ROYAL COMMONWEALTH SOCIETY OF CANADA SUPPORTS CAMPAIGN TO MAKE AUGUST 1ST EMANCIPATION DAY

August 1, 2019

TORONTO, ON: August 1st, 2019, Emancipation Day, marks the 185th anniversary of the abolition of slavery in the British Empire. Through the passing of this legislation, Canada and the other territories of the Empire became safe havens for thousands fleeing slavery, thus sparking one of the first significant human rights initiatives in the Americas, the Underground Railroad.

Rosemary Sadlier, the chair of the Royal Commonwealth Society Toronto Branch, has pursued official recognition of August 1st as Emancipation Day in Canada since 1997. These efforts have culminated in the date being officially recognized in the cities of Toronto and Ottawa and the province of Ontario as a whole. The Royal Commonwealth Society of Canada was happy to join this campaign starting in 2017. A successful Parliamentary Petition was submitted early in 2018 and led to the introduction of a Senate bill by Senator Wanda Thomas-Bernard, currently held at second reading until Parliament resumes later this year.

RCS Canada, and the Commonwealth as a whole, have long been committed to the principles of racial equality and human rights, as ensconced in the Commonwealth Charter. Establishing August 1st as Emancipation Day speaks to those principles and to the recognition of a growing inclusivity and common history among the 53 members of the Commonwealth.

About RCS Canada

The Royal Commonwealth Society of Canada (RCS) is both a learned Society and club, non-partisan, independent of governments and supported solely by public generosity. The RCS engages with its youth, civil society, business and government networks to address issues that matter to the Citizens of the Commonwealth. Its primary focus is to the promotion of young people throughout the Commonwealth.

For more information, please contact:

Rosemary Sadlier
toronto@rcs.ca

David Haisell
communications@rcs.ca

Royal Commonwealth Society of Canada
211 Bronson Centre, Room 102B

Ottawa, Ontario K1R 6H5

-00-