

Women's History Reading Comprehension



Viola Desmond's 91-year-old sister holding a new 2018 Canadian \$10 bill with Viola's picture

Who Is Viola Desmond?

In 1946, 9 years before [Rosa Parks](#) refused to give up her seat in a whites-only section of an Alabama bus, Viola Desmond refused to leave her main-floor seat in a Canadian movie theater.

Viola Desmond lived in Halifax, Nova Scotia. She was the owner and manager of a beauty products company. One day, her car broke down in New Glasgow, a town not far from Halifax. While her car was being repaired, she decided to see a movie.

Viola did not know that the theater was segregated. She chose a seat on the main floor. When she refused to move to the balcony, where Blacks were expected to sit, she was dragged out of the theater, arrested, charged and taken to jail.

Viola Desmond refused to accept the charges against her. Her case went all the way to Nova Scotia's Supreme Court. Although the court ruled against her, her brave stand inspired Nova Scotia's black community and helped advance Canada's civil rights movement.

Viola Desmond died at the age of 50 in 1965, long before the government of Nova Scotia officially pardoned her in 2010.

In 2018, Viola Desmond was honored by becoming the first woman to appear on a \$10 Canadian bank note. At the ceremony unveiling the bill, Wanda Robson, Viola's younger sister, said "the move to include a black woman on the bill is a giant step forward in continuing Viola's work toward equality."

Questions for "Who Is Viola Desmond?"

1. What job did Viola Desmond have?
theater ticket seller seamstress beauty company manager
2. Where did Viola Desmond live?
New Glasgow, Nova Scotia Halifax, Nova Scotia Montgomery, Alabama
3. Where was the movie theater where Viola Desmond was arrested?
New Glasgow, Nova Scotia Halifax, Nova Scotia Toronto, Ontario
4. Where was Rosa Parks when she refused to give up her seat?
in a bus in a movie theater in a restaurant
5. Where was Viola Desmond when she refused to give up her seat?
in a bus in a movie theater in a restaurant
6. When did Viola Desmond die?
1946 1965 2010
7. Viola Desmond won her case at the Supreme Court.
True False It doesn't say in the story.
8. Viola Desmond was alive when she was pardoned by the Nova Scotia government.
True False It doesn't say in the story.
9. Viola Desmond was the first woman to appear on a \$10 Canadian bank note.
True False It doesn't say in the story.
10. Who is Wanda Robson?
Viola Desmond's sister
Viola Desmond's niece
the New Glasgow ticket seller who had Viola arrested