
Lifetime Achievement Awards for Bristol Bus Boycott Pioneers

[26 April 2024]: Two of the original Bristol Bus Boycott campaigners, Guy Reid-Bailey OBE and Barbara Dettering, were yesterday recognised by equality charity Diversity UK with Lifetime Achievement Awards for their outstanding efforts in improving race equality in Britain. The charity worked in association with Curiosity UnLtd, independent UK law firm Burges Salmon and ethical bank Triodos Bank, to honour the anniversary of the Bristol Bus Boycott and its legacy by bringing the annual Paul Stephenson Lecture on race equality to its ancestral home city of Bristol for the first time on Thursday 25 April 2024.

Ramesh Vala CBE, Deputy Chair of Diversity UK, said in his citation, "*Diversity UK wishes to recognise Guy Reid-Bailey OBE for his role in the original Bristol Bus Boycott of 1963 and for his lifetime dedication to supporting the African-Caribbean community in Britain. We are very grateful to Guy. Although he didn't get the job with the Bristol Bus Company - a Sikh man called Raghbir Singh became the first non-white person to work on the buses in Bristol - it proves that protest does pave the way for others. Your sacrifice and continuous campaigning for what is 'right' since 1963 has opened doors for countless others just like you and me to walk through. In Hindu philosophy we call this lighting the path for others to follow and all I can say is that you have emblazoned this path throughout your life. Congratulations!*"

Presenting the second award to Barbara Dettering, **Ramesh Vala CBE** said "*I would like to say a heartfelt 'Thank you' to Barbara Dettering and we would like to honour her with a Lifetime Achievement Award in recognition of her tireless work during the Bristol Bus Boycott and her endeavours in founding the St Pauls Carnival and for her lifelong support of communities in Bristol. Of her time as one of the original Bristol Bus Boycott campaigners, she said she was one of the 'silent diggers' in the background, but, as everyone knows it takes courage, stamina and selflessness to continue supporting and always being there as someone to be relied upon for sympathy, comfort, reassurance and kindness. In his speech advocating for integrated schools, Dr King said 'commit yourself to the noble struggle for equal rights. You will make a better person of yourself, a greater nation of your country, and a finer world to live in'. Barbara, all I can say is that you have committed yourself throughout your life and made it a finer world for us all to live in. Many congratulations!*"

About the Paul Stephenson Lecture on race equality

The Paul Stephenson Lecture 2024 is part of the second year of the Big Bristol Bus Boycott Takeover from April 22nd to May 6th. This lecture is the crowning jewel in a citywide two week-long programme of events commemorating when the Bristol Bus Boycott began sixty years ago. Launched by equality charity Diversity UK at the Speaker's House at the House of Commons in 2016, the lecture is eponymous with Dr Paul Stephenson OBE, one of the original Bristol Bus Boycott campaigners and explores contemporary race equality campaigns. Previous esteemed speakers who have given the Paul Stephenson Lecture have included British politician and campaigner, Lord Simon Woolley, activist Patrick Vernon OBE, entrepreneur and educational philanthropist, Tom Ilube CBE, leading academic, Professor Marcia Wilson and geoscientist Christopher Jackson, among others.

For a comprehensive overview about the #PaulStephensonLecture, visit [Diversity UK](#)
#DiversityChampion #raceequality #equality #diversity #inclusion

Notes for Editors:

Images: <https://bit.ly/4aWKBZB>

About Dr Paul Stephenson OBE: Paul Stephenson, OBE, is a community worker, activist, and long-time campaigner for civil rights for the British African-Caribbean community in Bristol, England. As a young social worker, in April 1963, Stephenson led a boycott of the Bristol Omnibus Company, protesting its refusal to employ Black or Asian drivers or conductors. In August 1963, the day the Boycott defeated the 'Colour Bar', Martin Luther King gave his iconic 'I Have a Dream' speech. In 1964, Stephenson achieved national fame when he refused to leave a public house until he was served, resulting in a trial for failing to leave licensed premises. His campaigns were instrumental in paving the way for the first Race Relations Act in 1965. Paul Stephenson is a Freeman of the City of Bristol and was awarded an OBE in 2009. In July 2014, Mr Stephenson was awarded an honorary degree (Doctor of Law) by the University of Bristol "for his dedication to fighting for equality and civil rights across Bristol and around the world for over 60 years". He was honoured with the Diversity UK Lifetime Achievement Award in 2016.

About Guy Reid-Bailey OBE: Guy Reid-Bailey OBE helped overturn a ban by Bristol Omnibus Company on employing black and Asian drivers and conductors. Guy arrived in Bristol in 1961, aged 16, after moving from Jamaica. In 1963, having been inspired by the activism of Rosa Parks in the US, a group of young West Indian men in Bristol formed an action group to tackle the issue. They were Roy Hackett, Owen Henry, Audley Evans and Prince Brown - and they soon joined forces with Bristol's first black youth officer Paul Stephenson who became their spokesman. Paul set up a test case, arranging a job interview at the firm for a young warehouseman, Guy Bailey. When the company discovered he was West Indian, they cancelled the interview. The activists then held a press conference declaring a boycott of the city's buses with black and Asian people across the city refusing to use buses, with many white people supporting them throughout the four-month campaign. The Bristol Bus Boycott began on 30 April, 1963 and ended on 28 August that year - the same day as Martin Luther King delivered his iconic I Have a Dream speech. The boycott not only led to policy being overturned but also helped bring about the Race Relations Act of 1965 - which banned all discrimination in the workplace - by drawing national attention to racism in the UK.

About Barbara Dettering: As well as the Bristol Bus Boycott of 1963, marches and rallies were also staged, with the protests attracting national attention and highlighting the broader issue of racism in the UK. Barbara Dettering worked as a social worker in Bristol and has spent most of her life influencing young children to overcome prejudices and strive to achieve their dreams. She is one of the founders of St Pauls Carnival and played an important role in the Bristol Bus Boycott campaign. She worked tirelessly behind the scenes during the boycott, supporting the men spearheading the campaign. She describes herself as one of the "silent diggers", working away in the background to get her point across and change the lives of future generations. Barbara Dettering was born in British Guyana in 1939. She moved to Bristol in 1961. She has changed the lives of many people in the city as an activist, a civil rights pioneer and as one of the founders of the St Pauls Carnival. She is a key member of Bristol West Indian Parents and Friend Association and The Malcolm X elders Forum.

About Curiosity UnLtd: Curiosity UnLtd is an award-winning, Bristol-based think-and-do-tank. It co-creates racial and social justice adventures with corporate, civic, and community changemakers. Curiosity UnLtd is working towards transforming Bristol from the 7th worst to the best UK city for people of colour. <https://www.curiosityunltd.com/>

About Diversity UK: Diversity UK is an equality charity that aims to research, advocate and promote ideas for improving diversity and inclusion in Britain. It is an evidence-based initiative that seeks to influence policy, enhance civic engagement, and improve the perception of the minority ethnic community in Britain. Diversity UK aims to advance the public's education in diversity and inclusion in the workplace by conducting research for the public benefit and publishing valuable results. <https://diversityuk.org/>

About Ramesh Vala CBE, Deputy Chair, Diversity UK: Ramesh Vala CBE is a law and business consultant and Deputy Chair of equality charity Diversity UK. Graduating from the London School of Economics, Ramesh went on to achieve a distinction in his finals at Lancaster Gate College of Law. He became a partner within eighteen months of qualification and soon became one of very few Asian equity partners in a top UK law firm. In his personal life, he is dedicated to improving the lives of those less fortunate by fundraising for various charities. In 2001, Ramesh was appointed an OBE for his charitable work and in 2022, he was honoured with a CBE in recognition of his services to the community and to the Covid-19 Response.

About Burges Salmon: Based in Bristol, Burges Salmon is a market-leading independent UK law firm providing the best proposition for its people and clients. By focusing on the markets and areas of expertise, they have extensive knowledge and experience to achieve the best outcomes for their clients, who range from large organisations, entrepreneurial businesses and public sector bodies to individuals, families, and their global wealth. <https://www.burges-salmon.com/>

Roxanne Ratcliff, Head of Corporate Responsibility at Burges Salmon said, "It's an honour and a privilege for our firm to be hosting the 9th Paul Stephenson Lecture, taking place for the first time in Bristol, the home of the UK's first Bus Boycott, an event that will forever remain in history with the brave actions of those involved paving the way for the Race Relations Act 1965, the UK's first-ever anti-racist law.

"For many years, Burges Salmon has been campaigning to broaden access to the legal profession in a bid to better reflect the diverse make-up of the UK and we're proud to lead on pioneering diversity and mentoring initiatives with leading organisations across the city. Diversity and Inclusion sits firmly in our firm's ESG priorities, with a focus on ensuring that our progress towards greater diversity is underpinned by real inclusion too."

About Triodos Bank

Headquartered in Bristol, Triodos Bank's mission is to help create a society that protects and promotes quality of life and human dignity for all. Since 1980, our sustainable financial products have enabled individuals and organisations to use their money in ways that benefit people and the environment. <https://www.triodos.co.uk/>

For further details contact
Lopa Patel, T: 0203 865 4037
Info [at]diversityuk.org