



# VIOLA DESMOND

la Canadienne emblématique qui figurera sur le nouveau billet de 10 \$

Viola Desmond chosen as the Bank NOTE-able woman to be featured on new \$10 bank note



Photo : Communications Nova Scotia

Viola Desmond figurera sur un nouveau billet de 10 \$, qui devrait être émis à la fin de 2018. Ce sera la première fois que le portrait d'une femme canadienne ornera un billet de circulation courante de la Banque du Canada.

Mme Desmond, une icône du mouvement pour les droits et libertés au Canada, a été choisie parmi une liste restreinte de cinq femmes emblématiques par le ministre Morneau, conformément à la Loi sur la Banque du Canada. Femme d'affaires accomplie de la Nouvelle-Écosse, elle est connue pour avoir défié l'autorité, refusant de quitter une section réservée aux Blancs d'un cinéma en 1946, après quoi elle a été incarcérée, reconnue coupable et condamnée à une amende. Son procès constitue la première contestation judiciaire connue soulevée par une femme noire au Canada pour cause de ségrégation raciale.

La sélection de Viola Desmond est l'aboutissement de la campagne #surunBILLET menée pour choisir la Canadienne emblématique qui figurera sur ce nouveau billet de banque. Au printemps dernier, la Banque avait lancé un appel de candidatures qui avait permis de recueillir 26 300 propositions de partout au Canada, dont 461 candidates admissibles. Un comité consultatif indépendant composé d'éminents représentants canadiens des milieux universitaire, sportif, culturel et intellectuel a réduit cette liste à cinq candidatures, qui ont été présentées au ministre des Finances.

Le nouveau billet de 10 \$ illustrera les grands thèmes de la justice sociale et de la lutte pour les droits et libertés. Ce sera le premier billet de la prochaine série.

L'annonce du billet de 10 \$ sur lequel figurera Viola Desmond nous offre l'occasion de rompre avec la tradition et de représenter d'autres éminents Canadiens qui ont marqué l'histoire du pays.

## Grant of Free Pardon VIOLA IRENE DAVIS DESMOND



### Viola Irene Davis Desmond

Mrs. Viola Irene Davis Desmond was born on July 6, 1914 in Halifax, Nova Scotia, to James and Gwendolyn Davis. Mrs. Desmond was one of 15 siblings who went on to be a successful entrepreneur. She operated her own beauty parlour and beauty college in Halifax.

On Nov. 8, 1946, Viola Desmond became a victim of racism. While travelling to Sydney as part of a business trip, Viola stopped in New Glasgow at a local repair shop due to car troubles. While waiting for her car to be repaired, Mrs. Desmond decided to watch a movie at the Roseland Theatre.

At that time, the theatre had a policy that prohibited people of African ancestry from sitting on the main level of the theatre. African Nova Scotians were required to sit in the balcony where seating cost one cent less than the main level. Mrs. Desmond attempted to buy the more expensive main level ticket but was refused because she was African Nova Scotian.

Mrs. Desmond purchased a ticket which she thought was for the main level and proceeded to sit there. Her ticket was actually for the balcony. Mrs. Desmond was then removed from the theatre by the manager and police. After spending a night in jail, Mrs. Desmond was tried and convicted for an offence under the Theatres, Cinematographs and Amusements Act for failing to pay an extra cent in tax to the Province. She was given the option to pay a fine of \$20 plus costs associated with the trial, or to go to jail for 30 days. Due to her business commitments, Mrs. Desmond chose to pay the fine.

In the early 1950s, Mrs. Desmond closed her business and moved to Montreal, Quebec, where she enrolled in business college. She eventually settled in New York where she passed away at the age of 50.

### Granting of Official Apology and Free Pardon

On April 15, 2010, the province of Nova Scotia granted an official apology and free pardon to the late Mrs. Viola Desmond who was wrongfully fined and jailed for sitting in the white peoples' section of a New Glasgow movie theatre in 1946.

On the advice of the Executive Council, the lieutenant governor exercised the Royal Prerogative of Mercy to grant a free pardon. A free pardon is based on innocence and recognizes that a conviction was in error. A free pardon is an extraordinary remedy and is considered only in the rarest of circumstances.

A Royal Prerogative of Mercy Free Pardon is meant to right a wrong. In this case, the free pardon is meant to right the wrong done to Mrs. Desmond.



Photo : Collection de Wanda Robson. Institut Beaton, Université du Cap-Breton

Viola Desmond will be featured on a new \$10 bank note, expected in late 2018. This will mark the first time that a portrait of a Canadian woman will be featured on a regularly circulating Bank of Canada note.

Desmond, an icon of the human rights and freedoms movement in Canada, was selected from a short list of five iconic Canadian women by Minister Morneau, in accordance with the *Bank of Canada Act*. A successful Nova Scotia businesswoman, she is known for defiantly refusing to leave a whites-only area of a movie theatre in 1946. She was subsequently jailed, convicted and fined. Her court case was the first known legal challenge against racial segregation brought forth by a Black woman in Canada.

The selection of Viola Desmond is the final step in the #bankNOTEable campaign to choose an iconic Canadian woman to appear on this new bank note. In spring 2016, an open call for nominations launched by the Bank yielded more than 26,300 submissions from across Canada, resulting in 461 eligible candidates. An independent Advisory Council composed of eminent Canadian academic, sport, cultural and thought leaders narrowed down the list to five candidates for consideration by the Minister of Finance.

This new \$10 bank note will reflect the broader themes of social justice and the struggle for rights and freedoms. It will be the first note in the next series.

The introduction of the Viola Desmond \$10 note provides an opportune time to break from tradition and feature other prominent Canadians who have made their mark on the history of our country.