

# RAF

## MEDIA KIT 12<sup>TH</sup> EDITION OF THE RAF GALA EXCELLENCE





*For immediate release*

## **PRESS RELEASE**

**The Regroupement Affaires Femmes celebrates its 47 finalists  
with the theme “Together for the change”**

**Ottawa, Wednesday, July 29th 2020** - Regroupement Affaires Femmes (RAF) invites you to its very first live streamed bilingual Gala, around the theme of “Together for the change”. The Gala will take place on **Sunday, August 9, 2020, at 7:30 p.m.** on [its Web site](#).

During this gala, the RAF will celebrate its **47 finalists** divided in **nine categories**; this year, two new categories were created, including one that highlights the support of black men over black women.

From the COVID-19 pandemic to the murder of the Afro-american, George Floyd, the finalists of the 12<sup>th</sup> edition of the RAF Gala of Excellence stand out as committed agents of change who are contributing to the #BLACKLIVESMATTER movement in Canada, and who have so clearly demonstrated the mettle of African-Canadian Francophone girls and women.

For the first time in its history, RAF will recognize the excellence of Black Francophone and francophile girls and women right across the country, and will do so in Canada’s two official languages. It has been possible thanks to the Bilingual Ottawa program, managed by [ACFO Ottawa](#) and funded by the [Government of Canada](#), and La Nouvelle Scène Gilles Desjardins. Dènik Dorval, Bilingual Ottawa Program’s Project Manager, is delighted with the tremendous number of finalists representing Canada’s Black Francophone community, and very much looking forward to a dazzling evening!

For all those reasons, we invite you to celebrate the successes of Black women of all ages across the country.

You can buy your ticket to this historic live streamed event [here](#)! The funds raised through this Gala help RAF offer free workshops and training to this sometimes overlooked group. **Tickets are \$25 each.**

As you know, founded in 2006, RAF is a non-profit organization that is the only intergenerational association of its kind. Its mission is to celebrate the excellence and leadership of Canada’s Black Francophone girls and women!

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For candidates biographies, please consult [www.affemmes.ca](http://www.affemmes.ca). For interview requests with the finalists and RAF team, please contact **Grace K. Busanga** by email at [affemmes@gmail.com](mailto:affemmes@gmail.com) or by phone (613) 410-7450.

## FIND OUT THE 9 CATEGORIES AND 47 FINALISTS OF THE 12TH RAF GALA EXCELLENCE

### 1. New Generation

HASINA KAMANZI, Ottawa, ON  
JOËLLE KABISOSO, Toronto, ON

### 2. Entrepreneurship

AUDREY AJAVON, Orléans, ON  
CASSANDRE APOLLON, Montréal, QC  
JUSTINE BAHITA TSHULA, Ottawa, ON  
LÉONIE MANDANG, Ottawa, ON  
MARIE-CHANTAL BAGUIA, Orléans, ON  
MIKAËLLA CÉLESTIN, Orléans, ON  
ROSE NAPOLÉON, Montréal, QC  
STÉPHANIE GUINGANÉ, Gatineau, QC

### 3. Politique and Social Justice \*NEW\*

ANNE MOREAU, Ottawa, ON  
OLIVE KAMANYANA, Gatineau, QC  
SANDRA BARANCIRA, Gatineau, QC

### 4. Community Engagement

BIBIANE WANDJI, Ottawa, ON  
CÉCILE KAYIJUKA, Regina, SK  
LILIANE ULYSSE, Gatineau, QC  
MARIELLE M'BANGHA, Québec, QC  
MARTINE JASON, Ottawa, ON  
PULCHÉRIE MBOUSSI, Victoria, BC  
MURIEL BUMBA BEYA, Montréal, QC  
PERPÉTUE ADITÉ, Québec, QC  
SABINE MONPIERRE, Montréal, QC  
SANDRA BARANCIRA, Gatineau, QC  
STÉPHANIE GUINGANÉ, Gatineau, QC  
VALÉRIE ASSOI, Ottawa, ON

### 5. Women's Ally \*NEW\*

BIENVENU-OLIVIER NTUMBA, Montréal, QC  
BUUMA MAISHA, Ottawa, ON  
JACQUES RENAUD, Montréal, QC

### 6. Sport, Health and Well-being

DANIA VERSAILLES, Ottawa, ON  
EMMANUELLA MICHEL, Montréal, QC  
MARIE-CHRISTINE ADJOBI, Gatineau, QC  
MARJORIE DURÉ, Gatineau, QC  
NADINE ALPHONSE, Laval, QC

### 7. Education

ABRA AGBOLI, Gatineau, QC  
GUÉDELIN DESROSIERS, Montréal, QC  
VALÉRIE ASSOI, Ottawa, ON

### 8. Arts, Medias and Culture

CLAUDE-ANDRÉA BONNY, Ottawa, ON  
DJELY TAPA, Montréal, QC  
DJENNIE LAGUERRE, Toronto, ON  
OMAYRA ISSA, Saskatoon, SK  
SAGINE SÉMAJUSTE, Toronto, ON  
SCHELBY JEAN-BAPTISTE, Montréal, QC

### 9. Icon of the Year

ASSIATOU DIALLO, Toronto, ON  
MARIE-MICHÈLE VOLCY, Laval, QC  
MARJORIE DURÉ, Gatineau, QC  
YARDLY KAVANAGH, Montréal, QC

For candidates biographies, please consult [www.affemmes.ca](http://www.affemmes.ca).

# Find out our finalists

## CATEGORY: NEW GENERATION

### **HASINA KAMANZI, Ottawa, ON**

**Telling the story of black women on canvas**

Gifted visual artist Hasina can often be found painting at shows, community events or local artists' markets. Her poignant works tell the stories of her black sisters. In 2019, she was recognized by Purple Sisters (storyteller of

the year) and the Ontario Public Interest Research Group (OPIRG) Carleton (recognition for her work in the artistic community). She is one of the co-founders of Full Femme, a creation collective that has organized several memorable events, including the "A Look Into: Women in Hip Hop" and "A Look Into: Ottawa's Creative Scene" conference, and a show entitled "Les Noirs x L'avenir".



### **JOËLLE KABISOSO, Toronto, ON**

**A survivor!**

Sadly, her life has not always been a fairy tale. As a young high school student, Joëlle Kapinga Kabisoso was raped in a hotel room in Montréal. Of the five men in the room, how many took part in the rape? She has no idea. Her rape was never investigated, as she found out after asking

to see the file. Out of this trauma, a survivor was born. A vocation too. She ended up working with other sexual assault survivors at Legal Aid Ontario. She has dedicated her life to raising awareness and providing access to resources and programs for assault victims. Her long journey enabled her to write a book, a cry from the heart about rape, and to set up Sisters in Synch, a network that seeks to bring together women and provide support throughout the transition from youth to womanhood. Joëlle continues to receive therapy, and sees her healing as a work in progress.



## CATEGORY: ENTREPRENEURSHIP

### **AUDREY AJAVON, Orléans, ON** **Women's emancipation as a driving force**

Audrey Ajavon is the founder and CEO of AudreySaysFashion PR consultant and of the Fondation Aida Lovv in support of women's independence. She has always done volunteer work for her community and for the Cultural Association of

Togolese of Ontario where she has made good use of her many skills, mainly in communications and public relations. Selfless and always ready to help, she is currently part of the Runway for HOPE in support of CHEO production team, and of Start Up Fashion Week Montréal.



### **CASSANDRE APOLLON,** **Montréal, QC**

#### **A reporter who lives by the Gospel**

Educated in the arts, letters and communications, Cassandre began her career as a reporter in Montréal in 2016, and in 2017 joined MATV. She contributed to various shows, including Ma curieuse cité, Montréal Je Thème, Montréal

Gospel, and Rythme Gospel. Cassandre quickly made a name for herself with her reports on the Gospel and her unique style. This experienced general reporter, who can often be found on the front lines, is also a radio host, since February 2020 of Mon parcours.



**JUSTINE BAHITA TSHULA,  
Ottawa, ON**

**An entrepreneur at heart**

With a certificate in group facilitation from the Université du Québec en Outaouais and a certificate as a paralegal from Ottawa's Cité Collégiale, Justine Tshula is not a woman to rest on her laurels. Deeply involved in her community,

she has been a leader in the Lions Club International for youth in different communities in Africa. She also founded Opulence Global, a company providing fashion, beauty, health, dental and personal care services.



**LÉONIE MANDANG,  
Ottawa, ON**

**Freeze frame!**

Like a second skin, her camera never leaves her. When it comes to capturing all the power of the more stirring moments in the community organizations where she volunteers, camera is her comrade. Born in Senegal, where she is well known in social agencies and youth movements,

whatever she does, her focus never strays from the human being. Léonie arrived in Canada in 2014, earning a master's in international administration from ENAP in Québec City. In 2017, as a young mom, she set up her communications and events management agency, with a focus on photography, and a special interest in SMEs on a tight budget. She is currently preparing a photo exhibition on victims of domestic violence.



**MARIE-CHANTAL BAGUIA,**  
**Orléans, ON**

**Promoting the colours of Africa  
through communications**

A seasoned communicator with years of experience, Marie-Chantal Baguia is also a very original militant, as the founder of Machab Design. The company was set up to help women decorate their homes in rich colours with hand-made accessories using African cloth to create a cultural oasis in their lives. Marie-Chantal has a master's in public communications, with a concentration in public relations, from Université Laval. She has also written a book about youth, published by Éditions Vents d'Ouest in Gatineau in 2018



**MIKAËLLA CÉLESTIN,**  
**Orléans, ON**

**A pioneer in trichology**

Mikaëlla Celestin, of Haitian origins and proud of it, is a pioneer in the field of trichology in Canada. She is the first black woman to open a clinic and to offer services in this area. In the space of only 3 years, she has made a difference in the lives of hundreds of people struggling with hair loss. Her work has been widely recognized, including being nominated for two consecutive years by Faces Magazine as CEO of the year with the best customer service. Since opening her clinic, she has raised funds for cancer patients. In 2019, she opened two more businesses: The Fresh Mango, a healthy eatery, and the Ottawa Wellness Spa.



**ROSE NAPOLÉON, Montréal, QC**  
**A photographer crazy about digital communication**

If Rose Napoléon has anything mastered, that would be digital communication. This former blogger honed her skills through digital strategies and hosting online communities, among other things through her company, Napoléon Communications.

She has trained as an ASP in startups and has a certificate in digital and social media communication from UQAM, and to round it all out, an unconditional love for photography, which she puts to great use in her work.



**STÉPHANIE GUINGANÉ,**  
**Gatineau, QC**

**A passion for learning**

It all started in community centres. That was where Stéphanie Guingané first got the chance to hone her expertise and active listening skills with youth and underprivileged people. Later on, with a DCS in criminal justice and social

integration, she focused on facilitation and awareness to help youth at risk. Dynamic, multi-talented and with a passion for learning, Stéphanie did not think twice about returning to school to study Web design and marketing. She ended up setting up her own company, specializing in Web development, marketing and computer support, offering Web administration classes to her clients to enable them to take charge of their own Web content.



## CATEGORY: POLITICS AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

### **ANNE MOREAU, Ottawa, ON**

#### **An unwavering commitment to social justice**

A recent graduate from the University of Ottawa, Anne Moreau is heavily involved in the fight against sexual violence with Students for Consent Culture Canada. She is committed to helping women of colour achieve their independence, as well

as to promoting culturally sensitive feminism. With her passion for creating and maintaining a place for the more marginalized members of the black community, she recently launched UNILEARNAL, a new platform that she believes will help change images and correct negative and inaccurate perceptions of people seen as marginalized. At the same time, Anne hopes to familiarize herself with the legal system in order to pursue her fight for social justice.



### **OLIVE KAMANYANA, Gatineau, QC**

#### **Defender of Canadian values**

A resident of Canada for more than 30 years, Olive Kamanyana is one of those people for whom social and political involvement is second nature. She is a manager with the federal government and a doctoral student at the Université du Québec en Outaouais (UQO), as well as President and Founder of LeaderPOL-Leadership for people of African descent. This tremendously hard worker is involved on all fronts in an effort to provide visibility to the Black communities and to promote the Canadian values of living together. Heavily involved in local politics, she is also the President and founder of the Association des résidents du quartier du Carrefour-de-l'Hôpital, and Vice-President of the Centre local de développement pour la Communauté urbaine de l'Outaouais.



**SANDRA BARANCIRA,**  
**Gatineau, QC**

**Afro-militant 2.0**

With a bachelor's degree in social science, Sandra Barancira is first and foremost an ardent peace activist and devoted afro-feminist. This former member of the collectif de la société civile du Québec, she also set up an observatory of international current affairs that she uses to



raise awareness among social media users about world peace issues in the context of global interconnectedness. In addition to her many other activities, she is a co-founder of the Alliance des Burundais du Canada, and a recipient of Welcoming Ambassador Award from OLIP and the City of Ottawa.



**BIBIANE WANDJI, Ottawa, ON**  
**Entrepreneurship the Black  
woman's way**

Originally from Cameroon, Bibiane Wandji has always been involved in improving the condition of Black women. That commitment never wavered, even after arriving in the land of maple.

In fact it led her to create, in 2018, the

Afro-Entrepreneures du Canada network to provide a reference platform for Black female entrepreneurs in Canada. The platform has grown to a little over active 2,000 members. Ms. Wandji is also a member of Réseau Québécois en Innovation Sociale (Université de Montréal) and has started a research project on social innovation through practices to promote the socio-economic inclusion and civic engagement of Francophone Black women in Ottawa.



## **CÉCILE KAYIJUKA, Regina, SK**

### **A passion for sharing**

After falling in love with Saskatchewan, she was delighted to stay and work on behalf of the French linguistic minority community, women and visible minorities. In essence, everything she sees as the best of the cultural mosaic in the land of maple. From 2017 to 2019, she hosted

several events, including Saskatchewan African Fashion, an annual get-together celebrating Black culture during Black History Month, as well as Canada Day in 2017 and 2018. She chaired the diversity committee of the RCMP's Depot Division. In that capacity, she created platforms for minorities at the Academy to display the beauty of their culture and at the same time educate the public. Cécile Kayijuka has worked for Farm Credit Canada since 2012.

## **LILIANE ULYSSE, Gatineau, QC**

### **An ally of minorities and women**

Since arriving in Canada, Liliane has been a tireless defender of the rights of minorities and women, and has passionately dedicated herself to her community and the city of Gatineau. With her tremendous charisma, Liliane has applied her culture and convictions to community service. She has received numerous awards and recognitions



for her work, including second runner-up to Miss Canada in 2016, and a contender for the prestigious Miss Universe title in 2019. Liliane has worked as a volunteer for more than 20 years, and is currently setting her sights on various production projects to foster the employability of women seeking to re-enter the workforce or society in Gatineau.



**MARIELLE M'BANGHA,**  
**Québec, QC**

**Her mission is fighting for the well-being of immigrant women**

Marielle M'Bangha arrived in Quebec 15 years ago, and has since earned a bachelor's and a master's in social communication from UQTR. Her path and commitment led her to

found, in 2017, the Service de Référence en Périnatalité pour les Femmes Immigrantes de Québec (SRPFIQ), which she currently coordinates. Alongside those activities, she coordinates the Comité Femmes d'ici et d'ailleurs égales en droits under the Ligue des droits et libertés-Section Québec. Marielle M'Bangha recently started reporting on the condition of Black immigrant women on *Dignité noire*, a show on radio CKIA-FM in Québec City. She is also an active member of the newly formed Sisterhood-Québec, a committee of women of African descent. She has written a book of poems entitled *Dhéliel, mon fils, ma chair, mon sang* inspired by the perinatal mourning she underwent following her first pregnancy, to help break the taboo around this reality.

**MARTINE JASON, Ottawa, ON**  
**Intercultural Communicator**

Proud of her roots and ardent Francophone, Martine Jason has been heavily involved in the community since arriving in Canada. Over the years, she has become a diligent leader in Ottawa-Gatineau's francophone Black community. As a



multi-disciplinary community agent, Ms. Jason coordinates socio-economic projects for intercultural communities. A seasoned liaison agent and extraordinary facilitator, she is a superb communicator who manages to create win-win partnerships and strategic alliances through a joint vision with different levels of society, while at the same time serving as a representative before social and government bodies.



**PULCHÉRIE MBOUSSI,**  
**Victoria, BC**

**Cultural ambassador for Africa and  
the Caribbean**

Pulchérie Mboussi came to Canada in the 80s, and has since acquired a solid reputation as a community leader and promoter and defender of the celebration of the rich and varied culture of Africa and

the Caribbean through more and more cultural events and awareness campaigns. It all started in Quebec, where Pulchérie Mboussi has made a name for herself through her creative and innovative approaches to promoting African culture. Ms. Mboussi's lifetime commitment to this path continued when she moved to Victoria, British Columbia, where she founded VACCS (Victorian African and Caribbean Cultural Society) in 2012.

**MURIEL BUMBA BEYA,**  
**Montréal, QC**

**A model for immigrant young  
women**

A legal expert by training, Muriel Beya has always made community volunteer work the focus of her life. After spending some time on the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights in New York, she enhanced her experience by joining the Fondation Canadienne des Droits Humains in Montréal. Deeply involved in her community, she made a name for herself at the Centre d'encadrement des Jeunes Filles Immigrantes as the coordinator of the second day of the symposium on immigrant girls, by helping to draft the symposium report and launching her own business project to serve as model for girls. This turned out to be a prelude to the volunteer work with the Festival international de cinéma Vues d'Afrique for the next five years. She also received the woman of distinction award in 2018 and was named patron of the Salon des Entrepreneurs de la Minorité Visible.





## **PERPÉTUE ADITÉ, Québec, QC**

### **Denouncing social inequalities**

Currently doing her master's in international journalism at Université Laval, Perpétue Mahuclo Adité may be young, but she has plenty of experience when it comes to issues of social inequality. She has already racked up more than 5 years' work in sustainable

development and reducing social inequalities. She is also the ambassador to Canada of Oxfam Québec's C'est pour elle aussi campaign, and president of Un samedi Un village, and NGO that has been involved since June 2018 in supporting rural and underprivileged communities in Benin.

## **SABINE MONPIERRE, Montréal, QC**

### **An exemplary devotee of interculturalism**

A graduate of community development and intercultural relations, Sabine Monpierre is known for her expertise in socio-community issues and the promotion of interculturalism.

Committed to the defence of human rights, she is all too familiar with the challenges faced by refugees and immigrants, and is involved in different consultations and research projects, contributing her expertise to various focus groups. A certified facilitator of Mythes et Réalités en interculturel workshops, a supporter of local democracy and the fight against all forms of exclusion, she contributes-among other things-to discussions about issues of peace and social justice through the Réseau œcuménique Justice et Paix (ROJEP) in an effort to make a tangible contribution to the creation of social justice.





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## **VALÉRIE ASSOI, Ottawa, ON**

### **A mentor to young people**

The first person of African descent to be elected as a trustee on a French-language Catholic school board in Ontario, Valérie Assoi has done a great deal to help valorize students of African descent, striving for equity and inclusion in her school board. Her work helped bring

about the proclamation of the International Decade for People of African Descent. As a mentor to young people, she highlights Black excellence. She is also involved with the Ottawa Women's March, and is on the board of directors of IVTF, an organization that encourages women to get into politics and community work. Ms. Assoi is a 2019 recipient of a Leading Women, Leading Girls Building Communities Recognition Award in Orleans.



## CATEGORY: WOMEN'S ALLY

### **BIENVENU-OLIVIER NTUMBA, Montréal, QC**

#### **A defender of diversity**

Bienvenu-Olivier Ntumba is the epitome of the versatile activist. With a bachelor's degree in communication and a degree in business administration, he is also Vice-President of the Association étudiante du collège La Cité à Ottawa

(2015-2016) and a member of the board of directors of Forum Jeunesse de l'Île de Montréal, with responsibility for the defence of diversity rights. He was elected President of the East Montréal Federal Liberal Association, and is President of OSBL Mwali, a platform dedicated to promoting women's activities and fighting violence against women.



### **BUUMA MAISHA, Ottawa, ON** **Psychotherapist to victims of rape**

A professor and clinical supervisor at Ottawa's Saint Paul University, Buuma Maisha has made it his life's mission to fight sexual violence. His research essentially focuses on sexual violence in wartime and the sexual abuse of children. Buuma Maisha has been a

psychotherapist for the past nine years, helping to prevent the sexual abuse of children and providing counselling for victims of rape, mainly in Canada and in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. He is also very involved as a volunteer in the Communauté Congolaise du Canada d'Ottawa-Gatineau (CCCOG), of which he is the President.



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**JACQUES RENAUD,**  
**Montréal, QC**

**Le Coach Jay !**

Plus connu sous le nom de Coach Jay, Jacques Renaud est le fondateur et copropriétaire du centre Jaytrain Lifestyle Shredding, au sein duquel il est entraîneur le soir, alternant avec des journées d'IT Manager. L'initiative du centre lui a été

inspirée par ses problèmes de surpoids, qui avaient eux-mêmes engendré des crises régulières de panique. Sentant sa santé en danger, Jacques Renaud s'est repris en main. Et depuis 5 ans, le centre Jaytrain Lifestyle Shredding a aidé plus d'une centaine de clients à transformer leur corps et à opter pour un mode de vie sain.



## CATEGORY: SPORT, HEALTH AND WELLNESS

**DANIA VERSAILLES, Ottawa, ON**

**Passionate about health and martial arts**

Born in 1974 in Montréal into a Haitian family, Dania Versailles is a trained nurse. In order to better adapt the skills learned in the classroom to the realities of the front lines, she opted to do home care instead of working in a hospital



as a clinical supervisor. Only later did she discover a passion for teaching staff and students in a clinical setting. In 2015, she won the Leadership Award in Student Mentorship and is a regular special guest in classrooms, where she helps prepare the next generation and conveys her passion for the work. She loves being a mother, and she and her son have won several medals in Taekwondo. They are both preparing for their black belts. She urges all mothers to indulge in that delight...without holding back.



**EMMANUELLA MICHEL,  
Montréal, QC**

**The epitome of female versatility**

A natural leader and entrepreneur, Emmanuella Michel has countless skills to fall back on. She is a counselor and project leader in health, education and independence, and offers consultations in her private clinic and a mental health



counselor through the Cognicorp+ platform. Ms. Michel has received several awards, including the Prix Femme inspirante de Women Included. She has a bachelor's in science and a master's in social administration from Université de Montréal. She is currently studying for her doctorate in educational technology at Université Laval. For 10 years, Ms. Michel ran a group home for young women with light intellectual disabilities, in partnership with the Ministère de Santé et des Services Sociaux and a public organization.



**MARIE-CHRISTINE ADJOBI,  
Gatineau, QC**

**A defender of vulnerable persons**

Dr. Marie-Christine Adjobi is truly dedicated to community engagement. She uses her 15 years of professional experience in public and pediatric medicine in her fight to promote public health and wellness within the

community. Dr. Adjobi is particularly active among the vulnerable population (the sick, women, children, seniors ...) and offers her expertise in coaching to public-sector, private-sector and civil society organizations.



## MARJORIE DURÉ, Gatineau, QC

### Health through and through

A family doctor in Gatineau, Marjorie Duré studied medicine at the Autonomous University of Puebla in Mexico, and certified with the College of Family Physicians of Canada. She is a member of several professional associations in Canada and abroad. Dr. Duré also has a



bachelor's in law from the Université de Montréal, and a special interest in health care law. She is engaged in the fight to inform and raise awareness about the need for a multi-disciplinary and steady management of obesity, which is a growing chronic illness. Dr. Duré speaks fluent French, English, Spanish and Creole.



## NADINE ALPHONSE, Laval, QC

### Sport as a lifestyle

A natural athlete since childhood, Nadine started with figure skating in Laval, which she pursued for 14 years. But as she grew, she had to switch to another sport, and at 19 chose volleyball. After two years, she was recruited by the Université de Montréal, and for the next four years

played in university tournaments across Quebec and Canada. In 2005, she was recruited by Team Canada. In 2010, she took part in world championships. After a successful career at the Olympic and professional levels, in 2013, she became an ambassador for Fillactive, an organization that encourages high school girls to live a health and active life.



## CATEGORY: EDUCATION

### **ABRA AGBOLI, Gatineau, QC**

#### **A volunteer at heart**

Abra arrived in Canada in 2006, and studied public relations. This visionary entrepreneur took the initiative of volunteering with the international sector at La to Cité to help improve the program for international students. Over the years, she was put in charge of projects to

help international students at La Cité settle in. She is currently responsible for the recruitment of international students from west and central Africa.



### **GUÉDELINE DESROSIERS, Montréal, QC**

#### **A committed teacher**

When Guédeline Desrosiers arrived in Montréal at the age of 4, school became a sort of springboard into a world of infinite opportunities. It also helped her discover a vocation: helping young people.

At university, she coordinated the national

YMCA Summer Work Student Exchange. Program. At 23, she got her first teaching contract, and rediscovered her passion for teaching kids. For the past few years, she has been chairing the board of directors of the Association pour la réussite éducative des jeunes. Her unwavering commitment earned her media coverage on International Women's Day. For the past three years, she has been a pedagogical advisor, working tirelessly within the school system.



## VALÉRIE ASSOI, Ottawa, ON

### A mentor to young people

The first person of African descent to be elected as a trustee on a French-language Catholic school board in Ontario, Valérie Assoi has done a great deal to help valorize students of African descent, striving for equity and inclusion in her school board. Her work helped bring about the proclamation of the International Decade for People of African Descent. As a mentor to young people, she highlights Black excellence. She is also involved with the Ottawa Women's March, and is on the board of directors of IVTF, an organization that encourages women to get into politics and community work. Ms. Assoi is a 2019 recipient of a Leading Women, Leading Girls Building Communities Recognition Award in Orleans.





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## CATEGORY: ARTS, MEDIAS AND CULTURE

**CLAUDE-ANDRÉA BONNY,  
Ottawa, ON**

### The friendly host

Since landing in Canada barely two years ago, Claude-Andréa Bonny has been an example of successful integration, getting deeply involved in the Franco-Ontarian community. After earning her bachelor's in literature and philosophy, and a master's in private law, she decided to round out her education with an MBA in India and public relations studies at La Cité in Ottawa. Her undeniable talent as a communicator got her into Rogers TV to host various key events for Ottawa's Francophone community. She is the host of *Entre-nous*, where guests are interviewed in a warm and friendly setting. Claude Andréa was recently honoured with a highly prized but seldom given distinction, the Bernard-Grandmaitre award for newcomers.





## **DJELY TAPA, Montréal, QC**

### **Une ambassadrice de la musique malienne**



Djely Tapa is the daughter of the legendary griot and dancer Djely Bouya Diarra and of Kandia Kouyaté, one of Mali's greatest singers. On the international stage, she praises the Word imbued with the wisdom and vocal art of

griots, emblematic figures of traditional and contemporary Malian society, whose origins have been traced back as far as the Manding Empire in the 13th century. When Djely Tapa moved to Canada, it did not take her long to integrate into the local scene. In February 2019, Djely Tapa released her first album, Barokan. This reflection of her musical identity is a vibrant tribute to women and African culture. With her high-pitched voice, incandescent flow and elegant movements, Djely Tapa transports her audience through Sahelian, blues and electro sounds. In May 2019, Djely Tapa was named Révélation Radio-Canada in world music.

## **DJENNIE LAGUERRE, Toronto, ON**

### **Madame Bonheur for the kids**

Actress, author and storyteller Djennie Laguerre graduated from the Stella Adler Acting Conservatory (New York) and the University of Ottawa (B.A. in theatre and literature). She has a range of creations to her credit, including Manman la mer



(which she co-wrote with Carline Zamar and Edwige Jean-Pierre), Le malade imaginaire, and Les Zinspirés. A winner of the Spotlight Award at the SummerWorks Festival in 2008, kids know her as Madame Bonheur from TFO.



## **OMAYRA ISSA, Saskatoon, SK**

### **A storyteller at heart**

Storytelling is her signature brand. But she is also an outstanding interviewer and host. Omayra really is a citizen of the world. Born in Morocco, she grew up in Niger, mastering five languages. Based in Saskatchewan, where she works for Radio-Canada/CBC, she has received

several awards and nominations: Prix de la personne d'origine africaine francophone s'étant distinguée au sein de la communauté francophone à Saskatchewan in 2019, nomination for the Community Building Award at the YWCA's Women of Distinction Gala, and nomination as one of the 100 Black women to watch in Canada. This year, she was selected from among some 50 young leaders around the world for leadership training offered by the Policy Center for the New South, in Morocco.

## **SAGINE SÉMAJUSTE, Toronto, ON**

### **An artist through and through**

With her captivating smile and unshakable self-confidence, Sagine Sémajuste is one of those actresses who immediately catches your attention. A graduate of the American Musical and Dramatic Academy (AMDA) theatre program, Sagine is not

only successful actress, but also a dancer trained in classical ballet, jazz and hip hop. After earning her diploma from the AMDA, she returned to Toronto, where she applied her musical and theatre background to acting. She has done ads for Loblaws, Sleeman, Gain, Shoppers Drug Mart and Ford, and has several parts in film and TV.





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**SCHELBY JEAN-BAPTISTE,  
Montréal, QC**

**Crazy about comedy**

It is simply one of those that shine on stage or, failing that, shatters the screen. Schelby Jean-Baptiste trained in theatre performance at Concordia University and has had a very eclectic career as an actress.

Whether on the stage, on TV sets, in web series or in movies, his talent has spanned the genres. As proof, her nomination for Best Actress of the Year at the 2019 Dtnastie Gala. She is also co-founder of the Elles collective, a photo series project bringing together black women in the same field.



## CATEGORY: PERSON OF THE YEAR

### **ASSIATOU DIALLO, Toronto, ON**

#### **At the bedside of seniors and single mothers**



Born in the west African country of Guinea, Assiatou Diallo, founded TAAB Commercial Cleaning with a social vision of entrepreneurship. Part of her company is a non-profit social enterprise that offers support services to old people and

single mothers. Assiatou is an entrepreneur, mother, committed feminist and generous soul. She is actively involved in initiatives to support those around her. She is dedicated to helping others, to helping women achieve independence and to remaining active in her community. In 2013, she was recognized by the YWCA for her success, and gave the opening address at the YWCA Women of Distinctions Awards, in recognition of her positivity and incredible perseverance. In 2017, she was nominated by the Canada International Black Women Event (CIBWE) as one of the 100 Black Women to Watch. In 2019, she was elected President of MOFIF (Mouvement ontarien des femmes immigrantes francophones). Her inspiring story is exhibited at the Canadian Museum of Immigration in Halifax, to inspire others to immigrate to Canada.



## MARIE-MICHÈLE VOLCY, Laval, QC

### A linguist supporting the arts

Trained at the Conservatoire national d'art dramatique d'Haïti, Marie-Michèle Amédée Volcy launched her professional career in public speaking at Radio Port-au-Prince, later moving to Radio Haïti and Radio Nouveau-Monde. She moved to

Quebec in 1971, and continued her education, getting a master's in linguistics at the Université de Montréal in 1983. But it's in the artistic and cultural field that she has made her name over the past 40 plus years, in both the Quebec and Haitian artistic communities, as an actress, narrator and storyteller.

## MARJORIE DURÉ, Gatineau, QC

### Health through and through

A family doctor in Gatineau, Marjorie Duré studied medicine at the Autonomous University of Puebla in Mexico, and certified with the College of Family Physicians of Canada. She is a member of several professional associations in Canada and abroad. Dr. Duré also has a

bachelor's in law from the Université de Montréal, and a special interest in health care law. She is engaged in the fight to inform and raise awareness about the need for a multi-disciplinary and steady management of obesity, which is a growing chronic illness. Dr. Duré speaks fluent French, English, Spanish and Creole.





**YARDLY KAVANAGH,  
Montréal, QC**

**Artist to the core**

In an effort to overcome her shyness, Yardly Kavanagh turned to art to express herself. She ended up finding her vocation in writing and journalism. First at Radio centre-ville, then at Radio Canada, TV5, CBC, RCI,

TVA, Télé Québec, Vox ...and the list goes on. Known and recognized around the world, one of her shows, Regards d'Afrique, was aired live from Africa for three years in different languages.

Multi-talented, Yardly Kavanagh is a single mother, as well as an actress, translator and author. As an activist dedicated to defending the rights of the less fortunate, refugees, Haitians in the Dominican Republic, women and men in her community, she is a member of "Elles - Le Collectif" a group of 20 Black women in the arts.

# Partners of the 12<sup>th</sup> edition

For the first time in its history, RAF will recognize the excellence of Black Francophone and francophile girls and women right across the country, and will do so in Canada's two official languages. It has been possible thanks to the Bilingual Ottawa program, managed by ACFO Ottawa and funded by the Government of Canada , and La Nouvelle Scène Gilles Desjardins.

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LA NOUVELLE SCÈNE  
- Gilles Desjardins -

# Members of the jury

## **Léonie Tchatat**

**Founder and Executive Director at La Passerelle-I.D.E**

Léonie Tchatat, founder and director of La Passerelle-I.D.E., former human rights founder, founded more than 25 years ago, came to Canada as a student in the years 1990.

Today a Canadian citizen, this Franco-Ontarian of Cameroonian origin continues the mission she set for herself: to build lasting bridges between the host society and the Francophone immigrant communities that have recently arrived in Canada. She founded La Passerelle-I.D.E., which operates locally, provincially, nationally and internationally with an office in Paris since 2014. La Passerelle-I.D.E. is a leader in the field of human capital development and entrepreneurship of Francophone immigrants and visible minorities in Canada.



## **Yvette Ashiri**

**Municipal Councillor Candidate, activist and community leader**

Yvette Yendé-Ashiri is a wife and mother in the Cumberland District municipal election nomination. Mrs. Ashiri has dedicated her life to the improvement of the living conditions

of the human person and the development of women and girls.



## **Fernand Ackey**

### **Radio host and consultant in communications**

Passionate about culture and communications, Fernand-Bienvenue Ackey is a journalist, artist manager, presenter, producer, consultant and president of an international company,



a not-for-profit corporation that works to bring communities closer together and president of the consulting firm Productions Akwaaba. He has held the positions of Director of Francophone Music and Director of Promotions at CHUO FM 89.1 Radio Ottawa Inc., journalist and host of CHOQ FM Radio Toronto, responsible for the integration through the arts program and Director of Programs at Radio Cité.

# RAF's Board of Directors

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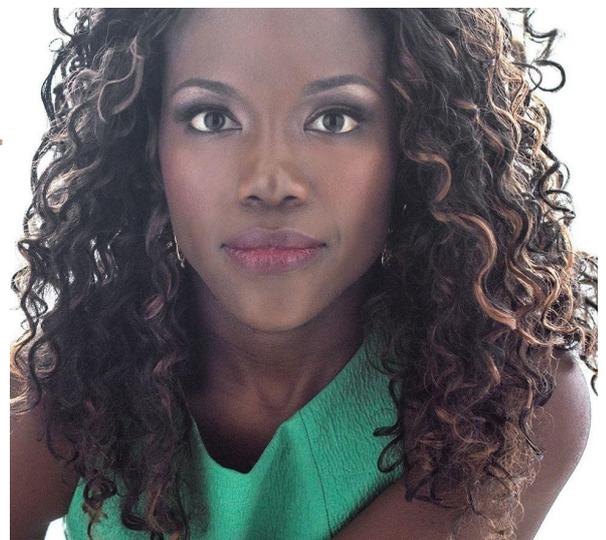
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