

Community comes together to celebrate Retired Captain Kevin Junor

By **Riley Murphy**

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

'Give Me My Flowers While I Yet Live' rang true this weekend as dozens of community members, friends, and family came together to celebrate and honour Kevin Junor at North Peel Community Church in Caledon.

Junor is not only a community champion in Caledon in numerous ways, but also in all the communities he is part of and represents.

Born in Birmingham, England, Junor moved to Jamaica to join his grandparents and other family members.

When he was 10, he joined his mother in Toronto.

Now, decades later, Junor and his family have been Caledon residents for over 20 years.

But before that, in 1980, Junor joined the Canadian Forces Reserves as an infantry soldier in the Toronto Scottish Regiment.

He was a chief warrant officer in 1998 and was then appointed to the position of Regimental Sgt. Major.

He retired from the military in 2023.

Junor was the first Black Regimental Sgt. Major with the Toronto Scottish Regiment, and a Captain in Queen's Own Rifles of Canada.

He was appointed to the Order of Ontario in 2024.

He also works with the Jamaica Diaspora Crime Intervention and Prevention Task Force.

Junor is also credited with being instrumental in the recognition of the work of the No. 2 Construction Battalion.

He served as a member of the committee that advised the federal government on crafting an apology to the descendants and relatives of the Black soldiers.

With all these accolades, Junor can also now and then be seen clearing snow from the North Peel Community Church parking lot.

After moving to Caledon, Junor and his family joined North Peel Community Church, where he is currently a District Elder.

The same community that came to celebrate him this past weekend,

At the special Sunday Service, Andrea Kelly-Brown joked that Junor must have more than 24 hours in a day to do all that he does.

She says not only does he serve at North Peel Community Church, but he also delegates to local governments, works with non-profits, and mentors individuals through G.E.T. Outreach Works.

During the service, there were numerous tributes to Junor from family, friends, and other members of North Peel Community Church, as well as members from Caledon Council, in attendance were Councillors Cosimo Napoli, Christina Early, Mario Russo, and Dave Sheen.

“What Kevin does in our community demonstrates what we all should strive to do, is to actually be a good brother, sister, father, neighbor, and all of the above, and that's what he does on a daily basis,” said Russo. “We really welcome and thank you for all that you do in our community, in Caledon. As you said, not just in Caledon, in Ontario, in Canada, and more importantly, on Earth.”

Early added Junor has been instrumental in Caledon, including his push for Black History Month.

“We are so fortunate in the Town of Caledon to have Kevin, who represents so well,” she says.

Tributes also came forward from individuals, including his niece.

“You've made this world better in your own way. Not just for those that you touch, those that you're connected to,” she says. “Even for me.”

Alethia O'Hara-Stephenson is both the president and founder of the Dufferin County Canadian Black Association, and also an Upper Grand District School Board trustee and Vice-Chair. She spoke on Junor's accomplishments since they met six years ago.

She reflected on meeting him at the Museum of Dufferin, when they were, at the time, embarking on an initiative to launch Black History Month, Junor was there with G.E.T. Outreach Works.

“That was the beginning of a steadfast relationship with him,” said O'Hara-Stephenson. “That moment led to mentorship sessions, collaborations between Dufferin County Canadian Black Association, and the broader community, collaboration with G.E.T. Outreach Works.”

“Captain Junor, you are an incredible trailblazer to our community, a legacy builder, and I'm so honored to be able to stand here in the presence with your family and your congregation to celebrate you and honor you.”

Pastor Claudette Kelly added that she's been able to watch Junor grow into who he is today, adding that he has done so much.

“Very seldom am I speechless,” said Junor, looking at the congregation, his friends, and family gathered around him that day.

“You speak of a number of hours in the day. It's individuals like my wife and daughter and granddaughter and my son, they're the ones that give up the most hours, so that I can do some of the things that I do,” he added.

Junor says he can do what he does because “I'm blessed to be a blessing.”

He thought back to his mother, who has passed, and referenced the quote, “If I can help somebody as I pass along, then my merits shall not be in vain.”

“That's what drives me as I continue to serve.”