



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

OHS Best Article or Paper Winner: “Who Used to Run the UNIA Hall’: Black Canadian Women’s Leadership of Toronto Division 21, 1919–1939”

The Ontario Historical Society is pleased to present the 2025 Best Article or Paper Award, which recognizes an outstanding article, cognate paper, or thesis on the history of Ontario, to Dr. Melissa N. Shaw, for her article: “Who Used to Run the UNIA Hall’: Black Canadian Women’s Leadership of Toronto Division 21, 1919–1939.” Shaw’s article, published in the Spring 2024 issue of *The Journal of African American History*, highlights the leadership of Black Canadian women in Toronto’s Division 21 UNIA Hall, showcasing their vital role in racial pride and community building. Skillfully written and meticulously researched, it draws on primary and archival materials, as well as oral histories, to demonstrate the intraracial sociopolitical work of Black women in Toronto who maintained their division’s fiscal health, fostered racial solidarity, and built a collective identity among Black youth. Dr. Shaw’s article is an excellent piece of scholarship that enhances our awareness of Ontario’s diverse history. The Awards Committee congratulates Dr. Melissa N. Shaw, winner of the 2025 OHS Best Article or Paper Award.



The OHS Best Article or Paper Award was presented at the 2025 OHS Awards Ceremony on December 6, 2025 at the Historic John McKenzie House in Willowdale, Toronto, Ontario. Left to right: OHS Executive Director Daniel Dishaw, Best Article Award Winner Dr. Melissa N. Shaw, and Co-Chair of the OHS Awards Committee Hans Bathija.

Founded in 1888, the Ontario Historical Society is a non-profit corporation and registered charity dedicated to the preservation and celebration of Ontario’s history for people of all ages and cultural backgrounds. To learn more about the OHS Awards Program, or to submit a nomination, please visit ontariohistoricalsociety.ca/awards/ or contact the Society’s offices by telephone or e-mail.

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