

# WELDON

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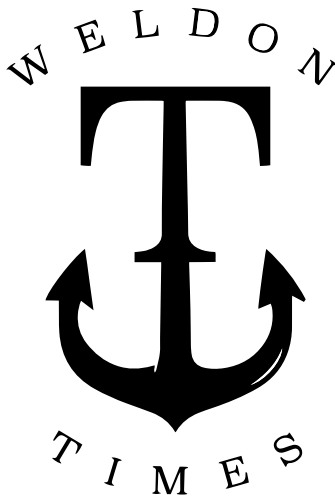
## QUARTERLY

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*Dalhousie University sits on Mi'kma'ki, the traditional territory of the Mi'kmaq.*





# Happy Black History Month!

Folu Adesanya (3L)

January 1, 2020 marked the beginning of a brand-new decade that many looked at with optimism and as a chance at a new lease on life. However, 2020, was marked with an enormous amount of suffering and sadness for so many around the world. For the Black community, this was especially true.

On March 13, 2020, 26-year-old EMT and aspiring nurse Breonna Taylor was shot to death by police in her apartment in Louisville, Kentucky. Officers barged into Taylor's apartment as she lay sleeping and fired multiple rounds. Less than three months later, on May 26, 2020, 46-year-old George Floyd was pinned face-down on the ground, in handcuffs, by a white police officer who pressed his knee against Floyd's neck for more than eight minutes.

In June of 2020, I had the opportunity to attend the Black Lives Matter protest in my hometown of Peterborough, Ontario. Sweating and apprehensive, I headed downtown with my younger cousin, Nonye, and one of my best friends, Cass. I had nothing with me except for a spring jacket and a bottle of water. I had no idea what to expect. I marched down some of the city's busiest intersections (which were completely free of cars) with Nonye and Cass by my side. I won't lie - it was emotional. Hearing so many around us chant "I can't breathe", "ACAB", and of course, "Black Lives Matter" was an incredibly painful reminder of the horrific events that had transpired just months earlier. It was a painful reminder that as a Black woman, I will one day have to sit my children down and tell them that they may be hated simply because of the colour of their skin. It was all so surreal - in the year 2020, I was walking down a street to protest racial inequality. To demand that I not be treated as lesser because of my skin. To insist that I be afforded the same rights and respect as my white peers.

Strangely enough, within these feelings of despair, anger, and grief was also this unfamiliar feeling of hopefulness. Standing in an open park, I looked out and saw people of all colours and from all walks of life who had come out to protest as well. Never had I seen the city public so unified in the name of justice. Never had I heard a movement so loud that its calls for change resonated throughout the entire globe. I no longer felt so alone.

Now more than ever, I am keenly aware of the need for change. I read an article the other day by a young woman named Komal Samrow who said the following: "I choose to view the shortcomings of my community in addressing racism not as inherent malice, but as an ignorance and lack of understanding surrounding what the fight for racial equality between Black and White people symbolizes for us." This really hit me: education is our most important tool in the fight against oppression. Ultimately, it is our collective responsibility to create a world where no persons are discriminated against. Understanding the violations of the rights of Black people around the world is the first step in dismantling the ideologies that permit discrimination against any minority group. We must recognize our own biases, hold ourselves accountable, and continue to amplify Black voices.

This year, Black History Month feels strangely bittersweet. I feel sadness when I remember my Black brothers and sisters that have been senselessly killed or tortured for the colour of their skin. But, I also feel immense hope - hope for a future where racial discrimination and social injustice have no place in any of our workplaces or societies.



# The Impact of COVID-19 on the Black Community

This article is a collaborative piece written by three Black authors for Black History Month. **Zainab Adejumobi** wrote the segment on economy. **David Chukwuka** wrote the portion on security. **Jonathan Duru** wrote the section on health. Happy Black History Month!



## Economic Impact of COVID-19 on the Black Community

by **Zainab Adejumobi**  
(1L)

The Black community in Nova Scotia has felt the impact of COVID-19 on an economic level.

Although the Canadian government has developed programs such as the Canadian Emergency Business Account (CEBA) to help businesses, many Black businesses have not received funding from the CEBA. To qualify for CEBA, a business must have had a payroll between \$20,000 and \$1.5 million in the previous year. Many Black businesses are small businesses with less revenue than mainstream businesses. As a result, many Black businesses have not been able to qualify for the funding.

Black businesses already suffer from anti-Black racism, and the compounded effect of COVID-19 is devastating. Black customers also report suffering from racist treatment. For example, in Montreal, there was a government order that open stores must sell only essential products. Uniprix, a store in Montreal, closed off their Black hair care section and deemed it “non-essential,” while other hair care products were left available for purchase. The store owner claims that this

was a mistake, but the section remained closed off until Tisha Samuels, a Black customer, complained about it and shared a video of the closed section on social media.

Thankfully, some people are working to salvage the situation. One such person is Jessica Bowden, the CEO of Teens Now Magazine, who created an online shopping mall called Ebony Shopping Plaza. The website showcases Black businesses and will let you shop for a range of products. You are welcome to support a Black business today. The link to Ebony Shopping Plaza is <https://www.ebonyshoppingplaza.com>.



## Security Impact of COVID-19 on the Black Community

By **David Chukwuka**  
(1L)

While the news of increased policing as a way of enforcing healthcare guidelines

during the pandemic has brought solace to the hearts of many, Black people and communities in Nova Scotia and around Canada are unable to share this sentiment. Though the entire country is battling the COVID-19 pandemic, Black communities face a bigger task of battling what some have termed the pandemic on a pandemic: racism exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The statistics are clear on the higher likelihood of Black people being street checked or killed by the police in Nova Scotia and other provinces. As a result, it is no surprise that using the police to respond to COVID-19 public health issues has had adverse effects on the

Black community. From the mishandled case of Dr. Jean Robert Ngola in New Brunswick, to the singling out of the Preston community in Nova Scotia by top health officials, there is one recurring theme: the subsequent publicity associated with over-policing stirs up anti-Black racial tensions and brings about online attacks, threats and stigmatization.

If these previous failed attempts are any indication, the emphasis on policing communicable disease outbreaks will only increase the spread, the risk of harm to and the incarceration of marginalized communities. The current situation is a chance to implement a new approach, one that identifies the root cause of the problem and provides support. But as it stands, the Black community continues to fight two battles which together present a greater security risk to identified communities and individuals.



## Health Impact of COVID-19 on the Black Community

By Jonathan Duru (1L)

BlackHistoryMonth is not solely about reminiscing on cultural symbols, venerated figures and a history that dates to the Ancient Levant. It is also

about recalling the problematic and oft-ignored aspects of our shared history. In anglophone North America, the medical concerns of Black people have been consistently neglected. While the American atrocities committed by J. Marion Sims and Tuskegee experimenters are well-known, Canada has also neglected its Black citizenry's medical needs. Factors such as perceived lack of concern by clinicians and nurses contribute to sentiments of distrust. These sentiments are inevitably directed at the medical community.

In the present day, the ongoing pandemic has greatly encumbered African Canadian communities, already among the most vulnerable in the country. Undoubtedly, many African Canadians have become wary of a medical community that has often disappointed them. There are ever-increasing sentiments of distrust concerning the rapidly implemented vaccine program. Much of that is rooted in historical occurrences of experimentation and medical racism towards Black people. Reports of death, migraines, throat pain and kidney irritation from the

COVID-19 vaccine do little to quell that distrust.

I end this brief piece in order to proffer some food for thought. Given enduring medical maltreatment, why do we see a sudden push to vaccinate the Black community seemingly earlier than other communities? What would it take to alleviate sentiments of distrust? What other factors permeate distrust? Are the current negative attitudes towards the vaccine justified? Do similar sentiments exist in other communities of colour? How can the legal community better voice African Canadian medical concerns?

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# The Illegal Knapsack: Whose burden to carry?

Folami Jones (3L)

Since 1970, the Dalhousie Legal Aid Clinic has been a cornerstone for legal advocacy and litigating test cases for marginalized communities in Nova Scotia. Its doors have offered individuals and families a place to find legal advice during some of their most challenging life circumstances. The lawyers, students and staff are commonly the people who usher hope into a client's dire situation, but not without proof of their poverty. It is their low-income reality that will commission a certificate for legal service, just another reminder of their social location.

When *Shanifa* walks into the clinic for legal advice because her three children were just taken into care by the Minister of Community services, she is walking in with a knapsack full of social and political inequalities. You see, her knapsack was passed down for generations, and it contains the realities that white supremacy has built a judicial system on. It contains the reality that she's a single African Nova Scotian mother because her partner was recently put in jail for selling marijuana to feed his family. He was selling marijuana to feed his family because he didn't get a chance to finish school. He didn't finish school because his family hadn't made it past grade 10. His family didn't make it past grade 10 because Black people had minimal job opportunities with lower wages, and they needed to feed their young family.

*Shanifa's* children were taken into care because they missed 5 days of school. They missed 5 days of school because they were at their grandmother's, because their apartment was too cold. They were cold because *Shanifa* wasn't able to pay the power bill. *Shanifa* didn't pay the power because her income assistance was suspended. When her cheque was suspended, she ended up having a few drinks to settle her mind. She drank more the next day because many other people living in the same circumstance

also drank more. Because they were cold, their cheques were suspended, they were working under the table, their community's children were taken, and their grandparents had gone through the same thing, as did their great-grandchildren.

So, when *Shanifa* shows up to Dalhousie Legal Aid, she's not just there because the Minister took her children into care. She is there because of the historical legacy of oppression against her people. She is there because the system has reinforced the threads in her knapsack by laws and regulations that disadvantage African Nova Scotians, forcing them into the contours of institutional injustices.

These discriminatory realities are the common threads that have weaved together a myriad of knapsacks for our clients. They have learned to navigate the process of unpacking their knapsack, hidden with deferred truths and incomplete stories. Clients survive by any means necessary. They do this with humility and resilience, despite the disproportionate rates of African Nova Scotian and Aboriginal peoples in the criminal justice system.

As law students that have been tasked with supporting our clients, we are charged with continuing to fight against the mechanisms that widen the gap of justice. It is critical that we constantly interrogate our implicit biases, while working collectively with our allies to dismantle and combat these institutional inequities. Dalhousie Legal Aid can only impact social change within the means of its resources. Therefore, without significant financial backing and those of us that reach back, give back, *Shanifa* bears the burden of carrying her generational knapsack alone. Without clinics like Dalhousie Legal Aid Clinic, the realities of our clients become tangled in the seamless binds of oppression.



# Our Call: Leading DLGS in a Pandemic

Okanga O. Okanga  
(President of Dalhousie Law Graduate Society, PhD Student)

Seven to eight years ago, I had the privilege of leading a students' body, the University of Nigeria Students' Bar Association (UNSBA). For a year, we had responsibility over a law clinic, a mock call to bar, legal debates, moot court, mock trials, and more. These were standing responsibilities for the UNSBA leadership. In September 2020, when I assumed responsibility to lead the Dalhousie Law Graduate Society (DLGS), I sensed that I was stepping into a "tough" arena. Ironically, I was not concerned about the enormity of the task before me, but that there might be nothing substantial to do. Unlike my UNSBA experience, there was no menu of standing projects awaiting me at the DLGS. The thought of occupying a largely dormant office terrified me. So, like every admin before us, we had to formulate our own to-do list, albeit almost from scratch.

Beside the dearth of (non-secretarial) standing responsibilities, we face the challenge of membership apathy. Every self-governing institution is only as functional as people are ready to engage with it. DLGS members are typically few, of diverse age groups, work, family and national backgrounds. Most combine distant academic life with immense family and professional responsibilities. Our (research) interests and motivations are as diverse as our fingerprints. The incentive to converge around any programs is typically low, more so in a pandemic year, with unprecedented stressors. Our numbers are further down this year because some non-resident grads had to defer their admissions due to the pandemic. So, really, who's left in the room?

I have the pleasure of working with a fantastically committed team. I am constantly energized by the enthusiasm, dynamism and industry of VP Ahmed, Secretary Luc and Treasurer Nelia. I

gladly welcome those attributes because, truly, no leader wants to stand alone before their sea of troubles. We meet bi-weekly and have found an equitable way to share the responsibilities. We have worked to standardize our internal processes and finally got on Twitter (@lawdlgs). Each of us has helped to hoist the torch and can take credit for the progress that we have made thus far.

Our agenda includes a Research Transition Conference as this year's signature project (May 21). This virtual conference will feature grad students from law schools globally, as well as a few keynote speakers. We want to talk about impactful research, exchange ideas and network. We will share more details soon, but in the meantime, a registration link can be found on Eventbrite. We hope that the larger Weldon community can join us.

We are building on the good efforts of our predecessors, especially those who revived and stabilized the Society in recent years. Like them, we will not just kick the can down the road come September. We will strive to plant a more colourful flag on Mount Weldon.

Finally, given where our world is today, I should leave a positive note on the COVID-19 pandemic. Many of us have felt the vicious coldness of this pandemic – some less than others. I have felt somewhat fortunate in Halifax, especially as I follow events around the world. I only arrived in Canada around Fall 2019 for the LLM. I had little time to settle in, get around and get to work before the pandemic came upon humankind like a wrecking ball. Like many, I had to shed some plans and hibernate. But like those beautiful trees by the streams of water, I am hopeful that we will spring back up and conquer this dark, harsh season. We rise together!





# 2L So Far

Jamie Samson (2L)

My expectations for my 2L year have, in many cases, not come to fruition - or, if they have, in a drastically different manner than I could have predicted. There was a rosy glow over my 2L year when I contemplated what it might bring. Greater relationships with friends (new and old), employment and extracurricular opportunities, new and specialized courses, and a chance to commit myself more to my classwork and the degree that I'd chosen. It hasn't quite worked out that way.

When the coronavirus pandemic began, I didn't realize where we would land come September of my second year. At home, online, trying to make the most of the resources we had to make the learning experience as uninterrupted as possible. It certainly threw a wrench in my plans for my second year. I'm a serial procrastinator at the best of times - but stuck in my apartment for classes, and with nowhere else to go in my down time, my motivation was hit hard. This has been the most difficult of my two years at law school; not substantively, but in terms of stagnancy and tedium.

Being at home all of the time, and having my classroom confined to the same rooms wherein I live, made my need for a break - an escape - stronger than ever. I felt that I was constantly in class, even when I was sitting at my breakfast table having tea - my books were always piled just next to me, and work was always on my mind. I put off readings in an even worse way than usual and procrastinated all of my assignments to the last minute. My first semester grades were far from stellar.

Instead of changing my bad habits, I've fallen further into them. Instead of meeting old and new friends, I've barely seen anyone all year. Most of my classes rely on self-instruction, which isn't ideal for a procrastinator. I was able to get two interviews for 2L summer positions but didn't end up getting any employment offers. Certainly not the revolutionary second year I had planned. Instead of flourishing, I'm just getting through.

I won't pretend second semester has meant a momentous change for me. I still procrastinate, and my February reading week will be spent catching up on class readings. But I can see hope on the horizon - the chance of a third year in person, back on campus with my classmates and friends, to be able to commiserate when things get difficult, and pull motivation from the palpable energy of others. I still have applications to complete for potential summer positions, so not all hope is lost on that front. None of my so-called failures this year change the fact that I've completed the first semester of my second year and that I will complete the second as well. They won't be the experiences I'd expected, but this state of the world won't last forever. If you didn't get the grades you wanted, or the job you wanted (or any job at all!), that won't last forever either. Not every year has to be the best one yet, and you don't always have to be at your best either.



# The Technology-Assisted Law Student: 5 Apps That Can Make Your Law School Experience Easier

Zainab Adejumobi (1L)

## Text-to-Speech Apps

Text-to-speech apps can read out a document to you. If you are an audio learner, this can be an ideal way to study. If you are tired of looking at a screen, text-to-speech apps can also help you. Thankfully, Dalhousie's bright space includes this function. To access this feature, click on a file on Brightspace, then beneath the file, click "Open with Doc Reader." On the top tab click "Listen." You can also find text-to-speech apps as an extension add-on on the Chrome web store. Many of them are free.

## Google's Voice Typing

If your hands are tired of typing, then try Google's Voice Typing feature. Google's Voice Typing types the words as you speak them. It is a feature available in Google Docs. To access this feature in Google Docs, open a Google Doc file and click on "Tools." From the drop-down menu, click on Voice Typing. To type with your voice across the web, you can check out speech-to-text extensions on the Chrome web store. Many of them are free.

## Weava Highlighter

If you are conducting research and collating information from several sites, Weava highlighter allows you to highlight specific passages of interest and put all your highlights in one place. Weava highlighter will colour code the highlights and link back to the original site that you highlighted them from. This Chrome extension is particularly useful for placing bits of information from several sites into one place. You can get this extension on the Chrome web store for free.

## Pomodoro App

The Pomodoro study technique is a technique where a person studies for 25 minutes non-stop but takes short breaks between each 25-minute period. This technique seeks to promote concentration. Pomodoro apps have a built-in timer that helps you pace your studying according to the Pomodoro technique. If this sounds good to you, then you can get an app like this for free on Google Play.

## Split Screen Extensions

Split screen extensions allow you to minimize the size of your browser window in such a way that you can have multiple windows open on the same page. The extension splits your screen into multiple parts (two or more). This function is especially helpful when taking notes during a Zoom class. You can see your Word document and Zoom class on the same screen and at the same time. You can get an extension like this for free on the Chrome web store.



# Alumni Bio:

## Charles Thompson, LLB (Dal Law '94)

Tiff Ward (1L)



Charles Thompson is currently a partner with Burchell MacDougall LLP, working out of their Truro, NS office. He manages a broad practice, focussed primarily on employment, municipal, and administrative law.

Charles grew up in Colchester County, Nova Scotia, completing his undergrad at Mount Allison and then his LLB at Dal Law (as Schulich was called then) in 1994. During law school he worked at a small firm in Yellowknife NWT in the summers following both his first and second years. Following graduation, he returned

to that firm to article and stayed on as an associate, and later partner. He returned to Nova Scotia after 10 years, joining Burchell MacDougall in 2004, first working as an associate and later joining the partnership.

Charles speaks highly of his years spent in Yellowknife. He says, "I loved living in the North – lots of unique opportunities and experiences, such as working on the court circuit and visiting communities throughout the Arctic." He also was the Deputy Law Clerk for the Legislative Assembly of NWT for a few years. Living and practicing law in the North exposed him to different cultures and ways of life of the Dene peoples of the western Arctic and the Inuit in the east.

Since returning to Nova Scotia, he has had the opportunity to build a strong network. He has several long-standing clients that he has worked with continually for many years, developing strong personal relationships that he values highly. In addition, Charles works with several charities and not-for-profits pro bono or at reduced rates, which he finds very rewarding.

Charles is also involved in his community, carrying on the Weldon tradition of unselfish public service. He has been involved in various committees of the Nova Scotia Barrister's Society and is currently the Vice-President of the Lawyers Insurance Association of Nova Scotia (LIANS), the liability insurance provider for all practicing lawyers in the province. Charles notes that though private practice is demanding of time and energy, he tries to stay involved in the broader community through volunteering with the Truro and Colchester Boys and Girls club as

well as other local not-for profits. Charles also enjoys spending time with his family, hiking, and reading.

Thinking back to his decision to attend Dalhousie, Charles says that he considered going out-of-province for law school but in the end chose Dal because of its great reputation not only locally but across the country. He says what sets our law school apart is the “wide variety of students that it attracts throughout Canada, which creates an interesting mix of backgrounds and ideas. Similarly, Dal Law grads are dispersed all over Canada and beyond.” When speaking of his law school experience, Charles fondly recalls those diverse perspectives and relationships with his fellow students.

As a student, Charles spent a memorable semester at the Dal Legal Aid Clinic, which he says was a definite highlight of his law school experience. He had the opportunity to conduct a complete criminal trial with the support of his supervisor, defending a youth charged

with a break and enter. He notes that this was a huge learning experience and that the semester overall was a “great opportunity to see and be involved in a type of practice that has an important and direct impact on people’s lives.”

Charles suggests that students remain open to diverse opportunities that might arise unexpectedly and to take a chance on something new, such as his time in Yellowknife. He recommends considering working in the North – “you will get exposed to so much, so quickly, much more than other places, and find yourself handling cases and clients early in your career that you would not have the chance to take on for several years in most parts of the country.” As a seasoned partner in private practice, Charles’ advice to students is to “be prepared to work hard. Law is a very rewarding career, but it is demanding and there are no shortcuts to being successful at it!”

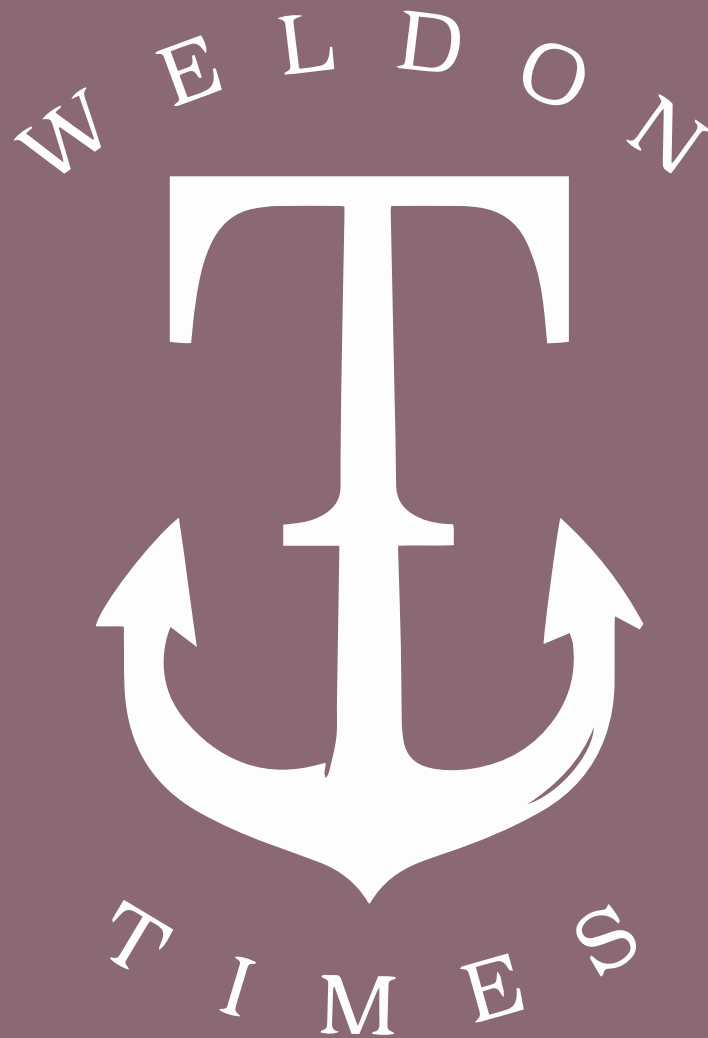


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IN THIS ISSUE

**FOLU ADESANYA**

ZAINAB ADEJUMOBI

**DAVID CHUKWUKA**

JONATHAN DURU

**FOLAMI JONES**

OKANGA O. OKANGA

**JAMIE SAMSON**

ZAINAB ADEJUMOBI

**TIFF WARD**