

# INTERNATIONAL **WOMEN'S DAY**

MARCH 8

International Women's Day is a global day to celebrate all women, girls, Two-Spirit, trans, non-binary, gender diverse peoples, and those impacted by gender oppression and misogyny. This day recognizes their historical and contemporary social, economic, cultural, and political achievements and raises awareness of the progress made towards advancing gender equity and the work that remains to be done.

The beginnings of International Women's Day can be traced back to the early twentieth century. It emerged from the activities of labour movements in North America and Europe and reflected a growing call for women's increased representation and participation in society. The United Nations recognized 1975 as International Women's Year and began celebrating March 8th as International Women's Day that same year.

Today, International Women's Day highlights the intersectionalities of all women and is a day for unity, celebration, reflection, advocacy, and action.

## Women in Canadian History

**1946:** Civil rights activist and Beauty School Owner Viola Desmond challenged racial discrimination and segregation at the Roseland Theatre in Nova Scotia. In 2016, she was the first woman in Canada to be depicted on a banknote.

**1954:** Elsie Knott, an Ojibwa woman and member of Curve Lake First Nation, is the first documented woman to be elected Chief of a First Nation community.

**1997:** The first Trans Arts Festival in North America, 'Counting Past 2', was founded by trans activist/artist Mirha-Soleil Ross in Toronto.

**1998:** Dr. Vivienne Poy became the first person of Asian ancestry to be appointed to the Senate of Canada where she focused on gender equity, multiculturalism, immigration, and human rights.

**2019:** Karen Jensen was appointed as Canada's first Federal Pay Equity Commissioner, within the Canadian Human Rights Commission.

**For further learning  
and resources, visit:**

[www.International  
WomensDay.com](http://www.InternationalWomensDay.com)