



# DR. RUDOLPH “RUDY” FFRENCH

## Academic and Mentor Extraordinaire

Rudolph “Rudy” Ffrench was born in Kingston Jamaica in 1930. He attended Kingston College and while there was a member of the famous Choir of this outstanding Secondary School for Boys. As an adult Rudy worked in the Revenue Department, Ministry of Finance in Jamaica.

He married Lorna Schryer, a graduate of the distinguished Durham Business College. Lorna worked in Educational Administration at the post-secondary level, including at the Mico Teacher Training College in Jamaica as Secretary to the Bursar at a time when initiatives in Continuing Education and Correspondence Courses were novel approaches and flexible alternatives in curriculum delivery being developed to make Teacher Education accessible to more students. She later worked at Queen’s University in Ontario, and as Secretary to the Vice President of Acadia University in Nova Scotia.

Lorna migrated to Canada accompanying her husband as he pursued further academic development beyond Jamaica’s shores. The couple became parents of three sons, Bruce, Robert, and Marc and in due course, daughters-in-law and grandchildren were added to the family.

Rudy’s education in Canada was facilitated when he received a government scholarship in 1960, which enabled him to obtain a BA degree from Queen’s University, Kingston Ontario. He successfully pursued two Master’s degrees in Economics, and later, a PhD from the University of Cardiff in Wales, UK. An exemplar of Caribbean innovativeness and resilience, Rudy also worked in the summers as a Sleeping Car Porter.

Between 1966 and 1997 he was a member of faculty at Acadia University. He was the first person of African descent

Rudy with wife Lorna



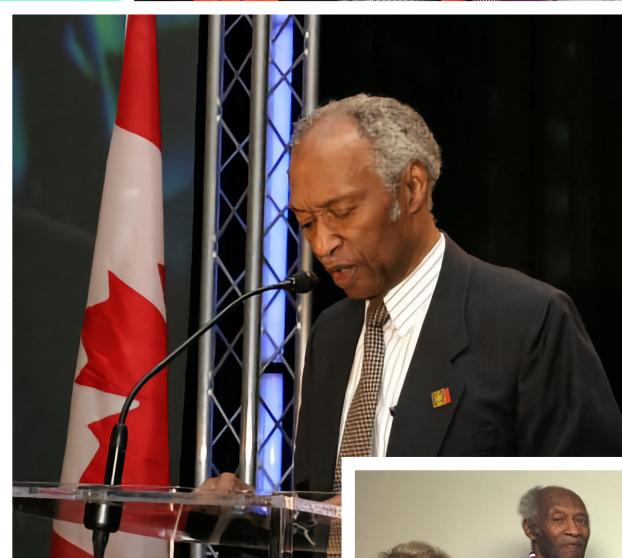
to be employed as a faculty member at that University, rising in the 1970s to the rank of full Professor and Head of the Department of Economics. His academic work included research and publication in peer reviewed journals including a 1972 article in the Canadian Journal of Agricultural Economics, entitled, “The Demand for Canadian Seaweeds With Special Reference to Irish Moss.”

His contribution to post-secondary education extended beyond Canadian shores and included posts as Visiting Lecturer at the University of the West Indies (Mona) and Manchester University in England.

As a subject matter expert in Economics, Rudy was an Advisor on policy whose insights were sought and valued by the Canadian government at both Provincial and Federal levels, the Jamaican government, and CARICOM (the Caribbean Community).



Rudy with son Robert



credit: Adams Photography



VANSDA first Board of Governors, with Senator Wanda Thomas Bernard

came to Nova Scotia from the Caribbean. Personal stories were shared by former students in the Acadia University’s Tribute to Rudy and in media features about individuals who attested to the value of Rudy’s mentorship and support in helping students to achieve academic success and experience wellbeing while they were far away from home.

Lorna Ffrench also contributed to the development of and solidarity among Black people and the wider society in Nova Scotia, especially as a member of the Caribbean Association of Nova Scotia (CARANS) and the Anglican Church in Kentville.

Rudolph “Rudy” Ffrench died on May 16, 2021 a few days shy of his 91st birthday. His legacy continues even as he is missed by his widow, sons, grandchildren, many other relatives, friends, and a grateful Black community in Nova Scotia.

Rudy’s other outstanding achievements in sports and in advocacy for the Black community were two ways in which he demonstrated the breadth and well-rounded nature of his personality. Among his many ‘firsts’ were being the first Black person to be Head Coach of the Acadia University Men’s Soccer Team and the first Black Head Coach in the Atlantic University Athletic Association (AUAA).

He was a founding member of Black Business Initiative (BBI) Nova Scotia which has established the Dr. Rudy Ffrench Youth Trailblazer Award in his honour. He was also a founding member of the Valley African Nova Scotian Development Association (VANSDA).

Rudy’s hard work in seeking access to higher education for people of African descent earned him the Black Educators Association Award for outstanding achievement within the Black community in Nova Scotia and Canada. He was inducted into the Black Cultural Society’s W.P. Oliver Wall of Honour.

Less formal, but no less heartfelt, are the tributes paid to Rudy Ffrench by former students of Acadia and other institutions in Nova Scotia, especially those who