



BANK OF CANADA  
BANQUE DU CANADA

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CONTACT: Media Relations  
613-782-8782

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

**GATINEAU, QUEBEC** — Governor Stephen S. Poloz, Minister of Finance Bill Morneau and Minister of Status of Women Patty Hajdu today announced that 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.

“Today is about recognizing the incalculable contribution that all women have had and continue to have in shaping Canada’s story. Viola Desmond’s own story reminds all of us that big change can start with moments of dignity and bravery,” said Minister Morneau. “She represents courage, strength and determination—qualities we should all aspire to every day.”

Joining Governor Poloz and Ministers Morneau and Hajdu at the Canadian Museum of History for the announcement was one of Viola Desmond’s sisters, Wanda Robson.

“It’s a big day to have a woman on a bank note, but it’s an especially big day to have your big sister on a bank note. Our family is extremely proud and honoured,” said Robson, who was instrumental in making Desmond’s story widely known.

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. Last spring, 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.

“Canadians were extremely engaged, which made our consultation process very successful,” said Governor Poloz. “Through this exciting process, with every mouse click or turn of a book’s page, with every kitchen table discussion or classroom debate, Canadians learned more about the iconic women who built Canada.”

Minister Hajdu said, “Many extraordinary women could have been on this next bank note, and the search and decision-making process were extremely thorough. The choice of Viola Desmond reminds us that Canada is a diverse country where everyone deserves



equality and respect.”

*Notes to Editors:*

- 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.
  - To continue to celebrate more iconic Canadians, the next \$5 note will also feature a new Bank NOTE-able Canadian. In due course, the Bank will launch another consultation process to seek input from Canadians on the design of that \$5 note, building on the successes of this most recent process.
  - Since Viola Desmond will be featured on the \$10 note and another iconic Canadian will be featured on the future \$5 note, Canada’s first Prime Minister, Sir John A. Macdonald, and our first francophone Prime Minister, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, will be honoured on our higher-value bank notes. This change will take place when the higher-value notes are redesigned for the next series.
  - These changes mean that former prime ministers William Lyon Mackenzie King and Sir Robert Borden will no longer be portrayed on bank notes.
  - The \$20 denomination will continue to feature the reigning monarch.
  - Additional biographical information about Viola Desmond is available on the Bank’s [website](#).
  - View the [Heritage Minute video](#) about Viola Desmond, courtesy of Historica Canada.
  - Download photos from today’s event on the Bank of Canada’s [Flickr gallery](#).
  - Find out more about the [selection and public consultation process that led to the choice of Viola Desmond and the approach to Canada’s next series of bank notes](#).
  - Additional biographical information about the [Advisory Council members](#) is available on the Bank’s website.
  - Find out more about our [Principles for Bank Note Design](#).
  - Consult the Bank of Canada’s [bank notes](#) web pages.
- *Please note: At the request of the family, media wishing to speak with Viola Desmond’s relatives are kindly asked to contact the Bank of Canada Media Relations team.*