MISS BETTY RILEY

1930, Saint John, New Brunswick

TELEVISION PRODUCER

Miss Betty Riley was a trailblazing television producer from New Brunswick. She later moved to Montreal, QC, and worked as an office supervisor for cable TV. Riley noted that, while there was increasing advocacy for recognizing ethnic diversity, “nothing was being done about Blacks. So I took it on myself to do something about it.” Riley became Canada’s first Black woman television producer when she created a television program titled *Black Is* which aired in the 1970s. This program was Canada’s first all-Black television program and dealt with contemporary issues affecting the Black community, discussing topics such as police brutality and discriminatory immigration policies. Riley also engaged in community work and ran a television workshop to teach Black youth the basics of production, giving them the tools to craft their own narratives of the Black experience in Canada. Riley was an outspoken advocate for racial and gender equality in the workplace, as a Black woman working in a white, male-dominated field. She stated, “women’s liberation is not my struggle. Black women never fought for the right to work. They had no choice. They had to work.”

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