

# My Hero, Violet King

By Zhizhi Gao

There were many problems in Canada in the past. One problem was that Japanese, Chinese, and Black Canadians were not treated the same way as white Canadians. For example, they had to work harder to get a job. For Black Canadians, the government didn't want them farming in Canada, even though the government told people before that they had extra land and wanted farmers. But the government only wanted white people farming. Another problem was that Black Canadians were not allowed in motels.

The Black Canadians probably felt upset and treated like they were not human. When you're treated differently and not allowed to do the same things white people get to do, you will feel very disappointed and mad. Unfairness from the government and white citizens makes racism and inequality worse. This is like when the white government took the First Nation people's children away to make them learn white traditions at a white residential school. The First Nations adults' and children's brains got traumatized.

Sadly, women were not treated equally either during that time. It was very hard for women to get a higher level job. One example is that in Violet King's law class of 142 people, there were only 3 women. They probably felt self-conscious because there were only three of them. If the others are all men and there are only a few of you, you stand out. It also probably means that the law school didn't really value women as much as men.

If there were someone to help solve these race and gender issues, Violet King would be that person. She was a Black Canadian and a woman, so she wanted to help these groups. People like King had to work triply hard: as a lawyer, as a woman, and as a Black Canadian.

In 1954, she became the first black woman to practice law in Canada. Afterwards, she worked for the Citizenship and Immigration Department. When King was looking for a job, she wasn't looking for any job, she was looking for this specific job because she wanted to help people. In this job, she worked for the government to help organizations assist people. She got to know a lot of organizations.

More people migrated from other parts of the world to Canada, so King had more work to do because there were additional people. She had to organize the people needed to teach immigrants to speak English or French and to help them have more friends because they just moved to Canada. The people she was helping were all different. She was already skilled with helping people of different backgrounds,

cultures, and skin colors because when she was a lawyer, in her spare time, she worked with young people who were all different too. So she moved on to helping more people with different backgrounds when she was working for the government.

At the United Nations Internship Course, she taught a class to government workers about how women were doing in the world. She was one of two women teaching out of thirty people. This shows the U.N. needs to include women as teachers more.

In 1976, she was the first woman appointed to an executive position with the national YMCA in the United States. This meant she was in a top level position in the YMCA, which didn't have a woman in their top level positions before. So she got to decide what the organization did and got to lead it. It's important to have a woman in higher level positions so that women will have the rules and programs that they want to have.

King was the first woman to do many things. She showed that anyone can do anything. How King grew up enabled her to help understand race and gender issues. King had ancestors who were black settlers. King's father's parents came to Canada because they wanted to become farmers. The white government didn't expect black people to come to Canada. They said to black people that only one thousand of them were allowed to come to Canada. So it was very hard for them. Later, King's father worked as a car porter and her mother was a seamstress. Her father had to work as a car porter because he had no other choice as a black person. Her brother protested that black people were not allowed in motels, even just for a rest or for a break. He told the government that the motel rule was unfair. His protesting showed that the family was very determined to make rules right. Seeing what her family was doing, King wanted to make things more fair too.

When I see or hear that people are not being treated equally, I feel very mad. I feel like I want to go back in time and change everything. We cannot change the past, but we can change the future by looking at the past.

I want to help people like Violet King did. My mom and I talked to the staff of the Kids Helping Kids - Alberta Children's Hospital Foundation. I started a fund to donate books, board and card games, play dough, and gift cards to the patients and their siblings. They might be feeling worried because they or their sibling are sick. For the fund, I went to the Bottle Depot with four bags of bottles and cans to recycle and I used the money to buy books to donate. For my next birthday, I will ask the kids attending my party to give me things to donate to the Children's Hospital if they want to. Also, I am writing a comic book called Sophie's World, which will hopefully be published in a year. I decided that 20% of the money the book makes will go to charity.

Violet King lived a life of service to other people because she wanted to help them. It inspires me to help people also.



### My Design Notes and Inspiration

First, I traced by hand Violet King's face and body from a picture I got online, then put it in a Procreate program. In the online picture, King has a glow of warmth, so I put some warm colors in my picture. For people who don't know Violet King, they can feel warm because they see the warm colors around her. Second, I gave her a pink outline to make her stand out, so people could see her more. Then I put the My Hero layer behind her body because sometimes you see that in other artwork and it looks cool. Finally, we usually put the name above the head, but what Violet King did came from her heart, so I put the words next to her heart.

### Bibliography Graphic Organizer

Use this form to help you cite all the resources your use

Author	Date Published (year)	Title (of book, magazine, website, etc.)	Website address
	1954	Miss Violet King Makes History In Legal Circles	
Teen Nolan	1958	Miss Violet King Is Credit To City	
	May 1, (year printed unclear)	Miss Violet King	
Eva Reid	1961	Home on Vacation	
	1963	Former Calgary Lawyer Moves To New U.S. Job	
Brian Brennan	1996	Prairie Roots Calgary-born Violet King Henry the first black women to practice law in Canada	

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Author	Date Published (year)	Title (of book, magazine, website, etc.)	Website address
		Alberta Historical Champions	albertachampions.org/champions/
	2017	The Canadian Encyclopedia: Violet King	thecanadianencyclopedia.ca
		Violet King: The Professional Trailblazer who broke Barriers	youtube.be/5P <sub>x</sub> OXmPjwYw?si=tL1CKj6zKE <sub>n</sub> 370uH