Celebrating Legends, Icons & Trailblazers

National African American History Month
A Century of Black Life, History and Culture
February 2021
FREEDOM'S JOURNAL (1827-1829)

POSTED ON JANUARY 4, 2011 BY CONTRIBUTED BY: ELLIOT PARTIN

TO OUR PATRONS

In the grand cause of liberty, all men are brothers, no matter what their color, race, or creed. We are all united in our struggle for justice and equality. Therefore, we make no distinction based on race or nationality. We hope that our readers will join us in our pursuit of a better future for all.

FREEDOM'S JOURNAL

"RIGHTHOODNESS EXALTED A NATION"

CORNISH & RUSWURM

Editors & Proprietors

TO THE PATRONS

The publication of this journal is the result of the combined efforts of a dedicated group of individuals. We are grateful to all who have contributed to its success.

POSTED ON JANUARY 4, 2011

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FREEDOM'S JOURNAL, Vol. 1 No. 1, March 16, 1827

THE EDITORS

From the Unseen Memory

MEMORIAL OF CAPTAIN PAUL CUFFE

On the first of the present month of August, 1816, a vessel arrived at Portsmouth, with a cargo from Sierra Leone. The cargo consisted of slaves. Captain Paul Cuffe was the master of this vessel. He was a man of superior moral and intellectual qualities. His conduct was everywhere worthy of respect. He was a man of strong principles, and acted upon them consistently. He was a man of noble character, and was beloved by all who knew him.

We are keeping in an improving and enlightened condition, and are determined to continue our efforts in this work. We are determined to continue to be a voice for justice and equality, and to work for a better future for all.

We are grateful to all who have contributed to our efforts, and we hope that our readers will continue to support us in our work.

Freedom's Journal, Vol. 1 No. 1, March 16, 1827

 Courtesy Library of Congress (sn83030455)
**Freedom’s Journal** was the first African American owned and operated newspaper in the United States. A weekly four column publication printed every Friday, Freedom’s Journal was founded by free born African Americans John Russwurm and Samuel Cornish on March 16, 1827 in New York City, New York. The newspaper contained both foreign and domestic news, editorials, biographies, births and deaths in the local African American community, and advertisements. Editorials deriding slavery, racial discrimination, and other injustices against African Americans were aimed at providing a counterweight to many of the white newspapers of the time period which openly supported slavery and racial bias.

*Freedom’s Journal* was not born solely out of the perceived need to defend African Americans as much as a desire within the black community to create a forum that would express their views and advocate for their causes. Russwurm and Cornish placed great value on the need for reading and writing as keys to empowerment for the black population and they hoped a black newspaper would encourage literacy and intellectual development among African Americans. Relatedly the newspaper sought to broaden its readers’ awareness of world events and developments while simultaneously strengthening ties among black communities across the Northern United States. Subscriptions were $3 per year and *Freedom’s Journal* at its peak circulated in eleven states, the District of Columbia, Haiti, Europe, and Canada.

In September 1827 Russwurm became sole editor of *Freedom’s Journal* following the resignation of Cornish over differences regarding African American colonization of Africa. Russwurm had begun to promote the colonization movement lead by the American Colonization Society which wanted to free African American slaves and offer them the opportunity of transport back to Africa. The paper’s support of colonization, however, was unpopular with its readers and subscriptions began to decline. With the loss of circulation in March 1829, *Freedom’s Journal* was forced to cease publication.

Soon afterwards, John Russwurm decided to emigrate to Liberia, the area established on Africa’s western coast to receive those recruited by the American Colonization Society. Russwurm became governor of Liberia’s Maryland Colony. Samuel Cornish returned to publishing in 1829 and attempted to revive *Freedom’s Journal* under a new name, *The Rights of All*. The newspaper folded in less than a year. Despite its two-year lifespan, *Freedom’s Journal* made an enormous impact on antebellum African American communities. By the beginning of the American Civil War, three decades later, there were over 40 black-owned and operated newspapers throughout the United States.
The *Baltimore Afro-American*, commonly known as *The Afro or Afro News*, is a weekly *African-American newspaper* published in *Baltimore, Maryland*. It is the flagship newspaper of the *Afro-American* chain and the longest-running *African-American* family-owned newspaper in the United States, *established in 1892*.

John H. Murphy, Sr., a formerly enslaved man founded the AFRO 128 years ago with $200 from his wife, Martha Howard Murphy. Together they created a platform to offer images and stories of hope to advance their community. The AFRO provides readers with good news about the Black community not otherwise found. Today the AFRO is led by 4th and 5th generation descendants of John H. Murphy Sr. and continues to provide news and information to the community.

The Afro is a weekly newspaper that is published twice a week on Wednesday and Friday. During the hay days of the publication, this newspaper was up against The Baltimore Sun and News American daily newspapers. The Afro has stood the test of time. News American was started in 1964 and ceased publication May 27, 1986, and The Afro is still going STRONG.
Orrin Cromwell Evans (1902–1971) was a pioneering African-American journalist and comic book publisher. Considered "the first black writer to cover general assignments for a mainstream white newspaper in the United States," he also published *All-Negro Comics*, the first known comics magazine written and drawn solely by African-American writers and artists.

Early life

Evans' father was light-skinned and could "pass" for white, but his dark-skinned mother sometimes had to pretend to be the family maid when strangers came to visit. Young Orrin was forced to confront racism at an early age due to his parents' difficult juggling act. Evans dropped out of school in eighth grade.

Journalism

Evans' began work in journalism as a teenager at the well-regarded African-American newspaper the *Philadelphia Tribune*.

In the early 1930, Evans became the only African-American on staff at *The Philadelphia Record*, where he wrote about segregation in the armed services during World War II. At *The Record* he faced death threats and discrimination, including being removed from a Charles Lindbergh press conference because of the color of his skin. In addition to *The Record*, Evans wrote for *The Chicago Defender, The Philadelphia Independent*, and *The Crisis*, the journal of the *NAACP*.
A strong proponent of racial equality, Evans thought he could reach a wider audience with a comic book. When The Record closed after an extended strike action in 1947, Evans partnered with former Record editor Harry T. Saylor, Record sports editor Bill Driscoll and two others to found the Philadelphia publishing company All-Negro Comics, Inc., with himself as president. In mid-1947, the company published the only known issue of All-Negro Comics, a 48-page, standard-sized comic book with a typical glossy color cover and newsprint interior. The comic's press run and distribution are unknown, and as one cultural historian notes of the era, "While there were a few heroic images of blacks created by blacks, such as the Jive Gray comic strip and All-Negro Comics, these images did not circulate outside of pre-civil rights segregated black communities.

Time magazine in 1947 described the villains in the lead feature, "Ace Harlem," as "a couple of zoot-suited, jive-talking Negro muggers, whose presence in anyone else's comics might have brought up complaints of racial 'distortion.' Since it was all in the family, Evans thought no Negro readers would mind." The protagonist of "Ace Harlem," however, was an African-American police detective; the characters in the "Lion Man and Bubba" feature were meant to inspire black people's pride in their African heritage.

Evans attempted to publish a second issue but was unable to purchase the newsprint required — which many believe he was blocked from doing by prejudiced distributors, as well as from competing, white-owned publishers (such as Parents Magazine Press and Fawcett Comics) which began producing their own black-themed titles.
Later career

Orrin later worked at the *Chester Times*, and then the *Philadelphia Bulletin* from 1962 until his death in 1971. He was deeply involved in Philadelphia-area journalism associations the Philadelphia Press Association, and was honored by *Urban League* of Pennsylvania. As a journalist, he was a fixture at *National Urban League* and *NAACP* conventions.

Awards

In 1971, shortly before his death, Evans was honored at the annual *NAACP* convention in Minneapolis and a scholarship was created in his name.

In 2011 he and his brother were posthumously given the *ECBACC* Pioneer Lifetime Achievement Award for the creation of *All-Negro Comics*. In 2014, Evans was elected to the *Will Eisner Award Hall of Fame* for his work as president of *All-Negro Comics*. 
Who Is Stacey Plaskett, the Breakout Star of the Senate Impeachment Trial?

The fact that Stacey Plaskett, as a 22-year-old recent college graduate, called all the time was the thing that impressed the congressman the most.

“Ron de Lugo told me the only reason they were giving me this job was because of my persistence,” she says of her first boss on the Hill, a Democrat from the Virgin Islands and the territory’s first ever delegate to Congress.

Rep. Stacey Plaskett: "This Capitol that was conceived by our Founding Fathers, that was built by slaves. That remains through the sacrifice through servicemen and women around the world."

Delegate Plaskett's presentation will go down in history. It will be remembered. It was jaw-dropping. It was one of the most powerful presentations I've ever seen. Wow. Just wow.

Congresswoman Stacey E. Plaskett represents the United States Virgin Islands’ at-large Congressional District in the United States House of Representatives. She is currently serving her fourth term in Congress.

For the 117th Congress, the members of the House Steering and Policy Committee unanimously appointed Congresswoman Plaskett to serve on the House Committee on Ways and Means, the oldest and one of the most exclusive committees in Congress. In true historic fashion, Ms. Plaskett is the first Member from a U.S. territory and the fourth African-American woman to serve on this committee. Currently serving her fourth term on the House Committee on Agriculture Congresswoman Plaskett previously served as the Chair of the Subcommittee on Biotechnology, Horticulture and Research. Ms. Plaskett is also a new member of the House Committee on Budget.

Congresswoman Plaskett previously served on the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee (T&I), as well as the House Committee on Oversight and Reform. Ms. Plaskett is a member of the Congressional Black Caucus, House Blockchain Caucus, and the New Democrat
Coalition where she is a co-chair of the Infrastructure Taskforce and the at-large Leadership Member. Congresswoman Plaskett also co-chairs the Congressional Caribbean Caucus.

During her time as a member of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Ms. Plaskett advocated for improvements to critical infrastructure in the U.S. Virgin Islands and the insular areas, as well as the development of economically depressed rural and urban areas. As a former attorney in public finance law, Congresswoman Plaskett sees the importance of Public Private Partnership (P3s) and worked to create constructive innovative mechanisms for incentivizing economic development in underserved areas in America. While on T&I, Ms. Plaskett worked to ensure the federal government is responsive to the needs of Americans in disaster-stricken areas.

Similarly, during her tenure as a member of the Committee on Agriculture, Ms. Plaskett has sat on multiple subcommittees including, Commodity Exchanges, Energy and Credit, Livestock and Foreign Agriculture and chaired the largest Agriculture subcommittee– Biotechnology, Horticulture and Research. On these committees, Congresswoman Plaskett has worked to ensure that the Virgin Islands and other rural communities receive adequate funding for necessary rural development programs including public infrastructure development, access to high-speed broadband, and small business support. Ms. Plaskett has advocated to protect programs that provide needed supplemental assistance to hardworking families.

As a member of the Committee on Oversight and Reform, Congresswoman Plaskett applied her skills as a former prosecutor to ensure accountability and transparency both within government and private sector entities whose operations impact the Virgin Islands community and communities across America.

Ms. Plaskett earned her undergraduate degree from Georgetown University School of Foreign Service, and her Juris Doctorate from American University’s Washington College of Law. Congresswoman Plaskett has a long history of public service having started as an Assistant District Attorney in the Bronx DA’s office as well as having worked as a political appointee at the Department of Justice where she served as Senior Counsel under both Deputy Attorney General Larry Thompson and his successor James Comey. In the Virgin Islands, she served as General Counsel for the Virgin Islands Economic Development Authority, charged with the economic development of the U.S. territory and also worked in private practice as counsel and transactional attorney for numerous companies.

As the Congressional representative for the Virgin Islands, she also hosts the Washington Report series which seeks to keep Virgin Islanders abreast and aware of the happenings in Washington, D.C. The series is aired on WTJX monthly.

Most importantly, Ms. Plaskett is the mother of 5 – three adults and 2 younger children and the wife of Jonathan Buckney-Small.
Today in Black History we salute the journey of Fannie Lou Townsend Hamer

Fannie Lou Townsend Hamer rose from humble beginnings in the Mississippi Delta to become one of the most important, passionate, and powerful voices of the civil and voting rights movements and a leader in the efforts for greater economic opportunities for African Americans.

Hamer was born on October 6, 1917 in Montgomery County, Mississippi, the 20th and last child of sharecroppers Lou Ella and James Townsend. She grew up in poverty, and at age six Hamer joined her family picking cotton. By age 12, she left school to work. In 1944, she married Perry Hamer and the couple toiled on the Mississippi plantation owned by B.D. Marlowe until 1962. Because Hamer was the only worker who could read and write, she also served as plantation timekeeper.

In 1961, Hamer received a hysterectomy by a white doctor without her consent while undergoing surgery to remove a uterine tumor. Such forced sterilization of Black women, as a way to reduce the Black population, was so widespread it was dubbed a “Mississippi appendectomy.” Unable to have children of their own, the Hamers adopted two daughters.

That summer, Hamer attended a meeting led by civil rights activists James Forman of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and James Bevel of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). Hamer was incensed by efforts to deny Blacks the right to vote. She became a SNCC organizer and on August 31, 1962 led 17 volunteers to register to vote at the Indianola, Mississippi Courthouse. Denied the right to vote due to an unfair literacy test, the group was harassed on their way home, when police stopped their bus and fined them $100 for the trumped-up charge that the bus was too yellow. That night, Marlow fired Hamer for her attempt to vote; her husband was required to stay until the harvest. Marlow confiscated much of their property. The Hamers moved to Ruleville, Mississippi in Sunflower County with very little.

In June 1963, after successfully registering to vote, Hamer and several other Black women were arrested for sitting in a “whites-only” bus station restaurant in Charleston, South Carolina. At the jailhouse, she and several of the women were brutally beaten, leaving Hamer with lifelong injuries from a blood clot in her eye, kidney damage, and leg damage.

In 1964, Hamer’s national reputation soared as she co-founded the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP), which challenged the local Democratic Party’s efforts to block Black participation. Hamer and other MFDP members went to the Democratic National Convention that year, arguing to be recognized as the official delegation. When Hamer spoke before the Credentials Committee, calling for mandatory integrated state delegations, President Lyndon Johnson held a televised press conference so she would not get any television airtime. But her speech, with its poignant descriptions of racial prejudice in the South, was televised later. By 1968, Hamer’s vision for racial parity in delegations had become a reality and Hamer was a member of Mississippi’s first integrated delegation.

In 1964 Hamer helped organize Freedom Summer, which brought hundreds of college students, Black and white, to help with African American voter registration in the segregated South. In 1964, she announced her candidacy for the Mississippi House of Representatives but
was barred from the ballot. A year later, Hamer, Victoria Gray, and Annie Devine became the first Black women to stand in the U.S. Congress when they unsuccessfully protested the Mississippi House election of 1964. She also traveled extensively, giving powerful speeches on behalf of civil rights. In 1971, Hamer helped to found the National Women’s Political Caucus.

Frustrated by the political process, Hamer turned to economics as a strategy for greater racial equality. In 1968, she began a “pig bank” to provide free pigs for Black farmers to breed, raise, and slaughter. A year later she launched the Freedom Farm Cooperative (FFC), buying up land that Blacks could own and farm collectively. With the assistance of donors (including famed singer Harry Belafonte), she purchased 640 acres and launched a coop store, boutique, and sewing enterprise. She single-handedly ensured that 200 units of low-income housing were built—many still exist in Ruleville today. The FFC lasted until the mid-1970s; at its heyday, it was among the largest employers in Sunflower County. Extensive travel and fundraising took Hamer away from the day-to-day operations, as did her failing health, and the FFC hobbled along until folding. Not long after, in 1977, Hamer died of breast cancer at age 59.
For the first time in its 130-year history, Wyoming has a Black sheriff.

Aaron Appelhans, 39, has taken charge of the Albany County Sheriff’s Office. Albany County Sheriff Aaron Appelhans stands in the county courthouse in Laramie, Wyoming. Wednesday, Feb. 3, 2021. Appelhans took office in January as Wyoming’s as the state’s first Black sheriff. Formerly a University of Wyoming Police Department patrol sergeant, Appelhans in January became the top law enforcement officer for a county three times the size of Rhode Island yet home to just 650 African Americans out of 39,000 people. Wyoming’s largest city and capital, Cheyenne, got its first Black police chief, James “Jim” Byrd, in 1966.

Appelhans with Judge Tori Kricken, who gave him the oath of office.

One reason it took so long to appoint a Black sheriff, according to the president of the Wyoming NAACP, Stephen Latham, is the state’s small Black population. Blacks make up 1.3% of the state’s residents, according to the US Census Bureau.
Today in Black History we salute the journey of Al Sharpton, Condoleezza Rice & Colin Powell

Alfred Charles Sharpton is an American civil rights activist, Baptist minister, talk show host and politician. Sharpton is the founder of the National Action Network. In 2004, he was a candidate for the Democratic nomination for the U.S. presidential election.

Condoleezza Rice, one of the most influential women in the world, was born on November 14, 1954, in Birmingham, Alabama. She was the first black woman to serve as the United States’ National Security Adviser, as well as the first black woman to serve as U.S. Secretary of State from 2005-2009.

Colin Powell is a retired four-star general of the United States Army. He is currently serving as an American Statesman. Powell was the first African-American to serve as the Secretary of State, which he did from 2001 to 2005 under George W. Bush. Powell is to date, the only African American to serve as the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, a position that he held during the Persian Gulf War. Powell has also served under the National Security Advisor.
Today in Black History we salute the journey of Sidney Poitier

Not many Academy Award-winning actors started out as immigrant teens washing dishes. But Sidney Poitier, a young orphan desperate to emerge from poverty and make something of himself, faced his raw beginnings by joining the U.S. Army and has made history as a trailblazing actor ever since.

Some say his highest achievement is becoming the first black American to win an Academy Award nearly 50 years ago, inspiring countless others to follow and emulate him. But Poitier is very respectful of his spot in history. Reflecting in 2002 on his most recent Oscar, a lifetime achievement award, Poitier says:

“I accept this award in memory of all the African American actors and actresses who went before me in the difficult years, on whose shoulders I was privileged to stand to see where I might go.”

Born in 1927 in Miami, Florida, Sidney Poitier grew up in the small village of Cat Island, Bahamas. His father, a poor tomato farmer, moved the family to the capital, Nassau, when Poitier was eleven and left for the United States as a young teen without any money.

He went to an Army recruitment office during World War II and said he was 18 when he was only 16. He then went on to serve the Army as a physiotherapist for almost a year. According to the Los Angeles Sentinel, “The U.S. Army literally took him in out of the cold.”
From dishes, Poitier then worked as a janitor for the American Negro Theater in exchange for acting lessons and began to develop his legendary acting skills in the theatre, once even landing a role as understudy to Harry Belafonte.

He continued to perform in plays until 1950, when he found a film career that quickly moved in parallel with the racial upheaval that was percolating its way throughout the decade. Sydney Poitier's movie debut came in No Way Out, a violent tale of racial hatred, that made him a hero back home in the Bahamas. The colonial government deemed it too explosive and censored it. The subsequent protest that erupted gave birth to the political party that would eventually overturn British rule.

That event launched the Poitier career that, in the words of his good friend Harry Belafonte, "put the cinema and millions of people in the world in touch with a truth about who we are. A truth that could have for a longer time eluded us had it not been for him [Poitier] and the choices he made."

By decade's end, Poitier's emergence was solidified, and in 1959, Sydney Poitier's Academy Award nomination, for his role in The Defiant Ones, was the first ever for an African American. By 1963 he scored another first – the first black to win the Academy Award, this time for his role in Lillies of the Field.

The New York Times' Vincent Canby once pointed out: "Poitier does not make movies, he makes milestones." And, according to the Kennedy Center for the Arts, the firsts just kept coming:

Poitier also starred in the first mainstream movies to condone interracial marriages and permit a mixed couple to hug and kiss (Guess Who's Coming to Dinner, 1967) and to attack apartheid (The Wilby Conspiracy, 1975). His trajectory traced an arc similar to that of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Justice Thurgood Marshall, as they emerged and impacted the American consciousness. Paying tribute to Poitier in 1967, Dr. King said, "He is a man of great depth, a man of great social concern, a man who is dedicated to human rights and freedom. Here is a man who, in the words we so often hear now, is a soul brother."
Today in Black History we salute the journey of Willa Beatrice Brown

Willa Beatrice Brown, a pioneering aviator, was born on January 22, 1906 in Glasgow, KY. She was the first woman commissioned as a lieutenant in the Civil Air Patrol and she was the first Black woman to earn a commercial pilot’s license, obtaining her license in 1937. Her efforts were responsible for Congress’ forming the renowned Tuskegee Airmen squadron, leading to the integration of the U.S. military service in 1948.

Willa Beatrice Brown, c. 1941 – 1945, when she was in her thirties: “Willa Beatrice Brown, a 31-year-old Negro American, serves her country by training pilots for the U.S. Army Air Forces. She is the first Negro woman to receive a commission as a lieutenant in the U.S. Civil Air Patrol.” N.d. 208-FS-793-1.

SOURCE
“Willa Beatrice Brown Chappell made significant contributions to both politics and the field of aviation during her lifetime. Her career began in 1926 as a “commerce” teacher at the Roosevelt High School, Gary, Indiana. She moved to Chicago after receiving tenure and there met Col. John C. Robinson and Cornelius R. Coffey, both pioneer pilots and mechanics. Under their tutelage Willa was able to follow in the steps of her mentor, Bessie Coleman, and later organize the annual memorial fly-over of Bessie Coleman’s grave.

In 1937 Willa earned her pilot’s license, making her the first African American woman to be licensed in the United States. Two years later she married Cornelius Coffey, who would become one of the Tuskegee Airmen. She was also a founding member of the National Airmen Association of America, the sole purpose of which was to lobby Congress for the racial integration of the U.S. Army Air Corps.

In 1941, with her flying service and aviation credentials, the U.S. government named Willa as the federal coordinator of the Chicago unit of the Civil Air Patrol civilian pilot training
program. She was ranked an officer in this first integrated unit. Her efforts were directly responsible for the creation of the renowned Tuskegee Airmen, which led to the integration of the U.S. military services in 1948. She was instrumental in training more than 200 students who went on to become Tuskegee pilots.”

The documentary *Willa Brown: An American Aviator*, presented by the Filmmaker’s Library, chronicles the life story of Ms. Brown as well as the history of Black American aviation before World War II, the contributions of many individuals who shaped civil rights history, and the film includes rare interviews of some of the actual participants in this little known part of American history.

In 1955, Ms. Brown married the Rev. J.H. Chappell. She became very active in the West Side Community Church in Chicago. In 1972 in recognition of her contributions to aviation in the United States as a pilot, an instructor, and an activist, Ms. Brown-Chappell was appointed to the Federal Aviation Administration’s Women’s Advisory Board.

Ms. Brown-Chappell died on July 18, 1992 at the age of 86.

In 2003, Willa Brown Chappell was inducted into the Aviation Hall of Fame for her native state of Kentucky.
Today in Black History we salute the journey of Dr. Shirley Ann Jackson

Dr. Shirley Ann Jackson is a superwoman of science. The first African-American woman to earn a doctorate at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), she’s also the president of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, the oldest technological research university in the United States. Born to Beatrice and George Jackson on August 5, 1946, in Washington, D.C., Jackson’s drive for success as a child came from her parents who encouraged and valued education. She would attend an accelerated program in math as well as science at Roosevelt High School and graduated the valedictorian of her class in 1964.

Upon her arrival at MIT in the fall of 1964 as part of a small collective of Black students studying theoretical physics, Jackson described her time at the university as “pretty isolating” in a conversation with Technology Review in 2017.

Four years later, she earned her Bachelors of Science in 1968 and four years after, she finished her doctorate work under the tutelage of Dr. James Young. Specializing in elementary particle theory, Jackson officially became Dr. Shirley Jackson, the first to earn a doctorate degree from the prestigious university. In total, she’s the second African-American in the history of the United States to earn a doctorate in physics.

“It’s nearly impossible to understand the full sweep of Shirley’s career, from academia to government to business,” Sylvester Gates, who considered Jackson to be his mentor at MIT said. “She has been extraordinarily successful in all of those realms. She also has a magnificent ability to understand organizations and how to be effective within them ... She has always been the cool head in the group.”

Jackson held several positions throughout the 1970s after earning her Ph.D. She worked as a research associate at Fermilab in Illinois, traveled abroad as a visiting scientist at the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN) in Switzerland and later joined the theoretical-physics...
research department at Bell Labs. Her trajectory continued upward in the ‘80s as she shifted towards public policy. She advised then New Jersey Governor Tom Kean on how the state should invest in science and technology at its research universities and later taught theoretical physics at Rutgers University beginning in 1991.

Then, in 1995, President Bill Clinton appointed Jackson the chair of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC). She developed and implemented regulations for assessing risk at the country’s nuclear power plants, using sophisticated computer modelings to make judgments about the likelihood of various problems. In theory, if a power plant operator wanted to make physical changes to the plant, regulators could use those computer modelings to accurately predict the risks of those changes.

After her stint as chair of the NRC concluded, Jackson became the 18th president of the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in 1999. She became the first woman and African-American in the position, where she remains today, working to develop a world-class university.

“I understood universities from the point of view of oversight and from the point of view of the faculty, in terms of how to organize research,” she said.

The achievements didn’t stop with her appointment as Rensselear. She was the first African-American woman elected to the National Academy of Engineering as well as the first woman to serve as president of the National Society of Black Physicists. In addition to her doctorate degree from MIT, Jackson has been awarded over 50 honorary doctoral degrees.

In 2009, she was appointed by President Barack Obama to the President’s Council of Advisors on Science and Technology. She led a study on advanced manufacturing in the United States and was also involved with issues of national and global security, cybersecurity, and digital technology. In 2016, Obama awarded her the National Medal of Science for her work in condensed matter and particle physics, public policy achievements, and being an inspiration to the next generation of STEM professionals.

“It’s important to serve,” Jackson said of those appointments. “It does take a lot of time. But I don’t play golf. And I have the ability to learn fast.”
Today in Black History we salute the journey of Ta-Nehisi Coates

Ta-Nehisi Coates is a distinguished writer in residence at NYU’s Arthur L. Carter Journalism Institute. He is the author of the bestselling books The Beautiful Struggle, We Were Eight Years in Power, and Between The World And Me, which won the National Book Award in 2015. His first novel, The Water Dancer, was released in September 2019. Ta-Nehisi is a recipient of a MacArthur Fellowship. He is also the current author of the Marvel comics The Black Panther and Captain America.

Today in Black History we salute the journey of James Edward Maceo West

James Edward Maceo West, African American inventor, acoustician, and research professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering and Mechanical Engineering at the Johns Hopkins University. He is a co-inventor of the electret microphone. Dr. West has over 250 patents to his name. At age 90 in 2021, he is still an active inventor working on a device to detect pneumonia in infant lungs. He is known worldwide as the co-inventor of the foil electret microphone. This is a type of condenser microphone upon which 90 percent of all microphones used today are based (such as telephones, sound and music recording equipment, and hearing aids). West developed the invention with his research partner Gerhard Sessler in 1962 while both were scientists at Bell Laboratories in Murray Hills, NJ. West holds more than 60 U.S. patents and more than 200 foreign patents using polymer foil electrets in transducers during his 40-year career with Bell Laboratories, where he had worked as an acoustical scientist. He has also authored or contributed to more than 150 technical papers and several books on acoustics, solid-state physics, and materials science. Upon retiring from Bell in 2001, he joined Johns Hopkins University as a research professor, and the transition to academia has been much to his liking. “I discovered that Johns Hopkins is a lot like Bell Labs, where the doors are always open and we are free to collaborate with researchers in other disciplines,” James says. “I like the fact that I’m not locked into one small niche here. I wanted to be in an environment that allowed 360 degrees of vision.” His research at Johns Hopkins includes efforts to improve teleconferencing technology by transmitting stereophonic sound over the Internet and new transducers. In addition, James has long been known for being a mentor to students, and for being active in initiating and participating in programs aimed at encouraging more minorities and women to enter the fields of science, technology, mathematics, and engineering (STEM).

West graduated from Temple University in 1957 with a degree in physics.
BLACK HISTORY MONTH: CELEBRATING THE WORK OF BLACK MICROBIOLOGISTS

Highlighting some of the work and achievements of

Faith Uwadiae, Jane Hinton and Harold Amos

Faith Uwadiae

Dr. Faith Uwadiae is currently working as a Postdoctoral Training Fellow at the Francis Crick Institute, but in her school days her sights were set on a different path, something more arts based. However her teachers suggested taking GCSE sciences to keep her options open, and it was during this time that she fell in love with biology.

Dr. Uwadiae is from Nigerian descent and has said that it is this identity that motivates her research into improving our understanding of malaria. Her research at the Francis Crick Institute is looking into the immunological link between malaria and a type of cancer known as Burkitt’s Lymphoma. The link between the two has been known about for some time but isn’t fully understood.

As well as her research, Dr. Uwadiae has given talks on her experiences as a black female scientist, including a lecture at Durham University titled “What does a scientist look like?”, and a webinar hosted by the British Society for Immunology on diversity and inclusion in STEM.
Jane Hinton

Born in 1919, Dr. Jane Hinton, daughter of Professor William Hinton, was one of the first two African-American women to gain a degree as a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine.

When she was six, Hinton’s parents sent her and her sister to school in Europe, ensuring that they would have the best education available to black students at that time. Returning to America in 1928, Hinton continued her education, first in a high school in Vermont, then earning her bachelors from Simmons College, Boston, in 1939. Following her education, she started her career working in Harvard’s laboratories. It was there that she co-developed the Mueller-Hinton agar with John Howard Mueller. The agar was a medium developed to isolate Neisseria, the bacteria that causes gonorrhea and meningococcal meningitis. The medium enables bacteria to thrive and has become one of the standard methods used to test bacterial resistance to antibiotics.

During World War II, Hinton worked as a medical technician for the U.S. War Department. After the war ended, she enrolled in the School of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania. It was here that, together with Alfreda Johnson Webb, she became the joint first African-American woman to earn the Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (VMD) degree in 1949. There had only been four African-American VMD graduates prior to Hinton and Webb, and it was nearly 20 years until there was another in 1968. In addition, Hinton and Webb were the first African-American members of the Women’s Veterinary Medicine Association.

Harold Amos

Born in 1918, Dr. Harold Amos first gained interest in microbiology from reading the biography of one of the fathers of microbiology, Louis Pasteur. Spending his early years in segregated schools, he completed high school at the top of his class, and in a time where scholarships were rare for African-Americans, gained a full scholarship to Springfield College in Massachusetts.

After World War II, Amos began his studies at Harvard Medical School, raising his profile as he earned his master’s degree in 1947 and PhD in 1952. After gaining his PhD he joined the Harvard Medical School faculty, working as a teacher. He worked his way up to Chair of the bacteriology department, becoming the first African American department Chair.

As well as being Chair of the department, Amos was named the Maude and Lillian Presley Professor of Microbiology and Molecular Genetics in 1975. He also received several awards, including the National Academy of Sciences' Public Welfare Medal and the Harvard Centennial Medal.

Amos was noted for his research and teaching, and as such, the Division of Medical Sciences graduate student lounge was named in his honour. He was however a very modest man, epitomised when he refused to sit for a sculpture when it was decided his bust should be placed in the lounge. A photograph was eventually used by the sculpture, but had to be obtained in secret.
MY CALL TO PREACH THE GOSPEL

I was born February 11th, 1783, at Cape May, State of New Jersey. At the age of seven years I was parted from my parents, and went to live as a servant maid, with a Mr. Sharp, at the distance of about sixty miles from the place of my birth.

My parents being wholly ignorant of the knowledge of God, had not therefore instructed me in any degree in this great matter. Not long after the commencement of my attendance on this lady, she had bid me do something respecting my work, which in a little while after she asked me if I had done, when I replied, Yes - but this was not true.

At this awful point, in my early history, the Spirit of God moved in power through my conscience, and told me I was a wretched sinner. On this account so great was the impression, and so strong were the feelings of guilt, that I promised in my heart that I would not tell another lie.

But notwithstanding this promise my heart grew harder, after a while, yet the Spirit of the Lord never entirely forsook me, but continued mercifully striving with me, until his gracious power converted my soul.

Mrs. Jarena Lee, Preacher of the A.M.E. Church, Aged 60 years in the 11th day of the 2nd month 1844, Philadelphia 1844.

Between four and five years after my sanctification, on a certain time, an impressive silence fell upon me, and I stood as if someone was about to speak to me, yet I had no such thought in my heart. - But to my utter surprise there seemed to sound a voice which I thought I distinctly heard, and most certainly understand, which said to me, "Go preach the Gospel!" I immediately replied aloud, "No one will believe me." Again I listened, and again the same voice seemed to say - "Preach the Gospel; I will put words in your mouth, and you will turn your enemies to become your friends."

At first I supposed that Satan had spoken to me, for I had read that he could transform himself into an angel of light for the purpose of deception. Immediately I went into a secret place, and called upon the Lord to know if he had called me to preach, and whether I was deceived or not; when there appeared to my view the form and figure of a pulpit, with a Bible lying thereon, the back of which was presented to me as plainly as if it had been a literal fact.

In consequence of this, my mind became so exercised, that during the night following, I took a text and preached in my sleep. I thought there stood before me a great multitude, while I expounded to them the things of religion. So violent were my exertions and so loud were my
exclamations, that I awoke from the sound of my own voice, which also awoke the family of the house where I resided. Two days after I went to see the preacher in charge of the African Society, who was the Rev. Richard Allen, the same before named in these pages, to tell him that I felt it my duty to preach the gospel. But as I drew near the street in which his house was, which was in the city of Philadelphia, my courage began to fail me; so terrible did the cross appear, it seemed that I should not be able to bear it. Previous to my acting out to go to see him, so agitated was my mind, that my appetite for my daily food failed me entirely. Several times on my way there, I turned back again; but as often I felt my strength again renewed, and I soon found that the nearer I approached to the house of the minister, the less was my fear. Accordingly, as soon as I came to the door, my fears subsided, the cross was removed, all things appeared pleasant - I was tranquil.

I now told him, that the Lord had revealed it to me, that I must preach the gospel. He replied, by asking, in what sphere I wished to move in? I said, among the Methodists. He then replied, that a Mrs. Cook, a Methodist lady, had also some time before requested the same privilege; who, it was believed, had done much good in the way of exhortation, and holding prayer meetings; and who had been permitted to do so by the verbal license of the preacher in charge at the time. But as to women preaching, he said that our Discipline knew nothing at all about it - that it did not call for women preachers. This I was glad to hear, because it removed the fear of the cross - but no sooner did this feeling cross my mind, than I found that a love of souls had in a measure departed from me; that holy energy which burned within me, as a fire, began to be smothered. This I soon perceived.

O how careful ought we to be, lest through our by-laws of church government and discipline, we bring into discredit even the word of life. For as unseemly as it may appear now-a-days for a woman to preach, it should be remembered that nothing is impossible with God. And why should it be thought impossible, heterodox, or improper for a woman to preach? seeing the Saviour died for the woman as well as for the man.

If the man may preach, because the Saviour died for him, why not the woman? seeing he died for her also. Is he not a whole Saviour, instead of a half one? as those who hold it wrong for a woman to preach, would seem to make it appear.

Did not Mary first preach the risen Saviour, and is not the doctrine of the resurrection the very climax of Christianity - hangs not all our hope on this, as argued by St Paul? Then did not Mary, a woman, preach the gospel? for she preached the resurrection of the crucified son of God.

But some will say that Mary did not expound the Scripture, therefore, she did not preach, in the proper sense of the term. To this I reply, it may be that the term preach in those primitive times, do not mean exactly what it is now made to mean; perhaps it was a great deal more simple then, than it is now - if it were not, the unlearned fishermen could not have preached the gospel at all, as they had no learning.

To this it may be replied, by those who are determined not to believe that it is right for a woman to preach, that the disciples, though they were fishermen and ignorant of letters too, were inspired so to do. To which I would reply, that though they were inspired, yet that inspiration did not save them from showing their ignorance of letters and of man's wisdom; this the multitude soon found out, by listening to the remarks of the envious Jewish priests. If then, to preach the gospel, by the gift of heaven, comes by inspiration solely, is God straitened: must he take the man exclusively? May he not, did he not, and can he not inspire a female to preach the simple story of the birth, life,
death, and resurrection of our Lord, and accompany it too with power to the sinner's heart. As for me, I am fully persuaded that the Lord called me to labor according to what I have received, in his vineyard. If he has not, how could he consistently hear testimony in favor of my poor labors, in awakening and converting sinners?

In my wanderings up and down among men, preaching according to my ability, I have frequently found families who told me that they had not for several years been to a meeting, and yet, while listening to hear what God would say to his poor female instrument, have believed with trembling tears rolling down their cheeks, the signs of contrition and repentance towards God. I firmly believe that I have sown seed, in the name of the Lord, which shall appear with its increase at the great day of accounts, when Christ shall come to make up his jewels.

At a certain time, I was beset with the idea, that soon or late I should fall from grace and lose my soul at last. I was frequently called to the throne of grace about this matter, but found no relief; the temptation pursued me still. Being more and more afflicted with it, till at a certain time, when the spirit strongly impressed it on my mind to enter into my closet and carry my case once more to the Lord; the Lord enabled me to draw nigh to him, and to his mercy seat, at this time, in an extraordinary manner; for while I wrestled with him for the victory over this disposition to doubt whether I should persevere, there appeared a form of fire, about the size of a man's hand, as I was on my knees; at the same moment there appeared to the eye of faith a man robed in a white garment, from the shoulders down to the feet; from him a voice proceeded, saying: "Thou shalt never return from the cross." Since that time I have never doubted, but believe that God will keep me until the day of redemption. Now I could adopt the very language of St Paul, and say, that nothing could have separated me from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus. Since that time, 1807, until the present, 1833, I have not even doubted the power and goodness of God to keep me from falling, through the sanctification of the spirit and belief of the truth.
Today in Black History we salute the journey of Anna Mae Bullock aka Tina Turner

Tina Turner, original name Anna Mae Bullock, (born November 26, 1939, Brownsville, Tennessee, U.S.), American-born singer who found success in the rhythm-and-blues, soul, and rock genres in a career that spanned five decades. Turner was born into a sharecropping family in rural Tennessee. She began singing as a teenager and, after moving to St. Louis, Missouri, immersed herself in the local rhythm-and-blues scene.

She met Ike Turner at a performance by his band, the Kings of Rhythm, in 1956, and soon became part of the act. She began performing as Tina Turner, and her electric stage presence quickly made her the centerpiece of the show. The ensemble, which toured as the Ike and Tina Turner Revue, was renowned for its live performances but struggled to find recording success. That changed in 1960, when “A Fool in Love” hit the pop charts, and a string of hit singles followed. Ike and Tina were married in 1962, although the date is subject to some speculation (during the couple’s divorce proceedings in 1977, Ike claimed that the two were never legally married). The Phil Spector-produced album River Deep—Mountain High (1966) was a hit in Europe, and its title track is arguably the high point of Spector’s “wall of sound” production style, but it sold poorly in the United States. Ike and Tina’s final hits as a couple were the cover version of Creedence Clearwater Revival’s “Proud Mary” (1971) and “Nutbush City Limits” (1973). Tina divorced Ike in 1978, alleging years of physical abuse and infidelity.

After a series of guest appearances on the albums of other artists, she released her debut solo album, Private Dancer, in 1984. It was a triumph, both critically and commercially, selling more than 20 million copies worldwide and winning three Grammy Awards, including record of the year and best female vocal performance for “What’s Love Got to Do with It.” The single became Turner’s signature song.
Today in Black History we salute the journey of Aretha Franklin

March 25, 1942 - August 16, 2018
"Aretha" and "Queen of Soul" Aretha Louise Franklin (March 25, 1942 - August 16, 2018) was an American singer, songwriter, actress, pianist, and civil rights activist. Franklin began her career as a child singing gospel at New Bethel Baptist Church in Detroit, Michigan, where her father C. L. Franklin was a minister. At the age of 18, she embarked on a secular-music career as a recording artist for Columbia Records. While Franklin's career did not immediately flourish, she found acclaim and commercial success after signing with Atlantic Records in 1966. Hit songs such as "I Never Loved a Man (The Way I Love You)", "Respect", "(You Make Me Feel Like) A Natural Woman", "Chain of Fools", "Think", and "I Say a Little Prayer" propelled her past her musical peers. By the end of the 1960s, Aretha Franklin had come to be known as the "Queen of Soul".

Franklin continued to record acclaimed albums such as I Never Loved a Man the Way I Love You (1967), Lady Soul (1968), Spirit in the Dark (1970), Young, Gifted and Black (1972), Amazing Grace (1972), and Sparkle (1976) before experiencing problems with her record company. Franklin left Atlantic in 1979 and signed with Arista Records. She appeared in the 1980 film The Blues Brothers before releasing the successful albums Jump to It (1982), Who’s Zoomin’ Who? (1985), and Aretha (1986) on the Arista label. In 1998, Franklin returned to the Top 40 with the Lauryn Hill-produced song "A Rose Is Still a Rose"; later, she released an album of the same name which was certified gold. That same year, Franklin earned international acclaim for her performance of "Nessun dorma" at the Grammy Awards where she filled in at the last minute for Luciano Pavarotti, who canceled his appearance after the show had already begun. In a widely noted performance, she paid tribute to 2015 honoree Carole King by singing "(You Make Me Feel Like) A Natural Woman" at the Kennedy Center Honors.

Franklin recorded 112 charted singles on Billboard, including 77 Hot 100 entries, 17 top-ten pop singles, 100 R&B entries, and 20 number-one R&B singles. Besides the foregoing, Franklin's well-known hits also include "Ain't No Way", "Call Me", "Don't Play That Song (You Lied)", "Spanish Harlem", "Rock Steady", "Day Dreaming", "Until You Come Back to Me (That's What I'm Gonna Do)", "Something He Can Feel", "Jump
to It", "Freeway of Love", "Who's Zoomin' Who", and "I Knew You Were Waiting (For Me)" (a duet with George Michael). She won 18 Grammy Awards, including the first eight awards given for Best Female R&B Vocal Performance (1968-1975). Franklin is one of the best-selling music artists of all time, having sold more than 75 million records worldwide.

Franklin received numerous honors throughout her career. She was awarded the National Medal of Arts and the Presidential Medal of Freedom. In 1987, she became the first female performer to be inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. She also was inducted into the UK Music Hall of Fame in 2005 and into the Gospel Music Hall of Fame in 2012. In 2010, Rolling Stone magazine ranked her number one on its list of the "100 Greatest Singers of All Time" and number nine on its list of "100 Greatest Artists of All Time". The Pulitzer Prize jury in 2019 awarded Franklin a posthumous special citation "for her indelible contribution to American music and culture for more than five decades". In 2020, she was inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame.

Franklin wipes a tear after being given the Presidential Medal of Freedom on November 9, 2005, at the White House. She is seated between fellow recipients Robert Conquest (left) and Alan Greenspan.

Thank you for your gifts of talent and being our Trailblazing “Diva” & “Legend” over the years... We Love You!

† May you Rest in Heavenly Peace our Lady Soul †

➢ The Movie “The Queen” airs March 21st on National Geographic ◄
CELEBRATING RADIO PERSONALITIES

**Catherine Liggins Hughes** is an American entrepreneur, radio and television personality and business executive. Hughes founded the media company Radio One, and when the company went public in 1999, she became the first African-American woman to head a publicly traded corporation.

**Broderick Stephen Harvey** is an American television presenter, comedian, actor, broadcaster, author, game show host and businessman. He hosts The Steve Harvey Morning Show, Family Feud, Celebrity Family Feud and the Miss Universe competition. Harvey began his career as a comedian.

**Ralph Waldo "Petey" Greene, Jr.** was an American television and radio talk-show host. A two-time Emmy Award-winner. Aside from being a radio personality and talk show host, Greene was also a community activist, joining the United Planning Organization and founding the Ralph Waldo Greene Community Centre and Efforts for Ex-Convicts. This organization remains devoted to helping former prisoners succeed in legitimate ways and to advocate prison reform. He rallied against poverty and racism on his shows and on the streets, participating in demonstrations during the height of his popularity. Following the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in April 1968, and during the subsequent riots that erupted throughout the United States, Greene made statements on air that were credited with helping quell the riots in Washington, D.C.
Phylicia Rashad was born Phylicia Allen on June 19, 1948, in Houston, Texas. Her father, Andrew Allen, was a dentist. Her mother, Vivian Ayers, was a poet and playwright who had been nominated for a Pulitzer Prize. She grew up in Texas alongside her siblings. Her sister, Debbie Allen, is a well-known dancer and actress. Her brother, “Tex” Arthur Allen, Jr., is a jazz musician.

Allen graduated from high school in 1965. From there, she attended Howard University in Washington D.C. She studied theater. She graduated magna cum laude in 1970 with a Bachelor’s in fine arts. By 1972, she married William Lancelot Bowles. They had a son together. The couple divorced by 1975.

Shortly after her divorce, Allen moved to New York. There, she began her Broadway career. Some of her earliest roles include Deena Jones in *Dreamgirls* and a munchkin in *The Wiz*. In 1978, she married Victor Willis, the original lead singer of the Village People. Willis helped Allen record her album, *Josephine Superstar*, which told the story of Josephine Baker.

Allen and Willis divorced in 1982. The following year, she began her TV career with a role on the ABC soap opera, *One Life to Live*. In 1984, she was cast in her most iconic role to date, Clair Huxtable on *The Cosby Show*. She played Cosby’s TV wife and a successful attorney. The show lasted for eight years and she won two Emmy Award nominations for her performance. She was dubbed "*The Mother of the Black Community*" at the 2010 NAACP Image Awards.

In 1985, Allen married former NFL athlete, Ahmad Rashad. She adopted his last name and has kept it even though their marriage ended in 2001. In 1996, Rashad returned to television in Bill Cosby’s sitcom, *Cosby*. The show ran for four seasons and ultimately ended in 2000.
Debbie Allen is an American actress, television director, dancer, choreographer, television producer and a member of the President’s Committee on Arts and Humanities. She is best known for her roles in the series ‘Fame’, and ‘Grey’s Anatomy,’ etc. Debbie has been awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award for her contribution to the dance. 

Debbie Allen: Birth facts, Family and Childhood

She was born on January 16, 1950, in Houston, Texas, USA. Her birth name is Deborah Kaye Allen and her birth sign is Capricorn. Her father’s name is Andrew Arthur Allen Jr. and her mother’s name is Vivian Allen. Her father is an orthodontist and her mother is a poet, artist, playwright, scholar, and publisher.

She is the third of her parents and her sibling’s names are Phylicia Rashad, Andrew Arthur Allen Jr., and Hugh Allen. She developed her interest in dancing at the age of 3 and she joined dance class at the age of 5.

Her parents divorced in 1957 and hence she was raised by her mother. She took her children to Mexico in 1960. The reunion between her family members was in Texas after two years. She holds American citizenship and her ethnicity is African-American.

She has completed her B.A. degree in classical Greek Literature, speech and theatre form the Howard University.

She went for an audition for the Houston Ballet School but she was rejected on the basis of her skin color. However, after seeing her skill, she became successful in impressing the admission department. After that, she was secretly enrolled by a Russian instructor.

Debbie was again rejected at the age of 16 when she was in an audition for the North Carolina School of the Arts because they discouraged black dancer. She then worked hard and focused on her studies and finally, she became successful in making an appearance on television.
She debuted with a small role in ‘Roots: The Next Generations’ but she hit big after she grabbed the role as Anita in ‘West Side Story’ in 1980. Then, she got an opportunity to become an instructor for the movie ‘Fame’.

Debbie debuted directing ‘The Cosby Show’ where her family member was also starred and boosted the show to the top of the rating. She produced and directed the show until the final 1993.

She opened a dance academy in L.A, California in 2001 and named it as Debbie Allen Dance Academy. She fulfilled her dream by opening the academy. Her academy teaches the major dance techniques like Classical Ballet, Modern, African, Jazz, and Hip-Hop.

Debbie was also a judge and mentor since 2002 for the show ‘So You Think You Can’.

**Debbie Allen: Lifetime Achievement and Awards**

She had been appointed as a member of the President’s Committee on the Arts and Humanities by President George W. Bush in 2001. She won Emmy Award three times for the choreography for the series ‘Fame’ and ‘The Motown 25th Anniversary Special. She was awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award for her contribution to the dance on February 4, 2009, and many more.
Yale alumna Angela Bassett, an Oscar-nominated actress, director, and producer, has received this year’s Yale Undergraduate Lifetime Achievement Award (YULAA) presented by the Yale College Council (YCC). YULAA — established by the YCC in conjunction with the President’s Office — recognizes Yale College alumni for their outstanding work in a particular field. It is the only award in Ivy League history that is selected and administered entirely by students. Bassett was chosen to receive the award via a poll last spring of students in the Yale College Classes of 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023.

Bassett is the first Black recipient of the award, as well as the one with the most Yale degrees (she holds a B.A., M.F.A., and honorary doctorate). To date, the award has been presented to President George H.W. Bush ’48, Anderson Cooper ’89, Maya Lin ’81, Jodie Foster ’85, and President George W. Bush ’68. In a letter to Bassett, YCC president Kahlil Greene ’21 said, “I write to thank you for inspiring an entire generation of Yale students to break down barriers and follow their dreams.”

Halle Berry's film debut roles are Spike Lee’s Jungle Fever, Strictly Business, Boomerang, Queen: The Story of an American Family, Flintstones, Losing Isaiah, Race the Sun and Executive Decision. Beginning in 1996, she was a Revlon spokeswoman for seven years and renewed her contract in 2004.

She starred alongside Natalie Deselle Reid in the 1997 comedy film B*A*P*S. In 1998, Berry received praise for her role in Bulworth as an intelligent woman raised by activists who gives a politician (Warren Beatty) a new lease on life. The same year, she played the singer Zola Taylor, one of the three wives of pop singer Frankie Lymon, in the biopic Why Do Fools Fall in Love. In the 1999 HBO biopic Introducing Dorothy Dandridge, she portrayed the first African American woman to be nominated for the Academy Award for Best Actress. Berry’s performance was recognized with several awards, including a Primetime Emmy Award and Golden Globe Award.
Actor and singer Will Smith

Will Smith a pioneering black nerd, helped raised and changed black rap music. *Smith’s music career reveals an artist who believed in an Afrocentric American dream based on ambition, hustle and black pride.*


Will Smith started his career in high school as the MC of hip-hop duo DJ Jazzy Jeff & The Fresh Prince with his childhood friend. Will had one of his friends join the group and the hip-hop group released their first single in 1985 called “Girls Ain’t Nothing But Trouble.” The single became a hit before Will had even graduated, and the young rapper became known for lighter raps that told stories without profanity.

Jive Records and Russell Simons took an interest in the group. Their first album, “Rock the House,” was released a few years later and earned the group their Grammy award for Best Rap Performance. They earned their second Grammy with “Summertime” in 1991, one of their most successful singles that charted.
**Donald Frank Cheadle Jr.** is an American actor, author, director, producer and writer.

**Activism**

Cheadle has campaigned to end the genocide in Darfur, Sudan. Cheadle and John Prendergast co-authored a book about this issue entitled *Not On Our Watch: The Mission to End Genocide in Darfur and Beyond*. With George Clooney, Brad Pitt, Matt Damon, David Pressman and Jerry Weintraub, Cheadle co-founded the Not On Our Watch Project, an organization focusing global attention and resources to stop and prevent mass atrocities. Cheadle was awarded the BET Humanitarian award of the year in 2007 for his humanitarian work for the people of Darfur and Rwanda.

**Shelton Jackson "Spike" Lee** is an American film director, producer, screenwriter, actor, and professor. His production company, 40 Acres and a Mule Filmworks, has produced more than 35 films since 1983. He made his directorial debut with *She's Gotta Have It*.

**Tyler Perry** is an American actor, director, producer and screenwriter. In 2011, Forbes listed him as the highest-paid man in entertainment, earning US$130 million between May 2010 and May 2011. Perry created and performs the Madea character, a tough elderly woman.
CELEBRATING PRESTIGIOUS TELEVISION JOURNALISTS

Bryant Charles Gumbel is an American television journalist and sportscaster, best known for his 15 years as co-host of NBC's Today.

Albert Lincoln Roker Jr. is an American weather forecaster, journalist, television personality, actor, and author. He is the current weather anchor on NBC's Today. Roker also serves as co-host on 3rd Hour Today, although the latter was not officially announced by NBC News.

Gayle King is an American television personality, author and broadcast journalist for CBS News, co-hosting its flagship morning program, CBS This Morning, a position she has held since its debut in 2012. She is also an editor-at-large for O, The Oprah Magazine.
CELEBRATING MEGHAN MARKLE & NIPSEY HUSSLE

Meghan Markle, Duchess of Sussex is an American member of the British royal family and a former actress. Born and raised in Los Angeles, California, Markle played the paralegal Rachel Zane in the American legal drama Suits, her acting career began while studying at Northwestern University.

Ermias Joseph Asghedom, known professionally as Nipsey Hussle, was an American rapper, activist, and entrepreneur.
In honor of Black History Month, throughout February the National Inventors Hall of Fame® (NIHF) Museum will be displaying a panel exhibit highlighting four influential African-American Inventors.

Located in the atrium of the United States Patent and Trademark Office headquarters, this exhibit features the accomplishments and patents of NIHF Inductees who pioneered technology essential to connecting billions of people across America.

While learning more about the contributions of these NIHF Inductees below, we encourage you to nominate an African-American inventor for consideration in our 2020 class of Inductees!

**Jim West, 1999 Inductee**

Jim West shares a patent with co-Inductee Gerhard Sessler for inventing the electret microphone in 1962 during their time at Bell Laboratories. Because of the device’s high performance and low cost, the technology was widely adopted, and 90 percent of today’s microphones are electret in nature. Additionally, this technology can be found in everyday items such as telephones, sound and music recording equipment, and hearing aids.
Granville Woods, 2006 Inductee

Granville Woods is credited with inventing the railroad telegraph. Using static electricity from the existing telegraph lines running parallel to the train tracks, this device enabled moving trains to communicate with each other and with rail stations for the first time. Before Woods’ crucial invention, moving trains were unable to coordinate with each other, resulting in dangerous situations.

W. Lincoln Hawkins, 2010 Inductee

The first African American to join the technical staff at Bell Labs, W. Lincoln Hawkins helped make universal telephone service accessible and economical. His co-invention of the polymer cable sheath allowed telephone cables to withstand changes in temperature and other environmental factors, helping to maintain a stable connection.

Victor Lawrence, 2016 Inductee

We have Victor Lawrence to thank for advancing the fields of data encoding and transmission, enabling the development of high-speed internet. His patents relating to signal processing in telecommunications helped to substantially increase the amount of data transferable across signals. Today, he is an advocate for bringing internet access to the world’s poorest countries.

https://www.invent.org/blog/innovation-display/Black-History-Month-Panel-Exhibit
Historical Sites around the Country

The National Museum of African American History and Culture is the only national museum devoted exclusively to the documentation of African American life, history, and culture. Act of Congress established it in 2003, following decades of efforts to promote and highlight the contributions of African Americans. To date, the Museum has collected more than 36,000 artifacts and nearly 100,000 individuals have become members. The Museum opened to the public on September 24, 2016, as the 19th and newest museum of the Smithsonian Institution.

https://nmaahc.si.edu/

Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park

The Martin Luther King Jr. National Historical Park covers about 35 acres and includes several buildings in Atlanta, Georgia related to the life and work of civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr.

https://www.nps.gov/malu/index.htm

Frederick Douglass National Historic Site

The Frederick Douglass National Historic Site, administered by the National Park Service, is located at 1411 W Street, SE, in Anacostia, a neighborhood east of the Anacostia River in Southeast Washington, D.C.

https://www.nps.gov/frdo/index.htm

Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial

The Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial is located in West Potomac Park next to the National Mall in Washington, D.C., United States. It covers four acres and includes the Stone of Hope, a granite statue of Civil Rights Movement leader Martin Luther King Jr. carved by sculptor

https://www.nps.gov/mlkm/planyourvisit/basicinfo.htm

National Civil Rights Museum

The National Civil Rights Museum is a complex of museums and historic buildings in Memphis, Tennessee; its exhibits trace the history of the civil rights movement in the United States from the 17th century to the present

https://www.civilrightsmuseum.org/

Negro Leagues Baseball Museum

The Negro Leagues Baseball Museum is a privately funded museum dedicated to preserving the history of Negro league baseball in America

https://nlbm.com/
Charles H. Wright Museum

The Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History is located in the Cultural Center of the U.S. city of Detroit, Michigan. Founded in 1965, the museum holds the world's largest permanent exhibit on African-American culture

https://www.thewright.org/

Harriet Tubman Home

Harriet Tubman National Historical Park is a US historical park in Auburn and Fleming, New York, associated with the life of Harriet Tubman. It comprises three properties: the Harriet Tubman Home for the Aged, in Auburn; the nearby Harriet Tubman Residence; and the Thompson A.M.E. Zion Church in Auburn.

https://www.harriettubmanhome.com/

Birmingham Civil Rights Institute

Birmingham Civil Rights Institute is a large interpretive museum and research center in Birmingham, Alabama that depicts the struggles of the Civil Rights Movement in the 1950s and 1960s.

https://www.bcri.org/
More than 40 years ago, Judith Thomas had a brief interview opportunity to work for legendary broadcaster Larry King, and that chance meeting turned into an almost 20-year tenure with the “King of Talk,” plus a friendship that would last until his death on Jan. 23.

As an employee for King, Thomas worked as a studio assistant, associate producer for his radio and television shows, personal assistant and vice president of Larry King Enterprises and served as the first executive director of the Larry King Cardiac Foundation.