



The TALKING DRUM

Stories

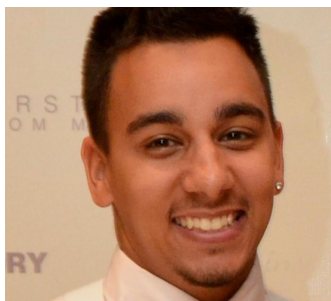
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The Amherstburg Freedom Museum is a curated archive that preserves and shares Amherstburg’s stories of the Underground Railroad, and the compassion and solidarity it took to make this network possible.

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Emancipation Celebration Recap!

There was a great turnout for our Emancipation Celebration on July 29th. Thank you to everyone who came out to support the Amherstburg Freedom Museum! Guests enjoyed great music from Six Degrees while having a delicious meal from the Fogolar. The theme was *Looking Forward from the Past* and that is exactly what we did. The tables were decorated with old photos from the Museum's collection (representing the past) while wild flower seed packets were given to each guest (representing the future). Also in the program was the Legacy Hero Award which honours a pillar of the community who has passed on. This year's award was (posthumously) given to Elder Edsel Smith and accepted by his son Dennis Smith. Edsel Smith's granddaughter Melissa Sims also gave a moving tribute. The evening also included an amazing performance from the very talented Flo Ndinmbundi from ACT. What a bright future she has!

We are grateful to MP Chris Lewis, Essex MPP Anthony Leardi, and Amherstburg Town Councillor Patricia Simone for attending, in addition to members of the Windsor Police Force and the Chief of Police. Additional thanks to our amazing sponsors TD Amherstburg and LiUNA! 625, and all the people and businesses who donated to our silent auction. We also couldn't have done this without our amazing volunteers. Thank you everyone and we can't wait for next year's celebration!



The Talking Drum

The Talking Drum is published monthly by the Amherstburg Freedom Museum. Contributions, story ideas, suggestions and feedback are always welcome. Please contact Mary-Katherine Whelan at curator@amherstburgfreedom.org

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Emancipation Celebration Recap!





Legacy Hero Award — Elder Edsel Smith



Having been prophesied over by an elderly man before he was even born, Edsel Wesley Smith was the son of a Barber, married to the love of his life, a father of twelve, and a retiree from the Windsor Utilities Commission after 28 years. During this time, he gave his life to Christ and his service in ministry began, and spanned over an extraordinary 66 years, covering Ontario and Michigan.

Starting under the Church of God in Christ organization as the first



Assistant-Pastor to Bishop C.L. Morton Sr., he volunteered as a street corner preacher, quickly moving his way up to broadcasting his sermons weekly from a radio station in Leamington, Ontario. Being asked to Pastor at St. Mark A.M.E. Church after it was reopened, is what led him to go independent and establish St. Mark Evangelical Church, where he served as pastor for a total of 50 years. Reverend Smith formerly served as a member of the Harrow Ministerial Alliance and was an Executive Member of the Windsor Episcopal Fellowship of Churches. Pastor Edsel Smith was known for his clever anecdotes, his hands-on ministry, and faithfully

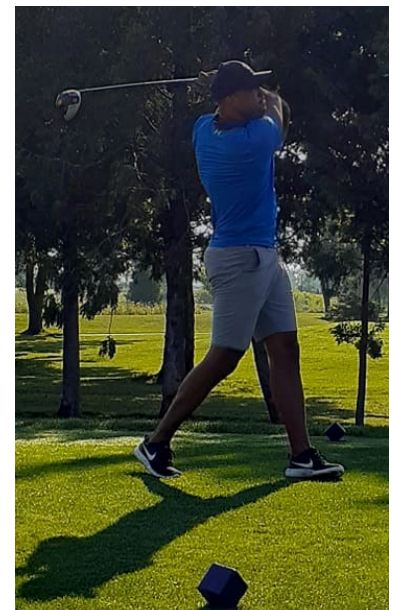


serving the needs of not only his congregation 24/7, but also the people throughout our community. Looking back over his life, we are honouring a man who has touched so many lives and will always be cherished for the memories that we have, as well as the wonderful legacy that he has left to us all. - **Written by Melissa Sims**



Walter Perry Emancipation Golf Classic

It was another beautiful day for our annual Walter Perry Emancipation Golf Classic on Saturday, August 6th. We are so grateful to all the golfers who participated and supported the Museum. Thank you to our sponsors and donors Jaguar Land Rover Windsor, BMO Essex Branch, St. Clair Hair Dressing, Freeds, and Frank Saroli of Shibley Righton LLP. We also couldn't have done this event without our amazing volunteers. Congratulations to the 50/50 winner Sam Bridgen and the tournament winners Denton Whited, Adrian Harris, and John Marchencausky!





Freedom Achievers is back!

Join us on Saturday, October 1st when we host a Mentor Showcase and presentation by Dr. Hadiya Roderique! Registered Mentors and Mentees get in for free! To become a mentor or mentee, please contact curator@amherstburgfreedom.org. To purchase your tickets, please go to <https://freedomachiever.givesmart.com>

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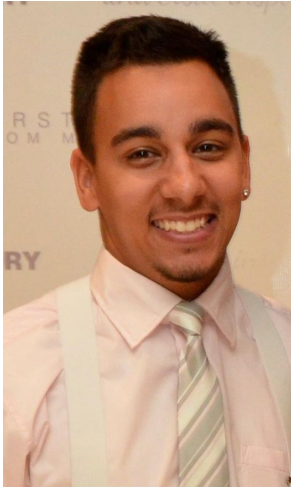
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Catching Up With Deshawn!



Amherstburg Freedom Museum Supporters may remember this friendly face. It's former employee Deshawn Baylis! He worked at the Museum for five years and we thought it would be nice to catch up with him.

1. What do you remember about growing up in Amherstburg? What I remember most about growing up in Amherstburg was the amount of family that live in the area. I am blessed to have such a large family – Baylis, Handsor and Harris family that all live so close by.

2. How long did you work/volunteer at the Museum and what was it like? I began volunteering for the Amherstburg Freedom Museum, then known as the North American Black Historical Museum, in 2009. I first began working as an employee for the museum in 2011 until 2016. I reflect on my time working with

the Amherstburg Freedom Museum as a privileged experience that shaped a lot of my professional life. I had a tremendous team to work with who made my time as a summer student a fun and memorable experience. I can recall a few guests who travelled a long way to visit our museum – which was always special. Additionally, I remember on one occasion, our Ontario Premier at the time came to visit the museum for a tour!

3. Who was the curator at the time? When I first started working with the museum, the curator was Kenn Stanton. Kenn truly was a role model for me as a young person and we were all very lucky to have him as our curator. Kenn was a goal focused yet lighthearted leader, who I remember most as being a carefully thought out and intelligent person.

4. What did it mean to you to work at the Museum and why did you start working here? It was a privilege to work at the Museum and the knowledge that I took away from that experience has stuck with me to this day. I started working at the museum to complete volunteer hours in High School. I followed in the steps of my father who also completed his volunteer hours at the museum over 30 years ago.

5. What experience did you gain from working at the Museum? Has it helped you with recent endeavours? My time at the museum has given me a great amount of experience on how to talk and interpret information to people. It is very important in what I do today, the ability to learn and review knowledge and concepts and be able to present that to an individual or group of people of different ages.

6. What high school and university did you attend? What did you study? I attended General Amherst High School and graduated in 2013. Then went on to the University of Windsor and graduated in 2018 with a Bachelor of Arts in Honours Criminology.





Catching Up With Deshawn!

7. What career did you choose? Have you always wanted to work in that profession? I chose a career path in Probation and Parole. I am currently a Probation and Parole Officer with the Ministry of the Solicitor General here in Windsor. I knew I wanted to work in this field in my last year in university when I did a practicum with the St. Leonard's Halfway House in Windsor. I found that I enjoyed working with clients on an individual basis; teaching and exploring new techniques and skills with clients that may reduce their likelihood of re-offending has been very rewarding to see – and in my opinion, has the most positive impact on our justice system.

8. What are some of the challenges you faced in achieving your career goals? How did you overcome them? Some challenges I experienced in achieving my goals was obtaining opportunities and experiences to assist in furthering my career in corrections. One of the ways I overcame this, was by being open and willing to come to any opportunity that came calling. For example, I began my career as a Probation and Parole officer in Yorkton, Saskatchewan for approximately two years before I returned to Ontario in the same profession.

9. What are some positive moments you experienced along the way to your career? Of course, being able to witness changes and small improvements in the lives of my clients I have worked with over the years have been the most positive moments in my career. However, the life experience I gained along the way has been just as impactful. I had the opportunity to experience Western Canada, meet new professionals and friends, and learn so much about myself as a person along the way.

10. Do you have any career advice for youth who are trying to create a path to career success? Don't be afraid to take risks to further your career goals. There may be opportunities that arise throughout your career path that may present as uncertain, but it is important to challenge those. Take those opportunities out of province, or those short-term contracts – or don't be afraid to do something different entirely. These risks may present as difficult; however, they help shape who you are and provide a wealth of professional and life experience.

11. What is next for you? Where do you see yourself in the future? I'm right where I want to be, I have worked hard to get where I am now and plan on furthering my professional experience with the Ministry here in Windsor. Who knows what the future will look like, but I am enjoying what I am doing right now and hope to for many years to come.

Thank you Charitable Gaming Windsor & Paradise Gaming Centre



Amherstburg Freedom Museum would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to **Charitable Gaming Windsor** and **Paradise Gaming Centre** for their continued support. Throughout the years, they have helped us keep the Museum open and running, and allowed for us to continue to offer our programming throughout the pandemic. Thank you!

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