for diversity and social justice*, 207-226.



**Janice Searles—Retired Principal**

#### **Achievements & Accomplishments:**

Mrs. Searles has held leadership/administrative roles of teacher, chairperson, guidance counselor, vice principal and principal. She has also been course director of the 'Valuing Diversity' course at George Brown College of Arts, Science and Technology. Mrs. Searles has represented the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) at seven National Alliance of Black School

Educators (NABSE) Conferences which afforded her the opportunity to share best practices as it relates to all students, but particularly those of colour who are often seen as marginalized. She culminated her outstanding thirty-one-year career in education after serving as principal of three schools in Toronto — Dublin Heights Elementary and Middle School, Lawrence Heights Middle School, and J.S. Woodsworth Senior Public School.

**Mrs. Searles’ Advice for the Next Generation:**

“There is nothing wrong with challenging the existing state of affairs at a time when the goal is to bring positive change, as long as it is done with dignity and respect. Nothing is more powerful than the belief in oneself. My mantra – Don’t let anyone steal your joy!”



**Randell Adjei**  
**Transformational Speaker—Spoken Word Practitioner**  
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Randell Adjei is an entrepreneur, speaker and spoken word practitioner who uses his gifts to Empower the message of Alchemy. He was recently appointed Ontario’s first Poet Laureate.

Randell is the founder of one of Toronto's largest youth led initiatives; Reaching Intelligent Souls Everywhere (R.I.S.E Edutainment). In 2018, R.I.S.E received the Toronto Arts Foundation’s, Mayor’s Youth Arts Award.

Randell is the author of “I am Not my struggles,” a powerful Anthology released in 2018. Randell was also named CBC’s Metro Morning’s Torontonians of the Year in 2015 and NOW Magazines Local Hero in May 2017. In 2020 Randell opened for President Barack Obama at the Economic Club of Canada.