
Remembering Barbara Howard

Barbara Howard was born in Vancouver in 1920.

She loved to run fast. At 17, she became the first Black woman to race for Canada. She won silver and bronze medals at the 1938 British Empire Games in Australia.

Howard wanted to race in the Olympics, but the Second World War stopped the Games. She gave up racing.

Helping others

After high school, Howard trained to be a teacher. In 1941, she made history again when she became Vancouver's first Black teacher. She taught gym for 43 years.



This is Barbara Howard.

In 1959, Howard graduated from the University of British Columbia with a Bachelor of Education degree.

Howard cared about people. During the war, the Canadian government made Japanese families move to camps. To help them, she visited and held dances.

In her '90s, she stayed busy. She ran programs for children. She helped seniors and immigrants at her church.

Howard won many awards, including a place in Canada's Sports Hall of Fame.

She died in 2017. She was 96 years old.

Vancouver renamed a park "Barbara Howard Plaza" to remember her.

Adapted from The Canadian Encyclopedia and CBC News • Photo: Wikimedia Commons/James Skitt Mathews