Dr. Jean Augustine’s life is a testament to the power of hard work and dedication in the pursuit of social justice. Born in Grenada in 1937, she overcame early challenges, including the loss of her father, to become an outstanding student. In 1960, she immigrated to Canada and, already a qualified teacher, pursued her education, eventually earning a Bachelor of Arts degree and a Master's in Education while working as an elementary school teacher and rising to the position of principal.

Throughout her career, Dr. Augustine’s contributions extended to numerous social causes, including serving on boards such as York University, The Hospital for Sick Children, and the Stephen Lewis Foundation. She was also the National President of the Congress of Black Women of Canada and played a pivotal role in the development of Canada's multiculturalism policy in 1971.

In 1993, Dr. Augustine made history as the first African-Canadian woman elected to Canada's House of Commons, representing Etobicoke-Lakeshore. Over her four consecutive terms in Parliament, she held various significant positions, including Minister of Multiculturalism and the Status of Women, and spearheaded legislation to protect disadvantaged individuals, establish Black History Month in Canada, and erect the Famous Five Monument on Parliament Hill.

Dr. Augustine’s commitment to education and community engagement is evident in her donation of archival materials to York University and her role in launching the Jean Augustine Chair in Education, Community, and Diaspora. She also led initiatives commemorating the abolition of the British Slave Trade Act and served as the first-ever Fairness Commissioner for the Province of Ontario.

Her extensive contributions have earned her numerous honors and awards, including honorary doctorate degrees from several universities and the Order of Canada. Today, her legacy lives on through institutions like The Jean Augustine Secondary School, the Jean Augustine Centre for Young Women’s Empowerment, and various parks and complexes bearing her name.

Dr. Jean Augustine continues to make a difference in her community, co-chairing the 100 Accomplished Black Canadian Women recognition program and funding scholarships for single mothers, young entrepreneurs, and community studies students. She remains a proud mother and grandmother, embodying the spirit of resilience, advocacy, and social justice.

*This document is available in alternate formats upon request.