

# Beverly Mascoll



Beverly Mascoll, was born in Fall River, NS on October 29, 1941. Her parents, Arthur and Gwendolyn Ash moved the family to Toronto in the 1950s marking the beginning of Beverly's transformative journey. After graduating from high school, Beverly found herself working as an executive assistant at Toronto Barber and Beauty Supply.

It was during her time at Toronto Barber and Beauty Supply that Beverly recognised a significant gap in the marketplace; the scarcity of beauty products catering specifically to Black women.

Noticing the lack of Black beauty products Beverly took it upon herself to launch Mascoll Beauty Supply Ltd. in 1970, with only \$700 in start-up capital. With the passion to fill the void she had identified, Beverly embarked on her entrepreneurial journey, which changed the country's Black beauty industry. Working out of her home and selling her products out of her car with her son, Eldon, she noted, in the 2012 video [Angel: A celebration of the Life of Beverly Mascoll](#), "I had a new business and a new baby and that was tough going because I'd set the baby on the front seat of my car and have my products in the back and have the baby on one hand and the products in the other, kinda crazy when I look back on it now".

Beverly knew that in order to elevate her business, she needed to partner with a major product manufacturer and so she journeyed to Chicago to meet George E. Johnson, securing the exclusive Canadian distribution rights for Johnson Products, the largest Black beauty company at the time. This made Mascoll Beauty Supply Ltd. the first and sole Canadian distributor of the most popular Black beauty product line at that time.

With that partnership Mascoll Beauty Supply quickly emerged as a trailblazer in the Canadian beauty supply industry. The company's growth was remarkable, with Beverly's strategic leadership driving its expansion into manufacturing and distribution. This coincided with the wave of immigration from the Caribbean to Canada in the 1970s and 80s which increased Canada's Black population significantly, Beverly shattered barriers and provided much-needed representation and products for the Black community.

Beverly returned to Nova Scotia to not only hold the first ever Black beauty trade show but to help raise a plaque renaming her school in Fall River to the Ash Lee Jefferson School, honouring the legacy of Ada Lee, Selena Elizabeth Jefferson and Beverly's grandmother, Martha Jane Ash.

Beverly Mascoll's influence extended far beyond business success. She was deeply committed to community development and advocacy, establishing the Beverly Mascoll Community Foundation to assist the development of youth, women and minorities, as just one of her philanthropic endeavours. All of which lead to her being appointed a Member of the Order of Canada for outstanding entrepreneurship and assisting Canada's youth in 1998.

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Beverly's vision for education led her to spearhead fundraising efforts to establish the first Black Canadian Studies program at Dalhousie University. In [Angel: A Celebration of the Life of Beverly Mascoll](#) Beverly shares "I measure success in the flexibility of being able to help someone, being able to make a difference in someone else's life, that's really important to me".

Tragically, Beverly Mascoll's journey was cut short by complications from breast cancer in 2001. Her passing left a void in the world of entrepreneurship, community leadership, and education. However, her legacy lives on through the countless lives she touched, inspired, and empowered.

In 2001, Mount St. Vincent University granted Beverly, posthumously, with a Doctor of Humane Letters. Beverly was the first person to receive a posthumous degree which honours worthy recipients who have contributed to the betterment of society and humanity in any field, but in particular, improvement of the status of women, contribution to higher education, humanitarian and social service, involvement with and fostering of culture and the arts, or leadership in a field of endeavour. Beverly's grandmother, Martha Ash, used to work at Mount St. Vincent University, as a cleaner and as a child Beverly would help, so it was a true honour for her husband Emerson Mascoll to accept the citation in her memory.