



## **Black Opportunity Fund Appoints Board of Directors and Executive Director**

### **Transition to Permanent Governance Structure Milestone in BOF History**

TORONTO, ONTARIO, March 17, 2021—Black Opportunity Fund (BOF), a dynamic partnership involving businesses, philanthropists, foundations, and the Black community, has appointed its inaugural Board of Directors in addition to naming Craig Wellington as the Executive Director of the organization. The Black Opportunity Fund was founded in 2020 to enable the Black community to access a pool of long-term funds to help combat the impact of systemic anti-Black racism and promote social and economic empowerment across Canada.

BOF's new, permanent Board of Directors is comprised of 19 individuals from across Canada who have taken up the challenge of operating the ambitious, Black-led development fund. With a broad range of expertise across multiple sectors, the new Board includes members of BOF's initial Steering Committee as well as a range of additional accomplished individuals dedicated to creating opportunities for Black communities.

"This is the next step in Black Opportunity Fund's development," said co-founder and newly appointed Chair of the Board, Ray Williams, a Managing Director and vice-chairman at National Bank. "In less than a year, we've established important relationships with many of our community leaders across the country, as well as with governments and private sector funders. We're proud to also announce the appointment of our Executive Director, Craig Wellington. It gives me great pleasure to welcome Craig and the inaugural Board members as we transition forward from the initial Steering Committee into a full governance structure."

"Black Opportunity Fund is exactly what is needed to make meaningful and lasting change for our Black communities across Canada," added Craig Wellington. "I'm looking forward to working with the whole team to build our capital pool and to distribute funds to community organizations and advocates for Black advancement and Black entrepreneurship. There's been an incredible response to BOF's work in the past year and I'm excited to be part of it."

Craig Wellington brings years of experience as a Community Organizer and leading executive, advising public and private sector firms on strategic planning, marketing and business development, as well as diversity and inclusion strategies. Craig has decades of experience working with organizations to address systemic bias in the criminal justice and education systems. He is a member of the City of Mississauga Mayor's Black Caucus, an advisory board member of the Black Community Action Network (BCAN) of Peel Region, as well as a former member of the Toronto Chief of Police's Black Community Consultative Committee. Craig brings his vision and leadership to the organization and will continue to grow the BOF's investment fund and establish its first set of grants and low-interest loans to promote Black-led initiatives by the end of 2021.



<b>Black Opportunity Fund – Inaugural Board of Directors</b>		
Mark Attanasio, Ontario	Eleanor McIntosh, Ontario	Dr. Bukola Salami, Alberta
Lori-Ann Beausoleil, Ontario	Dennis Mitchell, Ontario	Dr. Ato Sekyi-Otu, Ontario
Charmaine Crooks, British Columbia	Vyara Ndejuru, Quebec	Rustum Southwell, Nova Scotia
Charmain Emerson, Ontario	Chima Nkemdirim, Alberta	Wils Théagène, Quebec
Madeleine Fequiere, Quebec	Lekan Olawoye, Ontario	Donna Walwyn, Ontario
Colin Lynch, Ontario	Jaqui Parchment, Ontario	Ray Williams, Ontario
Velma McColl, Ontario		

***The inaugural Board will be supplemented in the months ahead to ensure diversity, skills and regional representation objectives are met.***

The new Board met on Monday, March 15, for a review of the BOF accomplishments to date, and to discuss the governance transition of the Steering Committee to the inaugural board of directors.

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#### **About the Black Opportunity Fund**

*In 2020, a diverse team of Black Canadians, from around the country, came together to create a new way to serve and empower Black communities. They established the Black Opportunity Fund (BOF) – with an ambitious goal of raising \$1.5 billion in 10 years – to fund Black-led initiatives.*

*Black Opportunity Fund will be a catalyst to dismantle anti-Black racism by supporting the social, cultural and economic changes required to advance diversity and inclusion at all levels in Canada’s institutions, governments, and businesses.*

*The Black Opportunity Fund is a new approach, leveraging partnerships between Black communities, government, corporations, philanthropic foundations, and individuals to drive a historic transformation of Canada’s Black communities.*

[www.blackopportunityfund.ca](http://www.blackopportunityfund.ca)

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