

Viola Desmond: 64 Years After She Was Jailed, A Step Now Taken To 'Right The Wrong'

On April 15, 2010, nearly 64 years after she was jailed, convicted and fined for defiantly refusing to leave a whites-only area of a Nova Scotia movie theatre, Viola Desmond was finally cleared of her criminal conviction.

The late Mrs. Desmond, who appears on Canada's new \$10 bank note, which will begin circulating at the end of the year, was a successful Canadian businesswoman whose case was among the first known legal challenges to racial segregation in Canada by a Black woman. She received a free pardon and apology from the Government of Nova Scotia on April 15, 2010.

It marked a historic event for Canada in its ongoing journey toward achieving human rights. It was also the first time the Nova Scotia government granted a free pardon posthumously. The rarely used free pardon is "based on innocence and recognizes that a conviction was in error," according to the government, and is "an extraordinary remedy ... considered only in the rarest of circumstances."

"This is a historic day for the province of Nova Scotia and a chance for us to finally right the wrong done to Mrs. Desmond and her family," said then-Premier Darrell Dexter at the time. "This is also an opportunity for us to acknowledge the incredibly brave actions of a woman who took a stand against racism and segregation."



In recent years, Viola Desmond's story has gone from being part of Nova Scotia history to part of the national conversation of Canada's history. She was honoured with her own Historica Canada Heritage Minute in 2016.

The free pardon stemmed from an incident on November 8, 1946, when Desmond was forcibly removed from the movie theatre in New Glasgow, Nova Scotia, for refusing to move to the balcony seats, where she was instructed to sit, to comply with the unwritten racially restrictive admissions policy of the theatre.

She was charged with attempting to defraud the provincial government, accused and ultimately convicted, of failing to pay a one-cent amusement tax—the difference between the cost of a seat downstairs and in the balcony.

While Desmond was unsuccessful in her subsequent efforts to quash her criminal conviction, the legal challenge she sparked touched a nerve within the Black

community and added to the growing consciousness regarding racial discrimination in Nova Scotia.

"This closes an erroneous chapter in the history of this province and allows a new one to begin," said then-Lieutenant-Governor Mayann Francis during the formal pardon ceremony in 2010.

"I am confident that the case of Mrs. Viola Desmond will be the focus of scholarly and human rights research for years to come. "It is a historic moment for Nova Scotia and for Canada, and I am proud to be a part of it."

Nearly a decade after she was pardoned, a new milestone was reached on March 8, 2018, when the new \$10 bank note featuring Mrs. Desmond's portrait was un-

veiled to Canadians.

Desmond's depiction on a Canadian bank note is the latest recognition of her fight for human rights and social justice, as well as the wrongful nature of her criminal conviction.

"What happened to my sister is part of our history and needs to remain intact," said Wanda Robson, Mrs. Desmond's sister, in her response to the free pardon.

"We must learn from our history so we do not repeat it. If my parents were here today, it would warm their hearts to see Viola recognized as a true Canadian hero."

Watch for the \$10 note featuring Viola Desmond and the theme of social justice and the struggle for rights and freedoms

when it begins to circulate at the end of 2018.

And stay tuned for the launch of the next Bank NOTE-able campaign, in which the Bank will reach out to Canadians to seek input on the portrait subject and design of the next \$5 note to continue to celebrate more iconic Canadians.

Visit bankofcanada.ca to learn more about the design and security features of Canada's currency and follow the Bank on Twitter (@bankofcanada) for the latest news about Canadian bank notes.

The Bank of Canada Museum is on Facebook! Follow, like and share the latest information about our new \$10 bank note and much more: @BoCMuseum and the constant move for social justice.

The Future Is In Preparing For Jobs That Don't Exist Today

By Sanjiv Kataria

It's April and a time to celebrate for millions of young Indians who have just finished their school-leaving class XII examinations. The days that follow help them unwind after months of exam preparation. The celebrations, however, are short-lived. The next many weeks and months are consumed preparing for admission tests for entry into a wide variety of disciplines.

It's a tough time as they evaluate options that further their individual interests and make deliberate decisions that will determine what lies ahead of them -- per-

haps for the rest of their lives.

For young Indians, making it to any of the country's 40,000 colleges -- or getting a subject of their choice -- is not easy. It is a pity that even though the number of colleges in the country has tripled in the last 17 years, the shortage of seats drives students to choose programmes that do not necessarily fit their aptitude. The marks they get in their school-leaving examination, conducted by the Central or the State Exam Boards or the International Baccalaureate, will determine their choice of subjects.

Just like the students, it is a busy time as well for career

counsellors invited by schools and colleges to advise on great careers in demand, worthy institutions to study in, and the best ways to get into a specific programme. Many help students choose between great destinations to study abroad. Should it be Singapore, nearer home, or one of the Ivy League institutions in the US? Or the UK or Australia? Should it be a full-fee programme in a university -- say, in safe and student-friendly Sydney -- or a fully-paid scholarship in an unheard of university in an East European nation?

When I get pulled into advising young nephews and nieces



based on the experience of helping our own young ones make their choices, I refer them to career option books by widely travelled counsellors to help them choose between engineering and biotechnology, architecture and law, medicine and pharma, liberal arts, social sciences or business management, journalism and computer science. And the list goes on.

For tough situations like convincing friends to let their loved ones choose streams beyond medicine or engineering, I encourage them to go to a professional career counsellor and careers columnists like Pervin Malhotra, who guided our son and daughter many years ago. These counsellors put the children through an aptitude test, discuss their strengths and suggest a set of options

An opportunity to sit through a fireside chat between Indian school students and Blair Slater, a career counsellor at the Sydney-based University of New South Wales (UNSW) recently, was an eye-opener. Blair, a former Hollywood star and now a full-time career counsellor for international students of over 100 nationalities, had an interesting take on careers.

He predicted that in the next 5 to 10 years, there will be plenty of jobs that don't even exist today. In an ever-evolving job market, his advice to students was to prepare for a career by following their passion, pursuing what's important to them while building a strong academic foundation. Problem-solving and adaptabil-

ity, Blair said, should be the key leitmotifs in their toolkit of skills that will help them shine in a world of fast-changing jobs.

Universities are using innovative social media like Facebook's live discussions with experts to reach wider audiences. A "Study in America" Facebook session by the US embassy in New Delhi last month helped demolish myths associated with admissions and job opportunities in America.

When looking for opportunities to study abroad, students will do well to consider the QS ranking that ranks higher educational institutes globally. The reputed British agency compares top universities in the world based on six performance parameters across sectors like Research, Teaching, Employability and Internationalisation, and the institute's stature.

The best advice on making career choices comes from successful professionals in the field of the student's interest. Insights from alumni shed light on the best practices followed by institutions, especially addressing their quest for knowledge, placement track record and reputation with employers. Institutions that will flourish in the future will adapt their curriculum to the needs of the fast-changing world with speed, lay emphasis on original research to solve burning issues facing the world, and focus on life-long employability of their alumni.

(The author, who served NIIT as a brand custodian for two decades, is a communications counsel. The views expressed are personal. He can be contacted at sanjiv.kataria@gmail.com)



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