



Celebrate

BLACK



History

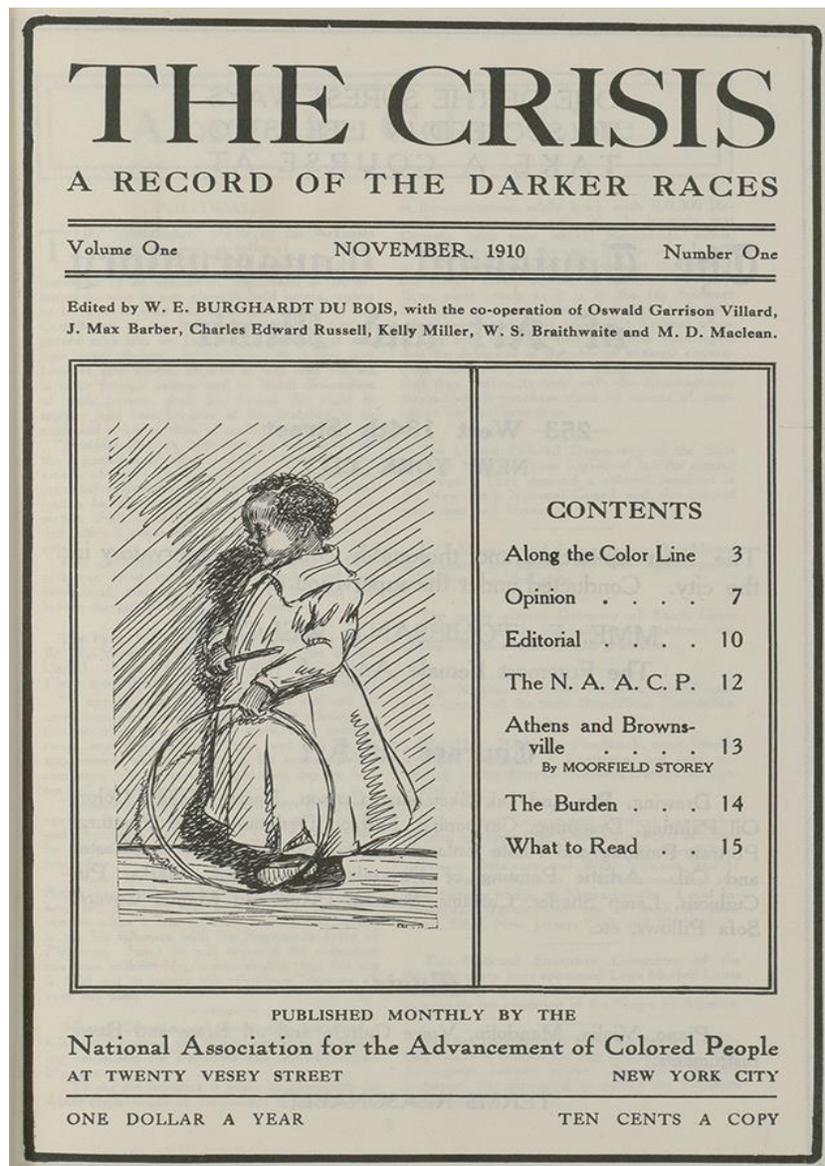
MONTH

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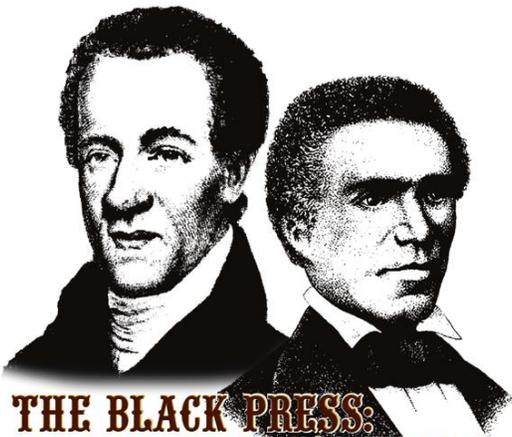


***The Crisis* is the official magazine of the
National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)**

It was founded in 1910 by [W. E. B. Du Bois](#) (editor), [Oswald Garrison Villard](#), [J. Max Barber](#), [Charles Edward Russell](#), [Kelly Miller](#), [William Stanley Braithwaite](#), and [Mary Dunlop Maclean](#). *The Crisis* has been in continuous print since 1910, and it is the oldest Black-oriented magazine in the world. Today, *The Crisis* is "a quarterly journal of civil rights, history, politics and culture and seeks to educate and challenge its readers about issues that continue to plague African Americans and other communities of color.



Samuel Cornish & John Russwurm - first editors of The Freedom's Journal and the first black newspaper in the United States



**THE BLACK PRESS:
CELEBRATING 189 YEARS
OF TELLING OUR STORY**

Story by Jo-Carolyn Goode | Photos of Samuel Cornish & John Russwurm

Silence is deadening. Movements are not taken. Words are not spoken. Action does not happen. And in the 1800s that was the outlook for black people. They might as well have been dead because in the greater society they didn't exist; at least on paper they didn't. Cut out of the conversation, no one told of their births, lives, marriages, deaths, accomplishments, or anything. No one knew their story. Black voices were not welcomed dialects as they were only discuss in a negative way by white people. Stories riddled with lies, negativity and unjust practices were the norm. Samuel Cornish, John Russwurm, and a bold, brave, brilliant group of New York men grew weary of others telling the black story and decided it was time for them to plead their "own cause." They did it in the only fashion that they knew

best. Putting pen to paper, they unsilence a people and gave life to their story.

In 1827, Cornish and Russwurm became the first editors of The Freedom's Journal, the first black newspaper in the United States. Although Freedom's Journal would only exist for 2 years, it would spun other newspapers; the most popular being that of The North Star by Frederick Douglas. Capturing an audience of more than just blacks, Douglas' publication became a tool of abolitionism as those in Congress and presidents read it.

Towards the end of 1865 and the Civil War black newspapers would get another surge. Bans on publications being circulated and published in the South were lifted. Emancipated slaves had the freedom to read opening up an entire new audience for the black press. With a larger readership and more publications, the black newspaper took on a new responsibility of being more than just a vehicle to tell a story but one that informed and was a sign of freedom.

As the years have passed more and more black publications have been established and some have died. The advancement of technology has given new avenues to tell the untold stories and reach readers on every level. In the cusp of that progression for the past 26 years has been Houston Style Magazine under the leadership of Francis Page, Jr. Starting as a local publication to highlight the best of Black Houston. Over the years we have evolved to be a global brand that reaches a readership of international connections. Covering everything from who will be the next president to the local lady making a difference in her community. We are the voice of the people.

The Black Press celebrates 189 years of telling our story our way. We thank you for your continue unwavering support.

Broadcast Legend Carole Simpson



In the midst of Black History Month, as the nation celebrates the leaders who helped shape the country, broadcast legend Carole Simpson is opening up about breaking barriers in the broadcast industry.

In 1988, Simpson made history as the first Black woman to helm a major network newscast when she became the face of ABC News' "World News Tonight" weekend edition, which is a role she held for 15 years. The three-time Emmy award-winning television journalist spoke to ABC News' Linsey Davis, who now holds the Sunday night anchor slot that Simpson once commanded, about paving the way for others in a male-dominated industry.

Simpson told Davis that she was proud of her for securing the position as she's had high hopes of seeing more African American women follow her lead.

"Women can do the impossible ... if you want something, you'll do it," Simpson told ABC News on Sunday.



In 1992, Simpson became the ***first minority to moderate a presidential debate***, which included President George H.W. Bush, Gov. Bill Clinton, and businessman Ross Perot. She recalls working tirelessly for days prior to the debate in preparation for the historic moment.

In her memoir titled "NewsLady," she details how she overcame both sexual discrimination and racism before reaching the top ranks of the industry.

The 79-year-old, who reported during the height of the civil rights movement, which includes covering and meeting Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., believes that America's racial reckoning last June following the death of George Floyd at the hands of Minneapolis police was short-lived.

"Just look at where we are now," Simpson told ABC News. "We are so divided and I think the race question is right back here. ... we've had many Black men killed since George Floyd."

As someone who reported on politics and frequently worked at the U.S. Capitol building, Simpson says that the deadly riot last month was something that "really shook" her.

"I think the damage that was done by Donald Trump to the nation is not insurmountable, but it's going to be hard ... to put all the pieces he tried to shatter," Simpson said.

Simpson, who grew up as a curious child on the South Side of Chicago, said that it took “sheer determination” to carve out her own path and follow her dream of working in news.

After attending the University of Michigan, she went to graduate school at the University of Iowa. After college, she quickly went on to leave her mark in her hometown of Chicago by becoming the first woman to broadcast radio news and the first Black woman to anchor a local newscast.

After working in the business for 40 years, she retired in 2006 and taught journalism courses at Emerson College in Boston for 13 years.

Today, Simpson is still making a difference in the industry by offering scholarships to journalism students and mentoring youth across the country.

Additionally, she offers advice to women through her vlog titled W.O.W. (Wise Old Woman) – a platform where she's become a one-woman production band by producing digital content from her home.

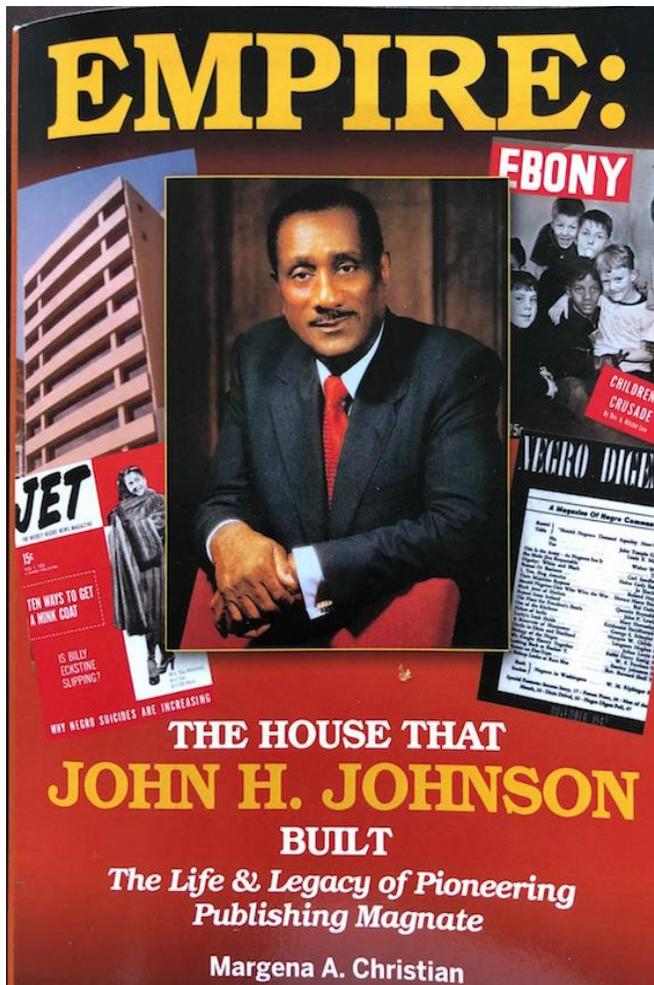
“I want my legacy to be that she made a difference,” Simpson said.

CELEBRATING BLACK AMERICAN MAGAZINES

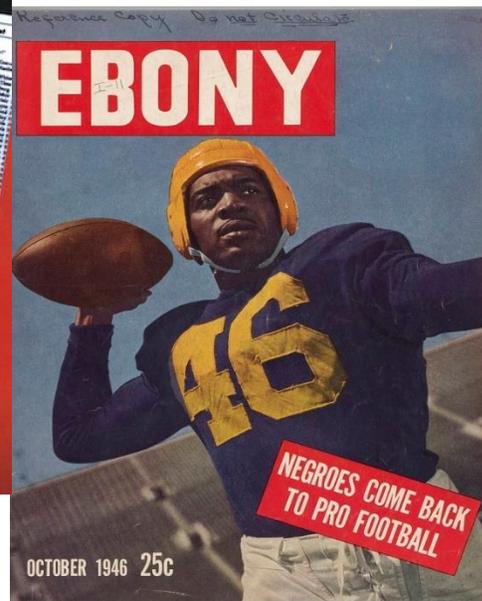
John H. Johnson was born in rural [Arkansas City, Arkansas](#) to Gertrude (nee Jenkins) and Leroy Johnson (d. 1926), the grandson of slaves. When he was six years old, his father died in a sawmill accident and Johnson was raised by his mother and his step father James Williams. Johnson attended an overcrowded and segregated elementary school. Such was his love of learning, he repeated the eighth grade rather than discontinue his education, as there was no public high school for African Americans in Arkansas City or anywhere else in [Desha County](#).

After a visit with his mother to [Chicago World's Fair](#), they decided that opportunities in the North were more plentiful than in the South.

Johnson began as an office boy at Supreme Life and within two years had become Pace's assistant. His duties included preparing a monthly digest of newspaper articles, with help from his publisher, "Madam DuBois." Johnson began to wonder if other people in the community might not enjoy the same type of service. He conceived of a publication patterned after *Reader's Digest*. His work at Supreme Life also gave him the opportunity to see the day-to-day operations of a business owned by an African American and fostered his dream of starting a business of his own.



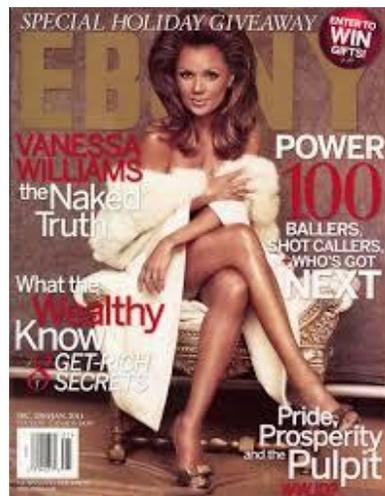
Ebony is a monthly magazine that focuses on news, culture, and entertainment. *Ebony* magazine was founded in 1945 by [John H. Johnson](#), who sought to address African-American issues, personalities and interests in a positive and self-affirming manner. Its cover photography typically showcases prominent African-American public figures, including entertainers and politicians.



After 71 years, in June 2016, Johnson Publishing sold both *Ebony* and *Jet*, another Johnson publication, to a private equity firm called Clear View Group. The new publisher is known as **Ebony Media Corporation**. After the publication went bankrupt in July 2020, it was

purchased for \$14 million by [Junior Bridgeman](#) in December 2020.

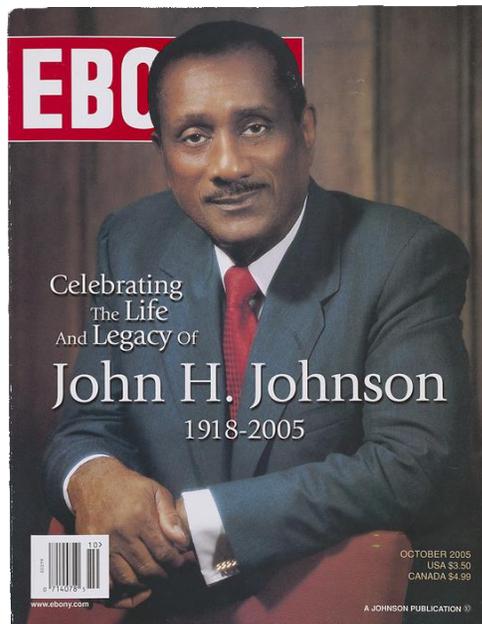
Each year, *Ebony* selects the America".



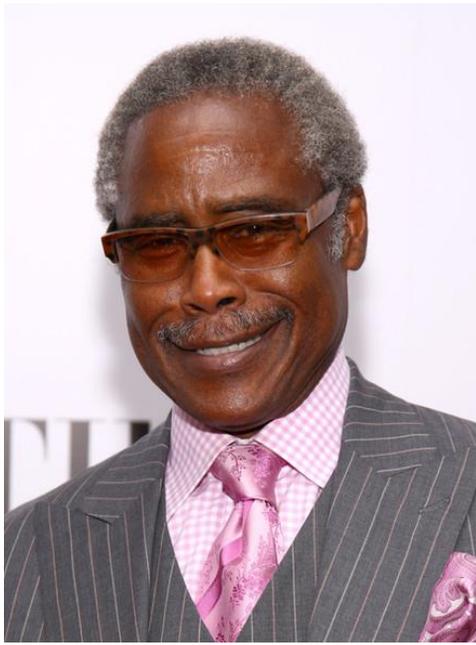
"100 Most Influential Blacks in

John Harold Johnson (January 19, 1918 – August 8, 2005) was an American businessman and publisher. Johnson was the founder of the [Johnson Publishing Company](#) which is headquartered in Chicago, Illinois. In 1982, Johnson became the first African American to appear on the [Forbes 400](#). In 1987, Johnson was named:

Black Enterprise Entrepreneur of the year!



✠Thanks Mr. Johnson & Continually Rest In Heavenly Peace✠



Edward Lewis (born on May 15, 1940) in the Bronx, New York. In 1969, he co-founded *Essence* magazine, specifically targeted to Black women. Propelled by the extraordinary success of *Essence*, he has become one of the most successful and respected magazine publishers in the country. In 1995, he also founded *Latina* magazine.

Publisher and entrepreneur Edward Lewis was born on May 15, 1940, in the Bronx, New York. He grew up impoverished in the projects of the South Bronx, a neighborhood plagued at the time by drug addiction and violence. Nevertheless, Lewis's parents—his father a night shift janitor at City College and his mother a factory worker—instilled in him a strong work ethic and desire to succeed.

Lewis attended De Witt Clinton High School in the Bronx, where he excelled academically and was a star fullback on the football team. Upon graduating from high school in 1958, he earned a football scholarship to the University of New Mexico.

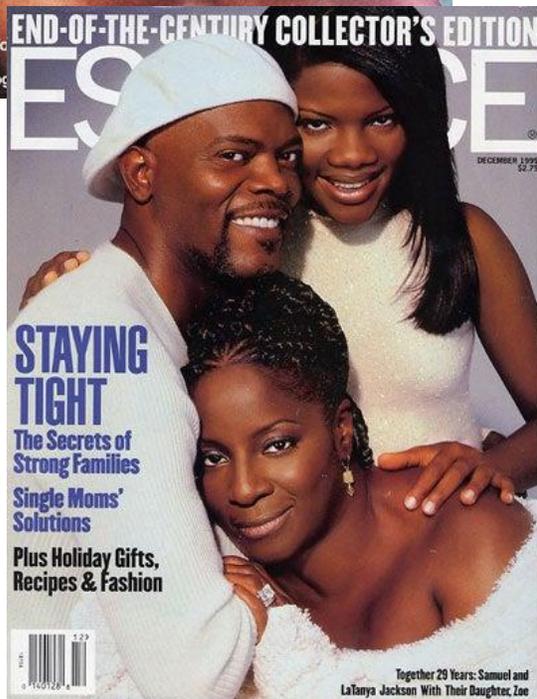
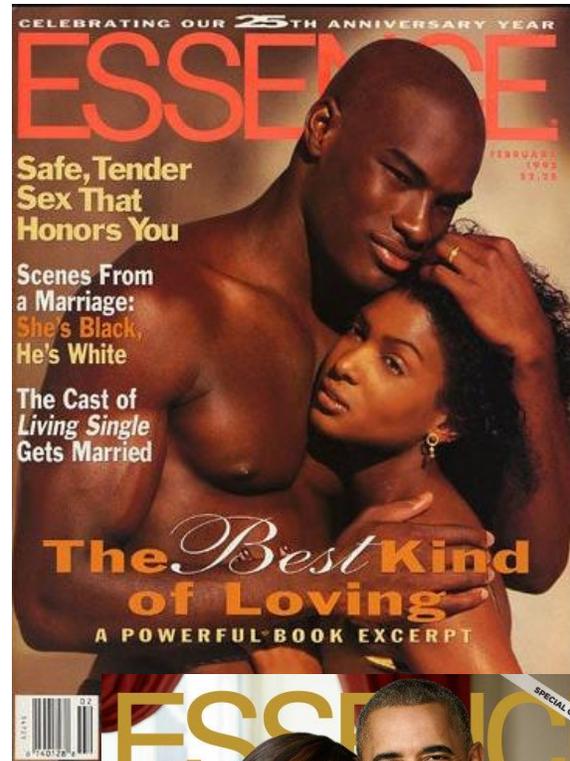
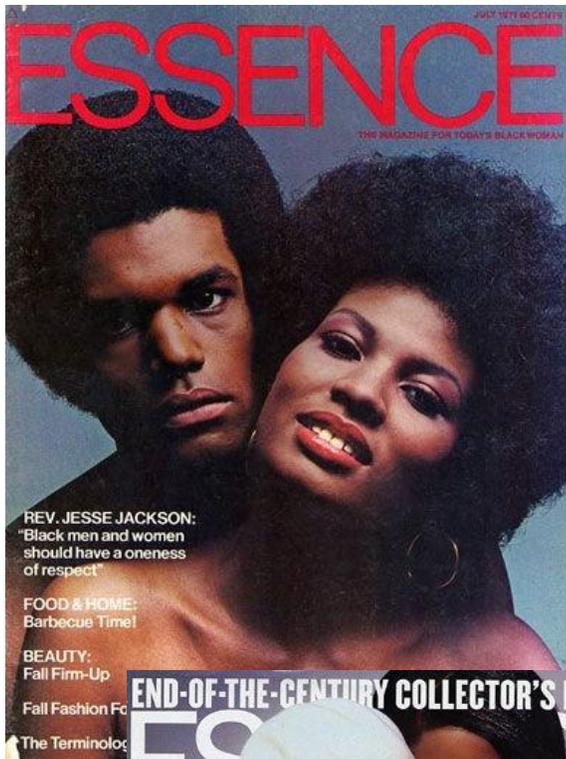
Edward Lewis very nearly did not make it to New Mexico alive. The cross-country flight on TWA airlines was the first Lewis had ever boarded and it was nearly his last: An engine caught fire in midair and passengers began bracing themselves for death. "I knew that my life was over," Lewis later recalled, "and I had another fellow sitting next to me, and we held hands. We were reading the Bible because we knew that was it." But it wasn't. The plane made a miraculously safe emergency landing and Lewis arrived safely in New Mexico after all.

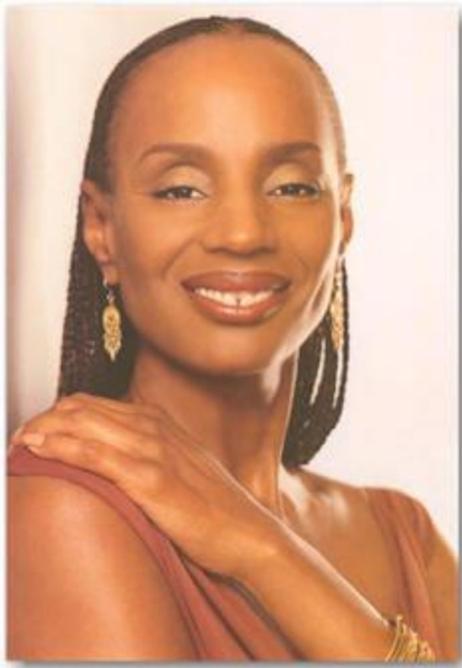
In 1965, Lewis landed a job as a financial analyst at First National City Bank in New York City. Lewis was steadily rising through the ranks at the bank, on track to become a loan officer, when in 1968 he attended a conference on Blacks in the business world. He met many other ambitious young African-American professionals at the conference, leaving with a newfound determination to start his own uniquely Black business.

A year later, Lewis, along with another young Black businessman from the Bronx, Clarence O. Smith, founded *Essence* magazine, a magazine specifically targeted to Black women. Lewis explained his vision for *Essence*: "We just had this desire to bring something into the world that Black women could feel good about—to give hope, to provide jobs, to provide a voice for Black women ... to begin to see their voices, to begin to see themselves in the pages of a magazine that they could call their own." The first issue of *Essence* was published in May 1970 with a modest print run of 50,000 copies. Since then, *Essence* has grown into what the *New York Times* called the "pre-eminent voice for Black women," with a readership of more than 7.5 million.

Every Single Time Black Love Reignied Supreme on ESSENCE Covers through the Years

SINCE OUR FIRST ISSUE HIT STANDS IN MAY 1970, WE'VE ALWAYS CELEBRATED THE BEAUTY OF BLACK LOVE.



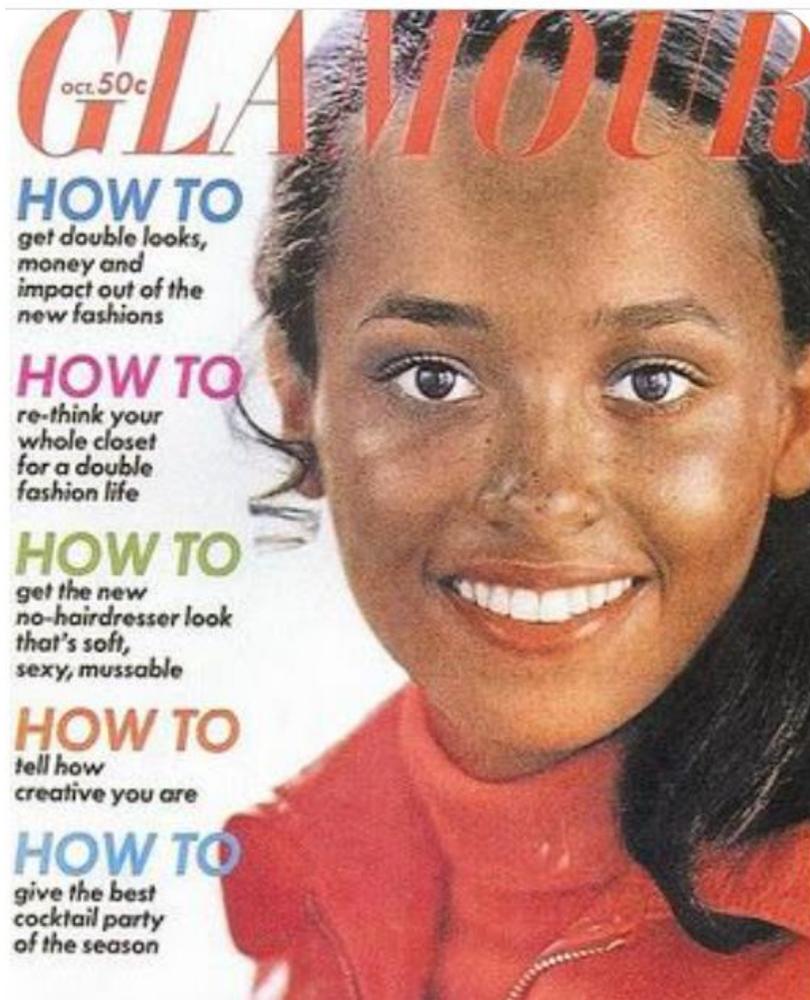


Susan L. Taylor is a [1 time AALBC.com Bestselling Author](#)

Susan L. Taylor has been the driving force behind [Essence Magazine](#) for almost 4 decades. Taylor, 61, joined Essence in 1970. A fourth-generation entrepreneur, Taylor was the founder of her own company, Nequai Cosmetics, before becoming Essence's fashion and beauty editor and, in 1981, its editor-in-chief. In 1999 Taylor became the first African American woman to receive The Henry Johnson Fisher Award from the Magazine Publishers of America, the magazine industry's highest honor. In 2002 Taylor was inducted into the American Society of Magazine Editors' Hall of Fame, which celebrates the career-long records of excellence, creativity and impact of a select group of highly influential magazine journalists. Taylor's visionary leadership was acknowledged when the NAACP presented her with its first President's Award in 2006. She is an avid supporter of a host of organizations dedicated to moving the Black community forward. Her passion and focus are on creating equity in education and turning around the nation's failing schools, which, she says are "the pipeline to prison."

"I will be leaving **Essence** to do what at this juncture in my life has become a larger work for me—building the National Cares Mentoring Movement, which I founded as Essence Cares and today is my deepest passion."

—Susan L. Taylor, December 28, 2007)



**Daphne Maxwell-Reid, first African American Glamour Magazine cover girl, 1969
(she's best known for her role as the mom
Vivian Banks of "Fresh Prince")**

Also, wife of Tim Reid



(Dad on "Sister Sister")

Poet, Author, Activist & Actress

Dr. Maya Angelou



My wish for you is that you **continue**.
Continue to be who and how you are,
to astonish a mean world
with your acts of **kindness**.

– Maya Angelou



“Do the
best you
can until
you know
better.
Then when
you know
better, do
better.”

– Maya Angelou





Maya Angelou was a civil rights activist, poet and award-winning author known for her acclaimed 1969 memoir, 'I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings,' and her numerous poetry and essay collections. Angelou received several honors throughout her career, including two NAACP Image Awards in the outstanding literary work (nonfiction) category, in 2005 and 2009.



Early Life

Angelou was born on April 4, 1928, in St. Louis, Missouri. During [World War II](#), Angelou moved to San Francisco, California. There she won a scholarship to study dance and acting at the California Labor School. Also during this time, Angelou became the first Black female cable car conductor — a job she held only briefly — in San Francisco.

In the mid-1950s, Angelou's career as a performer began to take off. She landed a role in a touring production of *Porgy and Bess*, later appearing in the off-Broadway production *Calypso Heat Wave* (1957) and releasing her first album, *Miss Calypso* (1957).

A member of the Harlem Writers Guild and a civil rights activist, Angelou organized and starred in the musical revue *Cabaret for Freedom* as a benefit for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, also serving as the SCLC's northern coordinator.

In 1961, Angelou appeared in an off-Broadway production of Jean Genet's *The Blacks* with [James Earl Jones](#), Lou Gossett Jr. and [Cicely Tyson](#).

Angelou went on to earn a Tony Award nomination for her role in the play *Look Away* (1973) and an Emmy Award nomination for her work on the television miniseries *Roots* (1977), among other honors.



Maya Angelou read her poem "On the Pulse of Morning" at the first inauguration of President Bill Clinton on January 20, 1993, becoming the second poet in history and the first African American and woman to read a poem at a presidential inauguration. The poem's themes are change,

inclusion, responsibility, and role of both the President and the citizenry in establishing economic security.

Maya Angelou Photos - U.S. President Barack Obama presents poet and author Maya Angelou with the 2010 Medal of Freedom in the East Room of the White House February 15, 2011 in Washington, DC.



**MAYA
ANGELOU**

Writer, Poet,
Performer &
Teacher



CALIFORNIA HALL OF FAME

Maya Angelou inducted into the California Hall of Fame – December 11, 2019

Maya Angelou Newsletter: March 2020



As I was growing I really didn't understand who my mother was. It was a different time in the 1950s. Racism and sexism were practiced unapologetically. Rebellion and resistance were not part of the American Psyche. Patriotism and conformance to the law was the mode of the day, even when that law was unjustly applied. My mother was not having any of that; she confronted and challenged the authorities and the police whenever she

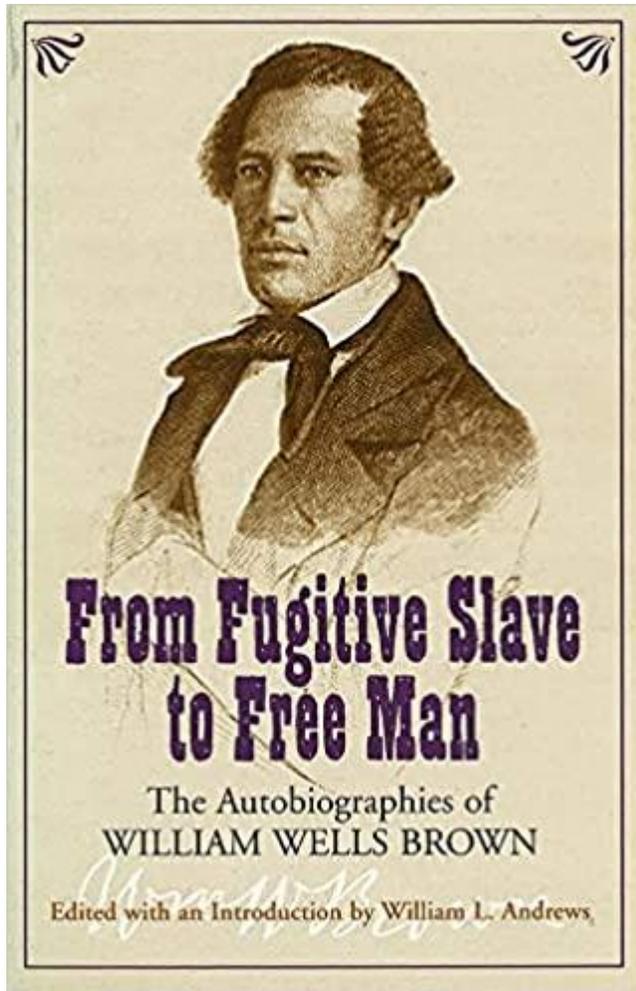
felt an injustice was being imposed upon her, which for the time was extremely unusual. She was often branded as a troublemaker. In my family, the older members; my grandparents and great aunts and uncles, who regularly carried guns and often had altercations with the police, thought my mother was strange. They thought she brought unnecessary attention to herself because she fought other people's battles. They didn't understand and neither did I at the time, that my mother's actions were dictated by her principles. In my adolescence, I actually bought into the belief she was a trouble-maker. My perceptions were based on the fact she got black-balled and fired from jobs for speaking up whenever she saw unfairness and injustice around her. Sometimes it wasn't even for herself, but for other people. I recall her saying to me that "She would not suffer either prejudicial behavior or injustice in her presence without protest." I later grew to understand that her actions were based on her belief that justice was so important that it must be fought for whenever it was encroached upon. She would tell me that the flower of the human spirit had difficulty blossoming without the natural nourishment of justice and dignity. Sometimes when we left the house, she would point out that the quality of justice one wants in their life begins at their own doorstep, meaning whatever they are willing to fight for or what they are willing to ignore. Frankly, my mother was one of the most daring people I knew. She spouted ideas and concepts that didn't become popular until twenty years later. For example, she called herself a Black person in 1950 when everyone else used the term "Colored"

and thought that 'Black' was a derisive and negative term. My mother would wear her hair natural and wear African dress, which embarrassed me and always elicited snide remarks from other "People of Color." She would take me aside and warn me about the insidious qualities of racism and prejudice. She would discuss with me the stereotypical depictions of Black people as well as Africa in the news and the movies, then tell me to always fight against the prison of ignorance. So, in this time of racial divisiveness and the rise of demagogues, with a President who is willing to start a war to divert attention away from his misconduct; with his biased and impulsive, presidential tweets ricocheting across the social media ether, we must remember all those who gave their sweat and blood to make this country stay true to the tenets of its Constitution. This is a fight that cannot be ignored; there is work to be done and many battles still to be won. So, roll up your sleeves and don't be a prisoner of ignorance. Justice ends or begins at your doorstep. ***As a postscript, this year is the fiftieth anniversary of the publishing of "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings."*** This book which addressed the human heart from the perspective of the Black Experience has never been out of print in its five decades of existence and has been translated into numerous languages around the globe. Yet, this amazing book along with her other fantastic literary endeavors are only one element of the phenomenal legacy of her life. Dr. Angelou can still inspire us and touch our hearts with the story of her life.

Guy Johnson, Author, and son of Maya Angelou



Guy Johnson, son of Maya Angelou, speaks at the Maya Angelou Forever Stamp Dedication on April 7, 2015 in Washington, DC.



William Wells Brown (c. 1814 – November 6, 1884) was a prominent African-American [abolitionist](#) lecturer, novelist, playwright, and historian in the United States. Born into [slavery](#) in [Montgomery County, Kentucky](#), near the town of [Mount Sterling](#), Brown escaped to Ohio in 1834 at the age of 19. He settled in [Boston, Massachusetts](#), where he worked for abolitionist causes and became a prolific writer. While working for abolition, Brown also supported causes including: temperance, women's suffrage, pacifism, prison reform, and an anti-tobacco movement. His novel [Clotel](#) (1853), considered the first novel written by an African American, was published in [London](#), England, where he resided at the time; it was later published in the United States.

Brown was an African-American pioneer in several different literary genres, including travel writing, fiction, and drama. In 1858 he became the first published African-American playwright, and often read from this work on the lecture circuit. Following the Civil War, in 1867 he published what is considered the first history of African Americans in the [Revolutionary War](#). He was among the first writers inducted to the Kentucky Writers Hall of Fame, established in 2013.



A public school was named for him in *Lexington, Kentucky*.

***The Promise Academy at William Wells Brown Elementary
Lexington, Kentucky
Be the Change... Change the World!***

Brown was lecturing in England when the 1850 [Fugitive Slave Law](#) was passed in the US; as its provisions increased the risk of capture and re-enslavement, he stayed overseas for several years. He traveled throughout Europe. After his freedom was purchased in 1854 by a British couple, he and his two daughters returned to the US, where he rejoined the abolitionist [lecture circuit](#) in the North. A contemporary of [Frederick Douglass](#), Brown was overshadowed by the charismatic orator and the two feuded publicly.

Brown stayed abroad until 1854. Passage of the [1850 Fugitive Slave Law](#) had increased his risk of capture even in the free states. Only after the Richardson family of Britain purchased his freedom in 1854 (they had done the same for [Frederick Douglass](#)), did Brown return to the United States. He quickly rejoined the anti-slavery lecture circuit.

Perhaps because of the rising social tensions in the 1850s, Brown became a proponent of African-American emigration to [Haiti](#), an independent black republic in the Caribbean since 1804. He decided that more militant actions were needed to help the abolitionist cause. During the [American Civil War](#) and in the decades that followed, Brown continued to publish fiction and non-fiction books, securing his reputation as one of the most prolific African-American writers of his time. He also helped recruit blacks to fight for the Union in the Civil War. He introduced [Robert John Simmons](#) from Bermuda to the abolitionist Francis George Shaw, father of Colonel [Robert Gould Shaw](#), the commanding officer of the [54th Massachusetts](#) Volunteer Infantry Regiment.

While continuing to write, Brown was active in the [Temperance movement](#) as a lecturer. After studying [homeopathic medicine](#), he opened a medical practice in Boston's [South End](#) while keeping a residence in [Cambridge](#). In 1882 he moved to the nearby city of [Chelsea](#).

William Wells Brown died on November 6, 1884, in Chelsea, Massachusetts, at the age of 70.



Eleanora Fagan (April 7, 1915 – July 17, 1959), known professionally as **Billie Holiday**, was an American [jazz](#) and [swing music](#) singer with a career spanning 26 years. Nicknamed "**Lady Day**" by her friend and music partner [Lester Young](#), Holiday had an innovative influence on jazz music and [pop](#) singing. Her vocal style, strongly inspired by jazz instrumentalists, pioneered a new way of manipulating [phrasing](#) and [tempo](#). She was known for her vocal delivery and improvisational skills.

After a turbulent childhood, Holiday began singing in nightclubs in [Harlem](#), where she was heard by producer [John Hammond](#), who commended her

voice. She signed a recording contract with [Brunswick](#) in 1935. Collaborations with [Teddy Wilson](#) yielded the hit "[What a Little Moonlight Can Do](#)", which became a jazz standard.

Throughout the 1930s and 1940s, Holiday had mainstream success on labels such as [Columbia](#) and [Decca](#). By the late 1940s, however, she was beset with legal troubles and drug abuse. After a short prison sentence, she performed at a sold-out concert at [Carnegie Hall](#), but her reputation deteriorated because of her drug and alcohol problems.

She was a successful concert performer throughout the 1950s with two further sold-out shows at Carnegie Hall. Because of personal struggles and an altered voice, her final recordings were met with mixed reaction but were mild commercial successes. Her final album, [Lady in Satin](#), was released in 1958. Holiday died of [cirrhosis](#) on July 17, 1959 at age 44. She won four [Grammy Awards](#), all of them posthumously, for Best Historical Album. She was inducted into the [Grammy Hall of Fame](#) in 1973. [Lady Sings the Blues](#), a film about her life, starring [Diana Ross](#), was released in 1972. She is the primary character in the play (later made into a film) [Lady Day at Emerson's Bar and Grill](#); the role was originated by Reenie Upchurch in 1986 and was played by [Audra McDonald](#) on [Broadway](#) and in the film. In 2017, Holiday was inducted into the [National Rhythm & Blues Hall of Fame](#).

1939: "Strange Fruit" and Commodore Records

Holiday was in the middle of recording for [Columbia](#) in the late 1930s when she was introduced to "[Strange Fruit](#)", a song based on a poem about [lynching](#) written by [Abel Meeropol](#), a Jewish schoolteacher from the Bronx. Meeropol used the pseudonym "Lewis Allan" for the poem, which was set to music and performed at teachers' union meetings. It was eventually heard by Barney Josephson, the proprietor of [Café Society](#), an integrated nightclub in [Greenwich Village](#), who introduced it to Holiday. She performed it at the club in 1939, with some trepidation, fearing possible retaliation. She later said that the imagery of the song reminded her of her father's death and that this played a role in her resistance to performing it. For her performance of "Strange Fruit" at the Café Society, she had waiters silence the crowd when the song began. During the song's long introduction, the lights dimmed and all movement had to cease. As Holiday began singing, only a small spotlight illuminated her face. On the final note, all lights went out, and when they came back on, Holiday was gone. Holiday said her father, [Clarence Holiday](#), was denied medical treatment for a fatal lung disorder because of racial prejudice, and that singing "Strange Fruit" reminded her of the incident. "It reminds me of how Pop died, but I have to keep singing it, not only because people ask for it, but because twenty years after Pop died the things that killed him are still happening in the South", she wrote in her autobiography. When Holiday's producers at Columbia found the subject matter too sensitive, [Milt Gabler](#) agreed to record it for his [Commodore Records](#) label on April 20, 1939. "Strange Fruit" remained in her repertoire for 20 years. She recorded it again for [Verve](#). The Commodore release did not get any airplay, but the controversial song sold well, though Gabler attributed that mostly to the record's other side, "[Fine and Mellow](#)", which was a [jukebox](#) hit. "The version I recorded for Commodore", Holiday said of "Strange Fruit", "became my biggest-selling record." "Strange Fruit" was the equivalent of a top-twenty hit in the 1930s.

Holiday's popularity increased after "Strange Fruit". She received a mention in [Time](#) magazine. "I open Café Society as an unknown," Holiday said. "I left two years later as a star. I needed the prestige and publicity all right, but you can't pay rent with it." She soon demanded a raise from her manager, [Joe Glaser](#). Holiday returned to Commodore in 1944, recording songs she made with Teddy Wilson in the 1930s, including "[I Cover the Waterfront](#)", "[I'll Get By](#)", and "[He's Funny That Way](#)". She also recorded new songs that were popular at the time, including, "[My Old Flame](#)", "How Am I to Know?", "I'm Yours", and "[I'll Be Seeing You](#)",

a number one hit for [Bing Crosby](#). She also recorded her version of "[Embraceable You](#)", which was inducted into the [Grammy Hall of Fame](#) in 2005.

Holiday's mother Sadie, nicknamed "The Duchess", opened a restaurant called Mom Holiday's. She used money from her daughter while playing dice with members of the Count Basie band, with whom she toured in the late 1930s. "It kept Mom busy and happy and stopped her from worrying and watching over me," Holiday said. Fagan began borrowing large amounts from Holiday to support the restaurant. Holiday obliged but soon fell on hard times herself. "I needed some money one night and I knew Mom was sure to have some", she said. "So I walked in the restaurant like a stockholder and asked. Mom turned me down flat. She wouldn't give me a cent." The two argued, and Holiday shouted angrily, "God bless the child that's got his own," and stormed out. With [Arthur Herzog, Jr.](#), a pianist, she wrote a song based on the lyric, "[God Bless the Child](#)", and added music. "God Bless the Child" became Holiday's most popular and most covered record. It reached number 25 on the charts in 1941 and was third in *Billboard's* songs of the year, selling over a million records. In 1976, the song was added to the [Grammy Hall of Fame](#). Herzog claimed Holiday contributed only a few lines to the lyrics. He said she came up with the line "God bless the child" from a dinner conversation the two had had.

On November 10, 1956, Holiday performed two concerts before packed audiences at Carnegie Hall. Live recordings of the second Carnegie Hall concert were released on a Verve/HMV album in the UK in late 1961 called [The Essential Billie Holiday](#). The 13 tracks included on this album featured her own songs "[I Love My Man](#)", "[Don't Explain](#)" and "[Fine and Mellow](#)", together with other songs closely associated with her, including "[Body and Soul](#)", "[My Man](#)", and "Lady Sings the Blues" (her lyrics accompanied a tune by pianist [Herbie Nichols](#)).^[90] The liner notes for this album were written partly by Gilbert Millstein of the *New York Times*, who, according to these notes, served as narrator of the Carnegie Hall concerts. Interspersed among Holiday's songs, Millstein read aloud four lengthy passages from her autobiography, *Lady Sings the Blues*. He later wrote:

The narration began with the *ironic account of her birth in Baltimore* – 'Mom and Pop were just a couple of kids when they got married. He was eighteen, she was sixteen, and I was three' – and ended, very nearly shyly, with her hope for love and a long life with 'my man' at her side. It was evident, even then, that Miss Holiday was ill. I had known her casually over the years and I was shocked at her physical weakness. Her rehearsal had been desultory; her voice sounded tinny and trailed off; her body sagged tiredly. But I will not forget the metamorphosis that night. The lights went down, the musicians began to play and the narration began. Miss Holiday stepped from between the curtains, into the white spotlight awaiting her, wearing a white evening gown and white gardenias in her black hair. She was erect and beautiful; poised and smiling. And when the first section of narration was ended, she sang – with strength undiminished – with all of the art that was hers. I was very much moved. In the darkness, my face burned and my eyes. I recall only one thing. I smiled.



The Billie Holiday Monument is located at [Pennsylvania](#) and West Lafayette Avenues in Baltimore's [Upton](#) neighborhood Maryland (sculpted by James Earl Reid, 1985)

The critic [Nat Hentoff](#) of [DownBeat](#) magazine, who attended the Carnegie Hall concert, wrote the remainder of the sleeve notes on the 1961 album. He wrote of Holiday's performance:

Throughout the night, Billie was in superior form to what had sometimes been the case in the last years of her life. Not only was there assurance of phrasing and intonation; but there was also an outgoing warmth, a palpable eagerness to reach and touch the audience. And there was mocking wit. A smile was often lightly evident on her lips and her eyes as if, for once, she could accept the fact that there were people who did dig her. The beat flowed in her uniquely sinuous, supple way of moving the story along; the words became her own experiences; and coursing through it all was Lady's sound – a texture simultaneously steel-edged and yet soft inside; a voice that was almost unbearably wise in disillusion and yet still childlike, again at the centre.



The audience was hers from before she sang, greeting her and saying good-bye with heavy, loving applause. And at one time, the musicians too applauded. It was a night when Billie was on top, undeniably the best and most honest jazz singer alive.

Holiday at the Club Bali, Washington, with Al Dunn (drums), and Bobby Tucker (piano)

On October 1949, Holiday recorded "[Crazy He Calls Me](#)", which was inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame in 2010. Gabler said the hit was her most successful recording for Decca after "Lover Man". The charts of the 1940s did not list songs outside the top 30, making it impossible to recognize minor hits. By the late 1940s, despite her popularity and concert power, her singles were little played on radio, perhaps because of her reputation.

The loss of her cabaret card reduced Holiday's earnings. She had not received proper record royalties until she joined Decca, so her main revenue was club concerts. The problem worsened when Holiday's records went out of print in the 1950s. She seldom received royalties in her later years. In 1958, she received a royalty of only \$11. Her lawyer in the late 1950s, Earle

Warren Zaidins, registered with [BMI](#) only two songs she had written or co-written, costing her revenue. In 1948, Holiday played at the Ebony Club, which was against the law. Her manager, John Levy, was convinced he could get her card back and allowed her to open without one. "I opened scared," Holiday said, "[I was] expecting the cops to come in any chorus and carry me off. But nothing happened. I was a huge success."

Holiday recorded Gershwin's "[I Loves You, Porgy](#)" in 1948. In 1950, Holiday appeared in the [Universal](#) short film *[Sugar Chile Robinson, Billie Holiday, Count Basie and His Sextet](#)*, singing "God Bless the Child" and "Now, Baby or Never".

Death and legacy

By early 1959, Holiday was diagnosed with [cirrhosis](#). Although she had initially stopped drinking on her doctor's orders, it was not long before she relapsed. By May 1959, she had lost 20 pounds (9.1 kg). Her manager [Joe Glaser](#), jazz critic [Leonard Feather](#), photojournalist Allan Morrison, and the singer's own friends all tried in vain to persuade her to go to a hospital. On May 31, 1959, Holiday was taken to [Metropolitan Hospital](#) in New York for treatment of [liver disease](#) and [heart disease](#). The [Federal Bureau of Narcotics](#), under the order of [Harry J. Anslinger](#), had been targeting Holiday since at least 1939. She was arrested and handcuffed for drug possession. As she lay dying, her hospital room was raided, and she was placed under police guard. On July 15, she received the last rites of the Roman [Catholic Church](#). She died at 3:10 a.m. on July 17, of [pulmonary edema](#) and [heart failure](#) caused by cirrhosis of the liver. She was 44. In her final years, she had been progressively swindled out of her earnings, and she died with US\$0.70 in the bank. Her funeral Mass was held on July 21, 1959, at the [Church of St. Paul the Apostle](#) in Manhattan. She was buried at [Saint Raymond's Cemetery](#) in the Bronx. The story of her burial plot and how it was managed by her estranged husband, Louis McKay, was documented on [NPR](#) in 2012.

Gilbert Millstein of [The New York Times](#), who was the announcer at Holiday's 1956 Carnegie Hall concerts and wrote parts of the sleeve notes for the album *The Essential Billie Holiday* (see above), described her death in these sleeve notes, dated 1961:

Billie Holiday died in Metropolitan Hospital, New York, on Friday, July 17, 1959, in the bed in which she had been arrested for illegal possession of narcotics a little more than a month before, as she lay mortally ill; in the room from which a police guard had been removed – by court order – only a few hours before her death, which, like her life, was disorderly and pitiful.

She had been strikingly beautiful, but she was wasted physically to a small, grotesque caricature of herself. The worms of every kind of excess – drugs were only one – had eaten her. The likelihood exists that among the last thoughts of this cynical, sentimental, profane, generous and greatly talented woman of 44 was the belief that she was to be arraigned the following morning. She would have been, eventually, although possibly not that quickly. In any case, she removed herself finally from the jurisdiction of any court here below.

When Holiday died, [The New York Times](#) published a short obituary on page 15 without a byline. She left an estate of \$1,000, and her best recordings from the '30s were mostly out of print. Holiday's public stature grew in the following years. In 1961, she was voted to the Down Beat Hall Of Fame, and soon after Columbia reissued nearly one hundred of her early records. In 1972, Diana Ross' portrayal of Holiday in *Lady Sings the Blues* was nominated for an Oscar and won a Golden Globe. Holiday was posthumously nominated for 23 Grammy awards.

Billie Holiday received several [Esquire Magazine](#) awards during her lifetime. Her posthumous awards also include being inducted into the [Grammy Hall of Fame](#), [Ertegun Jazz Hall of Fame](#), [Rock and Roll Hall of Fame](#), and the [ASCAP Jazz Wall of Fame](#). In 1985, a statue of Billie Holiday was erected in Baltimore; the statue was completed in 1993 with additional panels of images inspired by her seminal song *Strange Fruit*. In 2019, [Chirlane McCray](#) announced that New York City would build a statue honoring Holiday near [Queens Borough Hall](#). On June 25, 2019, [The New York Times Magazine](#) listed Billie Holiday among hundreds of artists whose material was reportedly destroyed in the [2008 Universal Studios fire](#).

A biographical drama film portraying Holiday, [*The United States vs. Billie Holiday*](#), starring singer [Andra Day](#), is set for release in **February 26, 2021** on **Hulu**.



Paramount Pictures has won the bid for **Lee Daniels** upcoming film, *The United States vs. Billie Holiday*.

The production landed the movie in an eight-figure deal, and it will be the first feature film Daniels' directed in over a decade.



CELEBRATING THE LEGENDARY NAT KING COLE



Nathaniel Adams Coles (March 17, 1919 – February 15, 1965), known professionally as **Nat King Cole**, was an American singer and jazz pianist. He recorded over 100 songs that became hits on the pop charts. His trio was the model for small jazz ensembles that followed. Cole also

acted in films and on television and performed on [Broadway](#). He was the first [African-American](#) man to host an American television series. He was the father of singer-songwriter [Natalie Cole](#) (1950–2015).

Cole learned to play the organ from his mother, Perlina Coles, the church organist. His first performance was "[Yes! We Have No Bananas](#)" at the age of four. He began formal lessons at 12, learning jazz, gospel, and classical music on piano "from [Johann Sebastian Bach](#) to [Sergei Rachmaninoff](#)." As a youth, he joined the news delivery boys' "[Bud Billiken Club](#)" band for [The Chicago Defender](#).

The Cole family moved to the [Bronzeville](#) neighborhood of Chicago, where he attended [Wendell Phillips Academy High School](#), the school [Sam Cooke](#) attended a few years later. He participated in [Walter Dyett](#)'s music program at [DuSable High School](#). He would sneak out of the house to visit clubs, sitting outside to hear [Louis Armstrong](#), [Earl Hines](#), and [Jimmie Noone](#).

When he was 15, Cole dropped out of high school to pursue a music career. After his brother Eddie, a bassist, came home from touring with [Noble Sissle](#), they formed a sextet and recorded two singles for [Decca](#) in 1936 as Eddie Cole's Swingsters. They performed in a revival of the musical [Shuffle Along](#). Nat Cole went on tour with the musical. In 1937, he married Nadine Robinson, who was a member of the cast.

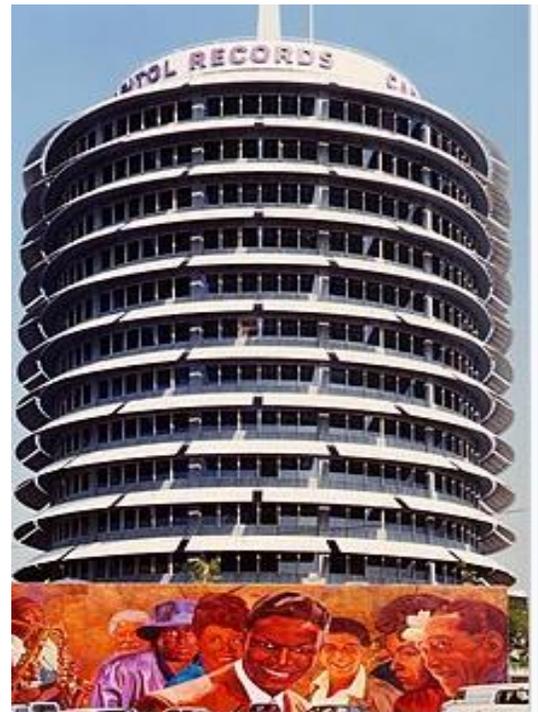
Early career



Photograph of Nat King Cole, Paramount Theater, New York City, November 1946

In January 1964, Cole made one of his final television appearances, on *The Jack Benny Program*. He was introduced as "the best friend a song ever had" and sang "[When I Fall in Love](#)". *Cat Ballou* (1965), his final film, was released several months after his death.

Earlier on, Cole's shift to traditional pop led some jazz critics and fans to accuse him of selling out, but he never abandoned his jazz roots; as late as 1956 he recorded an all-jazz album, *After Midnight*, and many of his albums after this are fundamentally jazz-based, being scored for big band without strings, although the arrangements focus primarily on the vocal rather than instrumental leads. Cole had one of his last major hits in 1963, two years before his death, with "[Those Lazy-Hazy-Crazy Days of Summer](#)", which reached number 6 on the Pop chart. "[Unforgettable](#)" was made famous again in 1991 by Cole's daughter Natalie when modern recording technology was used to reunite father and daughter in a duet. The duet version rose to the top of the pop charts, almost forty years after its original popularity.

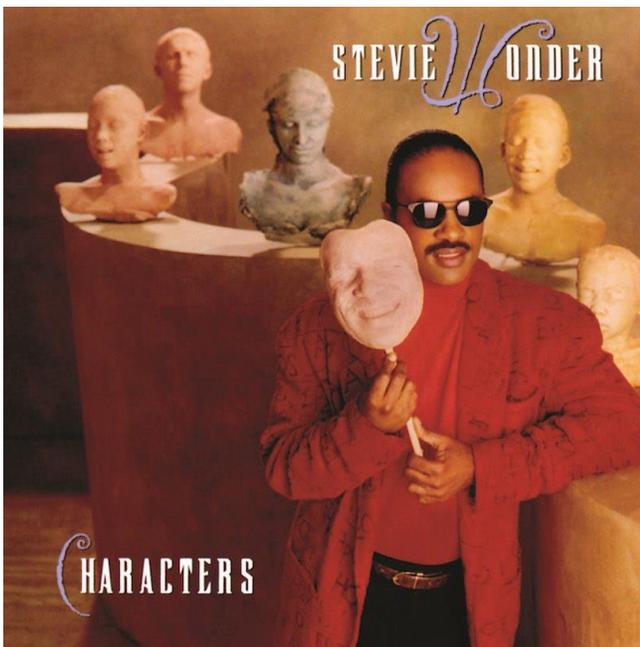


Capitol Records Building, known as "The House That Nat Built" on Vine St.



Lena Horne) was an American singer, dancer, actress, and [civil rights activist](#). Horne's career spanned over 70 years, appearing in film, television, and theater. Horne joined the chorus of the [Cotton Club](#) at the age of 16 and became a [nightclub performer](#) before moving to Hollywood.

Horne advocated for human rights and took part in the [March on Washington](#) in August 1963. Later she returned to her roots as a nightclub performer and continued to work on television, while releasing well-received record albums. She announced her retirement in March 1980, but the next year starred in a one-woman show, [Lena Horne: The Lady and Her Music](#), which ran for more than 300 performances on Broadway. She then toured the country in the show, earning numerous awards and accolades. Horne continued recording and performing sporadically into the 1990s, retreating from the public eye in 2000. Horne died of congestive heart failure on May 9, 2010, at the age of 92.



Stevie Wonder, is an American singer, songwriter, musician and record producer. A prominent figure in [popular music](#) during the second half of the 20th century, Wonder is one of the [most successful songwriters and musicians](#). A virtual [one-man band](#), his use of [synthesizers](#) and further [electronic musical instruments](#) during the 1970s reshaped the conventions of [R&B](#). He also helped drive the genre into the [album era](#), crafting his [LPs](#) as cohesive, consistent socially conscious statements with complex compositions.

Wonder is often hailed as a "[genius](#)", and has been credited as a pioneer and influence to musicians of various genres including [rhythm and blues](#), [pop](#), [soul](#), [gospel](#), [funk](#) and [jazz](#).



Diahann Carroll born Carol Diahann Johnson was born in [the Bronx](#), New York City, on July 17, 1935 to John Johnson, a subway conductor, and Mabel (Faulk), a nurse was an American actress, singer, model, and activist. She rose to prominence in some of the earliest [major studio](#) films to feature black casts,

including [Carmen Jones](#) (1954) and [Porgy and Bess](#) (1959). In 1962, Carroll won a [Tony Award](#) for Best Actress in a Musical, [a first for an African American woman](#), for her role in the [Broadway](#) musical [No Strings](#). In 1974 she starred in [Claudine](#) alongside [James Earl Jones](#) for which she was nominated for an [Academy Award for Best Actress](#).

While Carroll was still an infant, the family moved to [Harlem](#), where she grew up. She attended [Music and Art High School](#) and was a classmate of [Billy Dee Williams](#). In many interviews about her childhood, Carroll recalls her parents' support, and their enrolling her in dance, singing, and modeling classes. By the time Carroll was 15, she was modeling for [Ebony](#).

"She also began entering television contests, including *Arthur Godfrey's Talent Scouts*, under the name Diahann Carroll." After graduating from high school, she attended [New York University](#), where she majored in [sociology](#), "but she left before graduating to pursue a show-business career, promising her family that if the career did not materialize after two years, she would return to college.





Her title role in [Julia](#), for which she received the 1968 [Golden Globe Award for Best Actress In a Television Series](#), was the first series on [American television](#) to star a black woman in a non-stereotypical role, was a milestone both in her career and the medium. In the 1980s, she played the role of [Dominique Deveraux](#), a mixed-race diva, in the [prime time soap opera Dynasty](#). Carroll was the recipient of numerous stage and screen nominations and awards, including her Tony Award in 1962, Golden Globe Award in 1968 and five [Emmy Award](#) nominations.

She died on October 4, 2019 after a battle with breast cancer.



Ruby Dee: An Actress Who Marched On Washington and Onto the Screen



Born Ruby Ann Wallace **Ruby Dee**, by name of **Ruby Ann Wallace**, (born October 27, 1922, [Cleveland, Ohio](#) ([New Rochelle](#), New York), American actress and social activist who was known for her pioneering work in [African American](#) theatre and film and for her outspoken [civil rights](#) activism most identified with the part of New York City where she was raised.

"I don't know who I would be if I weren't this child from Harlem, this woman from Harlem. It's in me so deep," Dee told NPR's *Tell Me More* in 2007. Dee, who took the surname of her first husband, blues singer Frankie Dee, grew up in Harlem's rich cultural neighborhood, writing poetry. Over the years she would become a playwright, screenwriter, journalist and one of the most prominent actresses of her time, known for her roles in the 1961 film *A Raisin in the Sun* and the 2007

film *American Gangster*, for which she was nominated for an Academy Award. Dee told NPR that as a child, she didn't know any black screen idols. "It occurred to me that I was not white," she said. "It occurred to me that being what they call 'colored,' being a Negro, was some kind of a disadvantage." But that didn't stop her. While studying at Hunter College, Dee joined the American Negro Theater. That's where she met Sidney Poitier; they starred in five films together, including *A Raisin in the Sun*, in which she played a suffering housewife in the projects.

It was during her time at the American Negro Theater that she also met **Ossie Davis**, the man who would become her husband.



Ossie Davis (born **Raiford Chatman Davis** (December 18, 1917 – February 4, 2005) was an American movie, television and [Broadway](#) actor, director, poet, playwright, author, and social activist. He was known for his role as Yar in the 2000 animated movie *Dinosaur*. He was married to [Ruby Dee](#) with whom he frequently performed, until his death. Davis passed in [Miami, Florida](#) from [heart disease](#), aged 87.

He and his wife were named to the [NAACP Image Awards](#) Hall of Fame; were awarded the [National Medal of Arts](#)^[5] and were recipients of the [Kennedy Center Honors](#). He was inducted into the [American Theater Hall of Fame](#) in 1994.

She and Davis would become lifelong partners on screen and off. During the civil rights era in the 1960s, they marched for the rights of African-Americans, alongside Malcolm X and Martin

Luther King. Both were emcees for the March on Washington in 1963 and were associated with nearly every civil rights group, from the NAACP to the Black Panthers.

"I never thought about myself as an activist when we were coming along," she said. "I love the people I love. I didn't care whether they could be a Democrat, Republican, communist ... anything but a racist."

Kenny Leon, who directed a revival of *A Raisin in the Sun* 10 years ago, says Dee and Davis inspired generations of actors and activists. "A lot of us stand on the shoulders of her and Ossie Davis," Leon tells NPR, adding that Dee was "never didactic; art by its very nature is political, and that was the lesson she gave us." Leon says Dee always brought herself to her characters, "which also gave it edge, gave it heart, and gave it a realness and a truthfulness that could not be denied."

Director Spike Lee was so inspired by the art and activism of Ruby Dee and Ossie Davis that he cast them both in his 1989 film *Do the Right Thing* and his 1991 film *Jungle Fever*.

On Instagram, Spike Lee [posted this tribute to Dee](#):

"I know Ruby has already been embraced in a warm loving hug from her life partner of 57 years: Mr. Ossie Davis. It has been one of my great blessings in life to work with two of the finest artists and activists. Ruby and Ossie were in the battlefields with Paul Robeson, Malcolm X, and Dr. Martin Luther King. Ruby And Ossie served as a living example that one could be an artist and an activist, too; That one could be an artist and still deal with what it means to be a Black woman and a Black man in these United States."

During her lifetime, Ruby Dee won a Grammy, an Emmy and also received the National Medal of Arts and the Kennedy Center Honors. She told NPR how she herself would like to be remembered: "In those little flashes of moments ... that pick us up from some moments of despair." She died Wednesday, June 14, 2014 of natural causes at her home in New Rochelle, N.Y., surrounded by her children and grandchildren. She was 91.



Ruby Dee won a Screen Actors Guild award for *American Gangster* in 2008.



When Davis wanted to pursue a career in acting, he ran into the usual roadblocks that black people suffered at that time as they generally could only portray stereotypical characters such as [Stepin Fetchit](#). Instead, he tried to follow the example of [Sidney Poitier](#) and play more distinguished characters. When he found it necessary to play a [Pullman porter](#) or a butler, he played those characters realistically, not as a [caricature](#).

In 1976, Davis appeared on [Muhammad Ali](#)'s novelty album for children, [The Adventures of Ali and His Gang vs. Mr. Tooth Decay](#).

Ossie Davis at the 1963 [Civil Rights March on Washington, D.C.](#)



Davis found recognition late in his life by working in several of director [Spike Lee](#)'s films, including [Do The Right Thing](#), [Jungle Fever](#), [She Hate Me](#) and [Get on the Bus](#). He also found work as a commercial [voice-over](#) artist and served as the narrator of the early-1990s [CBS sitcom](#) [Evening Shade](#), starring [Burt Reynolds](#), where he also played one of the residents of a small southern town.

In 1999, Davis appeared as a theater caretaker in the [Trans-Siberian Orchestra](#) film [The Ghosts of Christmas Eve](#), which was released on DVD two years later.

For many years, he hosted the annual National Memorial Day Concert from Washington, DC.

He voiced [Anansi](#) the spider on the [PBS](#) children's television series [Sesame Street](#) in its animation segments.

Davis's last role was a several episode guest role on the [Showtime](#) drama series [The L Word](#), as a father struggling with the acceptance of his daughter [Bette](#) ([Jennifer Beals](#)) parenting a child with her lesbian partner. In his final episodes, his character was taken ill and died. His wife Ruby Dee was present during the filming of his own death scene. That episode, which aired shortly after Davis's own death, aired with a dedication to the actor.

Children of Ruby Dee and Ossie Davis discuss recent Schomburg acquisition of parents' papers



Ruby Dee and Ossie Davis with their children

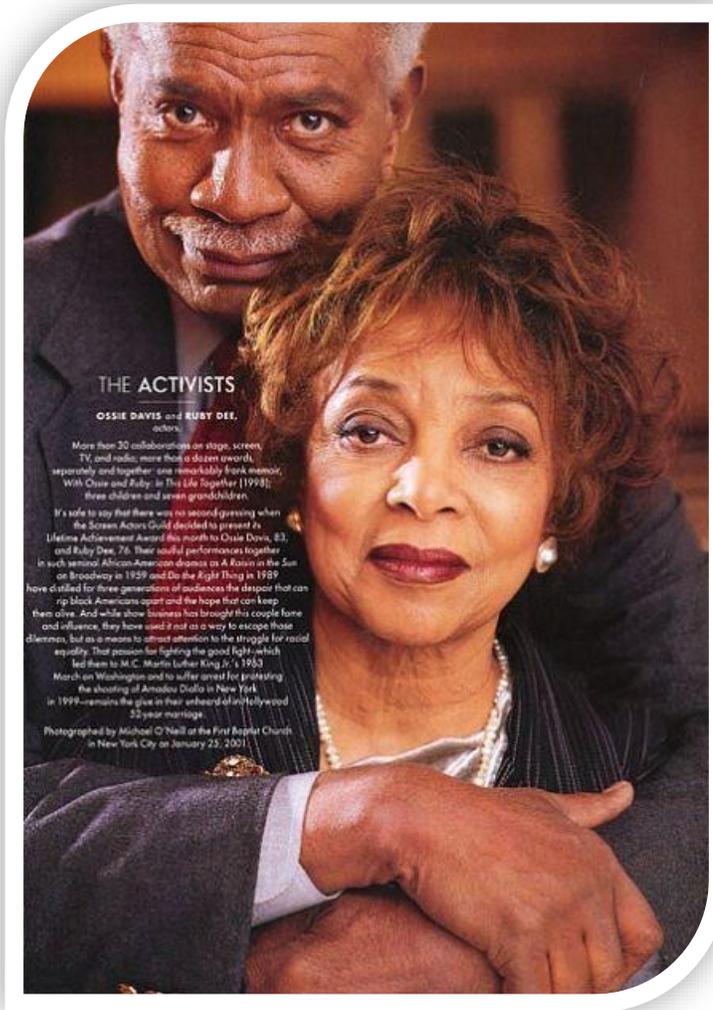
Ruby Dee was still alive when she and her daughters began to think about the best place to house the documents and artifacts that encapsulated Dee's life with fellow actor and activist Ossie Davis. The Schomburg was always at the forefront of their minds as an ideal location. After all, the storied institution had always been a fixture in their family. One of their daughters, Nora Davis Day explained, "We didn't formally talk about it going to the Schomburg, but they had already donated some of their work to the Schomburg, so it was a no-brainer that would be the first place we might talk about."

The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, a branch of at the New York Public Library, has acquired the full archive of the couple known equally for their acting, activism and strong personal partnership. The press release issued by the Schomburg stated, "The extensive archive includes more than 178.85 linear feet of material spanning eight decades of the couple's careers in theater, film and television; their near 60-year relationship and marriage; and their social, civic and political activities between 1932 and 2014."





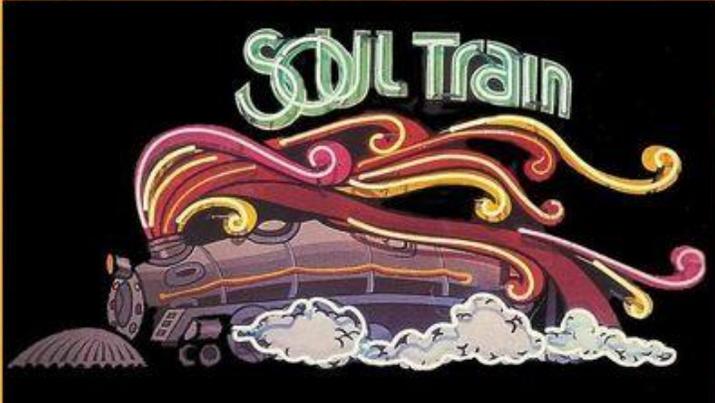
*Thank you for your gifts of talent and
being our*



*Trailblazing "Couple, Activist & Legend"
over the years... We Love You!*



† May you both Rest in Heavenly Peace †



On Wednesday morning February 1st, 2012, Don Cornelius, the creator and host of the iconic dance/music show *Soul Train*, was found dead in his home from an apparent self-inflicted gunshot wound. Police found Cornelius' body around 4 a.m. at his home in Sherman, Oaks, California, and he was taken to Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, where he was pronounced dead.



He was 75.

Cornelius created *Soul Train* as sort of the black answer to *American Bandstand*, a show that would provide a showcase for black artists and their music. The show had a huge cultural impact in that it gave black artists a medium through

which they could reach a much wider audience. Although *Soul Train* primarily focused on soul, R&B, funk and hip hop artists, musicians from other genres often performed on the show. A plethora of music legends have performed on the *Soul Train* stage, from James Brown to David Bowie. And in addition to the musical artists, the *Soul Train* dancers became semi-celebrities in their own right and would entertain viewers every Saturday afternoon with their new dance moves on the legendary *Soul Train* line.

Cornelius, who was also the show's executive producer, was known for his smooth, low-keyed interviewing style and his famous catchphrase, "you can bet your last money, it's all gonna be a stone gas, honey!" as well as his parting words at the end of the show, "and as always, we wish you love, peace and sooooulll!" *Soul Train* aired in syndication for 35 years (1971-2006) and holds the title for the longest, continuously running syndicated program on TV.

Cornelius was born in Chicago, Illinois on September 27, 1936. He served in the Marines in Korea and sold insurance among other jobs before going into radio broadcasting. He began his career in radio in 1966 as a fill-in disc jockey and news reader at WVON-AM, a Chicago radio station aimed at the black community. He also moonlighted as a sports reporter on a show called "A Black's View of the News" on WCIU-TV, a small local station.

Cornelius recognized the need for a venue for soul music on television. In 1970, he pitched the idea for a black-oriented dance/music show in the vein of *American Bandstand* to WCIU's management, and they liked the idea. *Soul Train* premiered on WCIU-TV August 17, 1970, as a live show airing weekday afternoons. Jerry Butler, the Chi-Lites and the Emotions were the first musical guest performers on the show. It was an instant hit and caught the attention of Johnson Products Company, which later co-sponsored the program's expansion into national syndication. *Soul Train* began airing on a weekly basis in October of 1971, and the show also moved to Los Angeles at that time. Cornelius stepped down as host in 1993 but remained its executive producer.

In 1987, Cornelius launched the *Soul Train Music Awards*, an annual award show that honors musical artists in the fields of R&B, hip-hop and gospel music. The award show is still going strong today. The *Soul Train* brand expanded even further with two additional annual specials: *The Soul Train Lady of Soul Awards* (premiered in 1995) which celebrates top achievements by female performers; and the *Soul Train Christmas Starfest* (premiered in 1998) that features holiday music performed by a variety of R&B and gospel artists.

Cornelius left a huge legacy with the influential *Soul Train* franchise. The show was instrumental in helping countless black artists break through to a wider audience. And for many of us, the show was an important part of our childhood. I remember as a kid (and later as a teen) looking forward to watching *Soul Train* on Saturday afternoons to catch hot live performances from some of the most talented musical artists of the day, as well as learn the latest dance steps from the *Soul Train* dancers. Rest in peace Mr. Cornelius. You will be sorely missed.



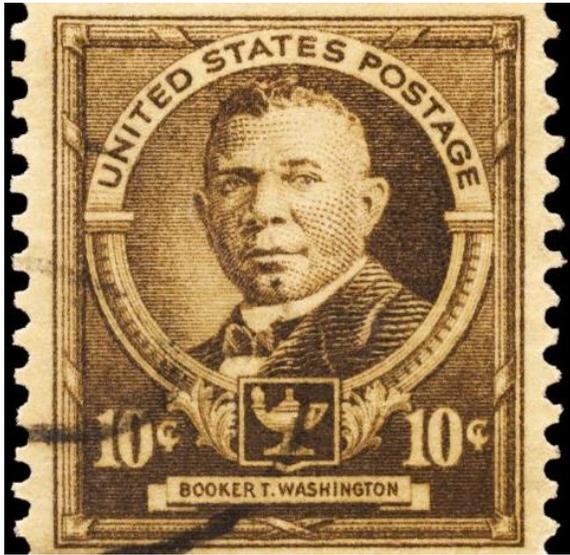
Thank you for the Soul Train Line Dance!

We Love You!



*† May you Rest in Heavenly
Peace, Love & Soul †*

1940 Marked the First Year with an African-American on a Stamp



Booker T. Washington was the first African-American to be commemorated on a stamp in April 1940. A former slave who became a celebrated educator, author, orator and civil rights leader, dies in Tuskegee, Alabama, of hypertension at 59. The stamp was part of the Post Office's Famous American Series.

CELEBRATING CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVISTS BRIDGES & HEIGHT

Ruby Bridges

American civil rights activist

Ruby Bridges, in full **Ruby Nell Bridges**, married name **Ruby Bridges-Hall**, (born September 8, 1954, Tylertown, [Mississippi](#), U.S.), American activist who became a symbol of the [civil rights movement](#) and who was, at age six, the youngest of a group of [African American](#) students to [integrate schools](#) in the American South.



Dorothy Irene Height was an American [civil rights](#) and [women's rights](#) activist. She focused on the issues of African American women, including [unemployment](#), [illiteracy](#), and voter awareness. Height is credited as the first leader in the [civil rights movement](#) to recognize inequality for women and African Americans as problems that should be considered as a whole. She was the president of the [National Council of Negro](#)

[Women](#) for forty years.

CELEBRATING CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVISTS MITCHELL & BARRY



Clarence Maurice Mitchell Jr. was an American [civil rights activist](#) and was the chief lobbyist for the [NAACP](#) for nearly 30 years. He also served as a regional director for the organization.

Mitchell, nicknamed "[the 101st U.S. Senator](#)", waged a tireless campaign on [Capitol Hill](#), helping to secure passage of civil rights legislation in the 1950s and 1960s: the [Civil Rights Act of 1957](#), the [Civil Rights Act of 1960](#), the [Civil Rights Act of 1964](#), the [Voting Rights Act of 1965](#) and the [Fair Housing Act \(Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968\)](#)

In 1969, he was awarded the [Spingarn Medal](#) by the NAACP for these efforts. Later he faced some criticism in the black community for supporting [Daniel Patrick Moynihan](#) (see [then U.S. Assistant Secretary of Labor; controversy over the War on Poverty](#), later a noted [U.S. Senator](#) from [New York](#)) and defending the [State of Israel](#). On June 9, 1980, he was presented with the "[Presidential Medal of Freedom](#)" by 39th President [Jimmy Carter](#).



Marion Barry Jr.; March 6, 1936 – November 23, 2014) was an American politician who served as [Mayor of the District of Columbia](#) from 1979 to 1991 and 1995 to 1999. A [Democrat](#), Barry had served three tenures on the [Council of the District of Columbia](#), representing as an at-large member from 1975 to 1979 and in [Ward 8](#) from 1993 to 1995, and again from 2005 to 2014.

In the 1960s, he was involved in the [civil rights movement](#), first as a member of the [Nashville Student Movement](#) and then serving as the first chairman of the [Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee](#) (SNCC). Barry came to national prominence as mayor of the national capital, the first prominent civil rights activist to become chief executive of a major American city. He gave the presidential nomination speech for [Jesse Jackson](#) at the [1984 Democratic National Convention](#).

CELEBRATING LAWYERS & POLITICIAN WASHINGTON & WILDER



Harold Lee Washington was an American lawyer and politician who was the 51st [Mayor of Chicago](#). Washington became the **first African American** to be elected as the city's mayor in April 1983 after a multiracial coalition of progressives supported his election. He served as mayor from April 29, 1983 until his death on November 25, 1987. Born in Chicago and raised in the [Bronzeville](#) neighborhood, Washington became involved in local 3rd Ward politics under Chicago Alderman and future

Congressman [Ralph Metcalfe](#) after graduating from [Roosevelt University](#) and [Northwestern University School of Law](#). Washington was a member of the [U.S. House of Representatives](#) from 1981 to 1983, representing [Illinois's first district](#). Washington had previously served in the [Illinois State Senate](#) and the [Illinois House of Representatives](#) from 1965 until 1976.



The Honorable L. Douglas Wilder

Lawrence Douglas Wilder an American lawyer and politician who served as the [66th Governor of Virginia](#) from 1990 to 1994. He was the [first African-American](#) to serve as governor of a [U.S. state](#) since the [Reconstruction era](#), and the first elected African-American governor.

CELEBRATING FEMALE MAYORS KELLY & BOWSER



Sharon Pratt formerly **Sharon Pratt Dixon** and **Sharon Pratt Kelly**, is an American attorney and politician.

Former Mayor of the District of Columbia from 1991 to 1995 who was the first African American woman to serve as a mayor of a major U.S. city. Her tenure is often blamed for the city's larger deficit.

She was a member of the Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority at Howard University, where she earned a Bachelor's degree in political science.

She defeated [Marion Barry](#) in the 1990 mayoral elections.



Muriel Elizabeth Bowser (is an American politician serving as the eighth [mayor of the District of Columbia](#) since 2015. A member of the [Democratic Party](#), she previously represented [Ward 4](#) as a member of the [Council of the District of Columbia](#) from 2007 to 2015. She is the second female mayor of the District of Columbia after [Sharon Pratt](#), and the first woman to be reelected to that position. She is also the second [African American](#) woman to be mayor.

CELEBRATING PRODUCERS & ACTOR JACKSON & ACTRESS LATIFAH



Samuel Leroy Jackson is an American actor and producer. Widely regarded as one of the most popular actors of his generation, the [films in which he has appeared](#) have collectively grossed over \$27 billion worldwide, making him the [highest-grossing actor of all time](#) (when cameo appearances are excluded).

Samuel Leroy Jackson was born in [Washington, D.C.](#) on December 21, 1948, the only child of Elizabeth Harriett (*née* Montgomery) and Roy Henry Jackson. He grew up in [Chattanooga, Tennessee](#). He was raised by his mother, a factory worker and later a supplies buyer for a [mental institution](#); he was also raised by his maternal grandparents, Edgar and Pearl Montgomery, as well as extended family. According to DNA tests, Jackson partially descends from the [Benga people](#) of [Gabon](#), and he became a

naturalized citizen of Gabon in 2019. He attended several [segregated schools](#) and graduated from Riverside High School in Chattanooga. After joining a local acting group to earn extra points in a class, he found an interest in acting and switched his major. Before graduating in 1972, he co-founded the Just Us Theatre.

After [Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination](#) in 1968, Jackson attended King's funeral in Atlanta as one of the ushers. He then travelled to [Memphis, Tennessee](#), to join an equal rights protest march. In a 2005 [Parade](#) interview, he revealed, "I was angry about the assassination, but I wasn't shocked by it. I knew that change was going to take something different – not sit-ins, not peaceful coexistence. In 1969, Jackson and several other students held members of the Morehouse College board of trustees (including [Martin Luther King Sr.](#)) hostage on the campus, demanding reform in the school's curriculum and governance. The college eventually agreed to change its policy, but Jackson was charged with and eventually convicted of unlawful confinement, a second-degree [felony](#). He was then suspended for two years for his criminal record and his actions. He would later return to the college to earn a [BA](#) in drama in 1972. While he was suspended, he took a job as a social worker in [Los Angeles](#). He decided to return to Atlanta, where he met with [Stokely Carmichael](#), [H. Rap Brown](#), and others active in the [Black Power](#) movement. He began to feel empowered with his involvement in the movement, especially when the group began buying guns. However, before he could become involved with any significant armed confrontations, his mother sent him to Los Angeles after the [FBI](#) warned her that he would die within a year if he remained with the group. In a 2018



interview with [Vogue](#), he denied having been a member of the [Black Panther Party](#).

Jackson's handprints in front of [The Great Movie Ride](#) at [Walt Disney World's Disney's Hollywood Studios](#) theme park. On June 13, 2000, Jackson was honored with a star on the [Hollywood Walk of Fame](#) at 7018 Hollywood Blvd.

In 2020, during the [COVID-19 pandemic](#), Samuel L. Jackson encouraged people to wear masks during pandemic as part of the State of California's Your Actions Save Lives campaign.

Jackson along with [Dwayne Johnson](#) also encouraged coronavirus patients to donate blood plasma to help others fighting the virus.

**Latifah's latest project, "Beyond Breathless"
on people and her Mom who was affected by Interstitial Lung Disease**



Queen Latifah, is an American singer, songwriter, rapper, actress, and

producer. Born in [Newark, New Jersey](#), she signed with [Tommy Boy](#)

[Records](#) in 1989 and released her debut album [All Hail the Queen](#) on November 28, 1989, featuring the hit single "Ladies First". Latifah starred as Khadijah James on the [FOX](#) sitcom [Living Single](#) from 1993 to 1998. Her third album, [Black Reign](#) (1993), spawned the single "[U.N.I.T.Y.](#)", which was influential in bringing awareness to women's rights and towards raising the perspective of women in communities worldwide. The record won a [Grammy Award](#). Latifah garnered acclaim with her role of Matron "Mama" Morton in the musical film [Chicago](#) (2002), receiving a nomination for the [Academy Award for Best Supporting Actress](#).

Queen Latifah is opening up about her mother's illness and loss.



The actress and musician discussed Wednesday her mother's battle with [interstitial lung disease](#), a group of chronic lung disorders that involves the scarring of lung tissue, on the "TODAY" show. Her mother, Rita Owens, died two years ago of scleroderma, an [autoimmune disease](#) in which the condition is

common, which has no cure. It was, "something that affected my mom who was otherwise a totally healthy person," she said. "It kind of came out of nowhere, it felt."

Latifah's latest project, "Beyond Breathless," a new documentary focused on people affected by interstitial lung disease, features her mother's story. She said she hopes it will educate people about the illness.

"We want people to be aware of it to recognize some of the symptoms — breathlessness, dry cough — and talk to their doctors and make sure it's not something they're dealing with" she said.

Owens, who died in 2018, was a former teacher.

"Anyone that has ever met her knows what a bright light she was on this earth," Latifah said in a [statement](#) following her mother's death. "Her battle is now over. I am heartbroken but know she is at peace."

She described her mother as someone who could always make someone feel special.



Updated June 18, 2020, By [Daniella Silva](#)

Juneteenth, the commemoration of the end of slavery in the United States, will be celebrated by Black Americans this Friday amid a national reckoning on race prompted by the police killing of George Floyd and the sweeping demonstrations that followed.

As hundreds of thousands have protested nationwide and calls for police reform and for an examination of the nation's history of racial inequality have grown — including [rising pressure to take down Confederate statues](#) — some have said that June 19 should be recognized as a national holiday.

President Donald [Trump was criticized](#) recently for deciding to hold a public rally on Friday in Tulsa, Oklahoma, site of one of the worst outbreaks of racial violence in American history, in 1921, when a racist white mob killed hundreds of Black residents. Trump later changed the rally to Saturday, [June 20](#).

As **June 19** approaches, here's what you need to know about the holiday.

Governor Larry Hogan issued a proclamation recognizing February 20, the anniversary of Frederick Douglass' death, as Civil Rights Heroes Day for the first time in Maryland history.

"As we commemorate Black History Month, I am proud to honor the lives and legacies of Maryland's iconic civil rights leaders, including Harriet Tubman, Frederick Douglass, and Thurgood Marshall," said Governor Hogan. "It is my hope that we continue to reflect on the countless contributions of these remarkable leaders, and to continuously fight for unity, equality, and justice."

