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**By Doug Draper**

## **Wilma Morrison.**

This 81-year-old Niagara Falls, Ontario resident has invested years of her life, out of her love for history and her heritage, documenting Black history ... leading force in restoring the more than century and a half year old Nathaniel Dett Memorial Church ... in Niagara Falls – also known as the British Methodist Episcopal Church and one of the oldest surviving Black churches on the Ontario side of our greater Niagara region.



**Niagara Falls MPP Kim Craiton with Wilma Morrison during Order of Ontario ceremonies.**

Order of Ontario Award January 27, 2014

The Lieutenant-Governor's Ontario Heritage Award

The Niagara Falls Arts and Culture Wall of Fame.

The Hamilton Black History Committee Award of Merit.

“Mrs. Black History of Niagara,”

Honourary Doctorate Degree, Brock University, Wilma Morrison

By [John Law](#), Niagara Falls Review , Tuesday, January 25, 2011 12:00:00 EST AM

Morrison's resume leaves no doubt why she deserves it. For more than half her life, she has brought Niagara's black history to the forefront, speaking whenever and wherever invited.

In the '90s, she was the key figure in saving the BME church ... where many former slaves would congregate after fleeing the U.S. via Niagara's Underground Railroad. The 175-year-old building was declared a heritage site in 2000.

"The woman across the road came and told me she wanted to buy it, tear it down and build a house for her son," she recalls. "It's part of our heritage. It's the only thing left in town that says we've been here, had a presence here, and helped to build a community for over 100 years.

"These are the things I think are important. A lot of people don't."

Her tireless work as a black history advocate has earned Morrison just about every community award Niagara Falls has to offer. Now, it's the province's turn to recognize her.

She helped establish the Norval Johnson Library inside the BME Church. It's the region's most thorough collection of black history and literature.

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