



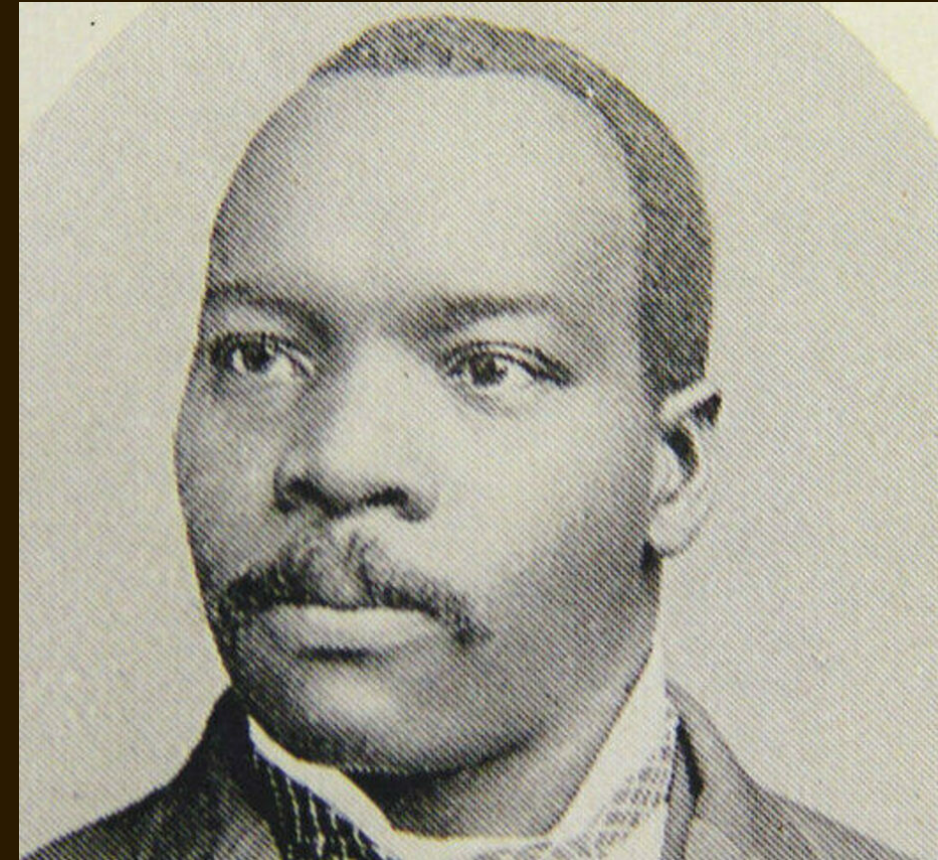
HONORING THE MANY CONTRIBUTIONS OF BLACK AMERICANS

A campus-wide celebration of Black History Month by
SUNY ULSTER FACULTY and
The Office of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

- Engineer who established his own machine shop in Cincinnati in 1880. Later moved to New York City.
- Invented first electric railway powered by overhead lines, as well as third rail system for subways.
- Invented first telegraph system able to transmit from moving trains, as well as ability to transmit voice and Morse code over the same line.
- Registered over 35 patents, 1880-1907, including ones for a steam boiler furnace (1884), electric incubator (1900), and automatic air brake (1902).

*Picture of Granville T. Woods from
Cosmopolitan magazine, c. 1895*

ENGINEERING **GRANVILLE T. WOODS**



Maya Angelou was born Marguerite Johnson in St. Louis, Missouri, on April 4, 1928. She grew up in St. Louis and Stamps, Arkansas. She was an author, poet, historian, songwriter, playwright, dancer, stage and screen producer, director, performer, singer, and civil rights activist. She was best known for her seven autobiographical books.

The first black woman director in Hollywood, Angelou wrote, produced, directed, and starred in productions for stage, film, and television.

Poets.org

HUMANITIES MAYA ANGELOU



DIVERSITY • EQUITY • INCLUSION

Barack Obama served as the 44th President of the United States. His story is the American story — values from the heartland, a middle-class upbringing in a strong family, hard work and education as the means of getting ahead, and the conviction that a life so blessed should be lived in service to others. When Barack Obama was elected president in 2008, he became the first African American to hold the office.

Whitehouse.gov

POLITICAL SCIENCES

BARACK OBAMA



DIVERSITY • EQUITY • INCLUSION

On August 11, 2020, Vice President Harris accepted President Joe Biden's invitation to become his running mate and help unite the nation. She is the first woman, the first Black American, and the first South Asian American to be elected Vice President, as was the case with other offices she has held. She is, however, determined not to be the last.

Whitehouse.gov

POLITICAL SCIENCES **KAMALA HARRIS**



DIVERSITY • EQUITY • INCLUSION

In 1890, George W. Johnson, a former slave, became the first African-American musician to make commercial records. During his short but successful singing career, Johnson sold thousands of recordings. But his contribution to the music industry has been mostly ignored. The Library of Congress is now recognizing George W. Johnson's contribution to music. Last week, Johnson's "The Laughing Song" was added to the National Recording Registry.

NPR.org

MUSIC **GEORGE JOHNSON**



DIVERSITY • EQUITY • INCLUSION

Amanda S. C. Gorman is an American poet and activist. Her work focuses on issues of oppression, feminism, race, and marginalization, as well as the African diaspora. Gorman was the first person to be named National Youth Poet Laureate.

Wikipedia.com

HUMANITIES

AMANDA GORMAN



DIVERSITY • EQUITY • INCLUSION

Kobe Bryant is an 18-time All-Star who won five NBA championships and became one of the greatest basketball players of his generation during a 20-year career with the Lakers.

Bryant became one of the NBA's most popular players and the face of the Lakers during his career. Winning a record four NBA All-Star Game MVP awards, he was the overall league MVP in 2008, a two-time NBA scoring champion and 12 All-Defensive selections.

He teamed with Shaquille O'Neal in a combustible partnership to lead the Lakers to NBA titles in 2000, 2001 and 2002. He later teamed with Pau Gasol to win two more titles in 2009 and 2010.

A two-time Olympic gold medalist with the dominant U.S. team, Bryant retired in 2016 after scoring 60 points in his final NBA game. In December 2017, the Lakers hung banners retiring his No. 8 and No. 24 jerseys in the Staples Center rafters in an unprecedented double honor.

SPORTS KOBE BRYANT



NBA.com



DIVERSITY • EQUITY • INCLUSION

- The first professional African American and Native American sculptor, Edmonia Lewis earned critical praise for work that explored religious and classical themes.
- Edmonia Lewis' first notable commercial success was a bust of Colonel Robert Gould Shaw. The money she earned selling copies of the bust allowed her to sail to Rome, Italy, where she mastered working in marble. She quickly achieved success as a sculptor.
- One of her most prized works was "Forever Free" (1867), a sculpture depicting a Black man and woman emerging from the bonds of slavery. Lewis also created busts of American Presidents including Ulysses S. Grant and Abraham Lincoln.
- Until the 1890s, she continued to exhibit her work and was even visited by Frederick Douglass in Rome, but little is known about the last decade or so of her life. Her pieces are now part of the permanent collections of the Howard University Gallery of Art and the Smithsonian American Art Museum.



DIVERSITY • EQUITY • INCLUSION

ARTS EDMONIA LEWIS



.Source: Blackpast.org

Appointed Librarian of Congress 2016

First woman and first African American to lead the national library

Ph.D. from the Graduate Library School of the University of Chicago

LIBRARY
CARLA HAYDEN



DIVERSITY • EQUITY • INCLUSION

“I am not satisfied in making money for myself. I endeavor to provide employment to hundreds of women of my race.” – Madame CJ Walker

In 1908, Madame CJ Walker started her own company manufacturing specialized hair products for African American women. The Madame CJ Walker Manufacturing Company employed thousands of women. In addition to on the job training in sales and grooming, Madame CJ Walker taught many women how to budget, build their business, and become financially independent.



DIVERSITY • EQUITY • INCLUSION

MANUFACTURING & SCIENCE **MADAME CJ WALKER**



“A pioneering scientist who is pulling and prodding Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute to greater prominence.” - Chronicle of Higher Education

The first African-American woman to receive a doctorate from M.I.T. — and the second to earn a doctorate in physics in the U.S. She is both the first woman and the first African American to serve as the chairman of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, and the first African-American woman to lead a national research university, RPI. She also is the first African-American woman elected to the National Academy of Engineering, and the first to receive the Vannevar Bush award.

MANUFACTURING & SCIENCE
SHIRLEY ANN JACKSON



DIVERSITY • EQUITY • INCLUSION

Dr. Dorothy Height was born in Richmond, Virginia in 1912, and was educated in the public schools of Rankin, Pennsylvania; outside of Pittsburgh. Dr. Height won an oratorical scholarship, which along with a record of scholastic excellence, allowed her to enroll in New York University where she earned her bachelor and master's degrees in four years. Dr. Height did further postgraduate work at Columbia University and the New York School of Social Work.

Ms. Height was among the coalition of African American leaders who pushed civil rights to the center of the American political stage after World War II, and she was a key figure in the struggles for school desegregation, voting rights, employment opportunities and public accommodations in the 1950s and 1960s. Dr. Height was often times known as the "Godmother of the Civil Rights Movement." President Barack Obama stated that "She never cared about who got the credit. What she cared about was the cause. The cause of justice, the cause of equality, the cause of opportunity, freedom's cause."

Sources: Washingtonpost.com, NASWFoundation.org



DIVERSITY • EQUITY • INCLUSION

HUMAN SERVICES DOROTHY HEIGHT



Dr. Leftwich fell in love with geology when he took an elective Earth Science course in college. Dr. Mack Gipson, one of America's first black geoscientists, encouraged him to pursue a degree in the new geology department he'd created at Virginia State University. Dr. Leftwich became the department's first graduate in 1969 - and was only the 7th African American in the country to graduate with a geoscience degree.

He went on to get his master's at the University of Massachusetts and his PhD at Penn State, and spent a long and productive career researching oddities in sedimentary basins. He was an expert in petroleum geology, working for major oil companies and holding a position as professor at Old Dominion University. He became a founding member of the National Association of Black Geoscientists, and held the organization together through the lean years of 1986-89, when a downturn in the oil industry led to an exodus of geologists. Because of his dedicated work, the organization survived and is thriving today.

He volunteered for over twenty years at schools ranging from elementary to community college, ensuring new generations of students would have the opportunity to fall in love with the good science of rock-breaking. For his efforts, he was awarded the GSA Bromery Award in 2009.



DIVERSITY • EQUITY • INCLUSION

Source: Scientificamerican.com

GEOLOGY

JOHN T. LEFTWICH



In 1955, Annie Easley began her career at NASA, then the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics (NACA), as a human computer performing complex mathematical calculations.

When human computers were replaced by machines, Easley evolved along with the technology. She became an adept computer programmer, using languages like the Formula Translating System (Fortran) to support a number of NASA's programs. She developed and implemented code used in researching energy-conversion systems, analyzing alternative power technology—including the battery technology that was used for early hybrid vehicles, as well as for the [Centaur](#) upper-stage rocket. Her contributions to the Centaur project framed the technological foundation for launching future satellites and space vehicles, including the 1997 launch of [Cassini](#) to Saturn.

Later in her career at NASA, she took on the additional role of equal employment opportunity (EEO) counselor. In this role she helped supervisors address issues of gender, race, and age in discrimination complaints at the lowest level and in the most cooperative way possible.

Annie Easley retired in 1989 after 34 years with NASA. She passed away on June 25, 2011.



DIVERSITY • EQUITY • INCLUSION

SCIENCE ANNIE EASLEY



Source: Nasa.gov

- One of the reasons we celebrate Black History Month in February is because of Frederick Douglass.
- Douglass was the most photographed American of the 19th century, sitting for more portraits than even Abraham Lincoln.
- Douglass was the only African American to attend the First Women's Rights Convention held in Seneca Falls, New York, in 1848.
- During the Civil War, Douglass passionately helped enlist free black men to fight in the Union Army, convinced it would help African Americans win freedom, respect and full citizenship.
- Douglass was the first African American to receive a vote for president at a major political party convention.
- Douglass was also the first African American to receive a vice presidential nomination when Victoria Woodhull, the first woman to run for president, chose him as her running mate at the Equal Rights Party Convention in 1872, although he did not acknowledge the nomination or campaign for the office.

Source: Britannica.com

HUMANITIES FREDERICK DOUGLASS



Mae C. Jemison is an American astronaut and physician who, on June 4, 1987, became the first African American woman to be admitted into NASA's astronaut training program. On September 12, 1992, Jemison finally flew into space with six other astronauts aboard the Endeavour on mission STS47, becoming the first African American woman in space. In recognition of her accomplishments, Jemison has received several awards and honorary doctorates.

Biography.com

ENGINEERING **MAE JEMISON**



DIVERSITY • EQUITY • INCLUSION

- Louis Tompkins Wright, medical researcher, war hero and [political activist](#), was born to [former slaves](#) in La Grange, [Georgia](#) on July 23, 1891. He earned a bachelor's degree from Atlanta's [Clark University](#) in 1911 and a medical degree from Harvard University Medical School in 1915. Wright's activism began at Harvard where he missed three weeks of medical school to join [NAACP](#) picket lines protesting The Birth of a Nation.
- in 1919 he became the first African American appointed to the surgical staff at Harlem Hospital. Wright protested the dilapidated conditions of the hospital, raised its patient care standards, improved the professionalism of its staff, and brought the institution to national eminence.
- Wright continued to serve on the staff of Harlem Hospital until 1949 in various capacities, including director of the department of surgery and president of its medical board. Wright headed the team that first used Aureomycin. He became an expert in the treatment of head injuries and introduced the intradermal method of vaccination. Wright also founded the cancer research center at Harlem Hospital known as the Harlem Hospital Cancer Research Foundation.



DIVERSITY • EQUITY • INCLUSION

Source: Blackpast.org

SCIENCE DR. LEWIS T. WRIGHT



- Mahoney holds the honor of becoming the first black registered nurse. In 1879, she graduated from a program in New England that required 16 hours of labor, seven days a week. By the end of the program, she was one of three graduates out of a class that began with 40 students.
- She proved her mettle and went on to blaze trails for future nurses. In 1908, she helped to establish the National Association of Colored Graduate Nurses and proved, on a daily basis, that black nurses were in no way inferior to others.
- In recognition of her momentous achievements, the American Nurses Association created the Mary Mahoney Award, which is still considered one of the highest honors a nurse can receive.

Source: Nurse.org

NURSING **MARY ELIZA MAHONEY**



William Edward Burghardt Du Bois was a noted scholar, editor, and African American activist. Du Bois was a founding member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP - the largest and oldest civil rights organization in America).

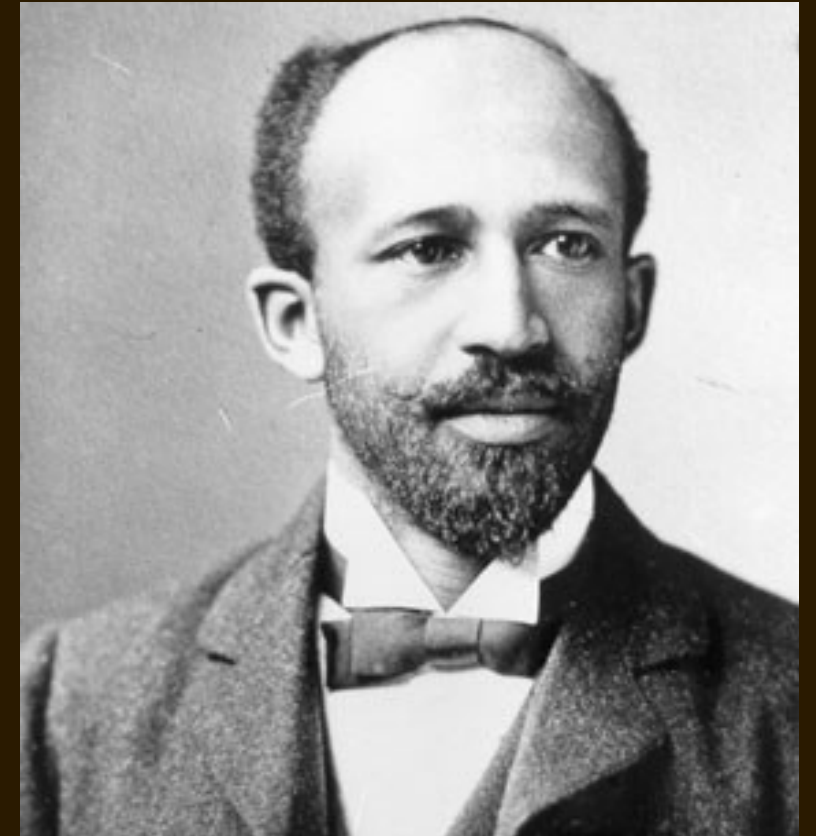
Throughout his life Du Bois fought discrimination and racism. He made significant contributions to debates about race, politics, and history in the United States in the first half of the 20th century, primarily through his writing and impassioned speaking on race relations.

Du Bois also served as editor of *The Crisis* magazine and published several scholarly works on race and African American history. By the time he died, in 1963, he had written 17 books, edited four journals and played a key role in reshaping black-white relations in America.

Source: Americallibrary.gov

HISTORY

W.E.B. DU BOIS



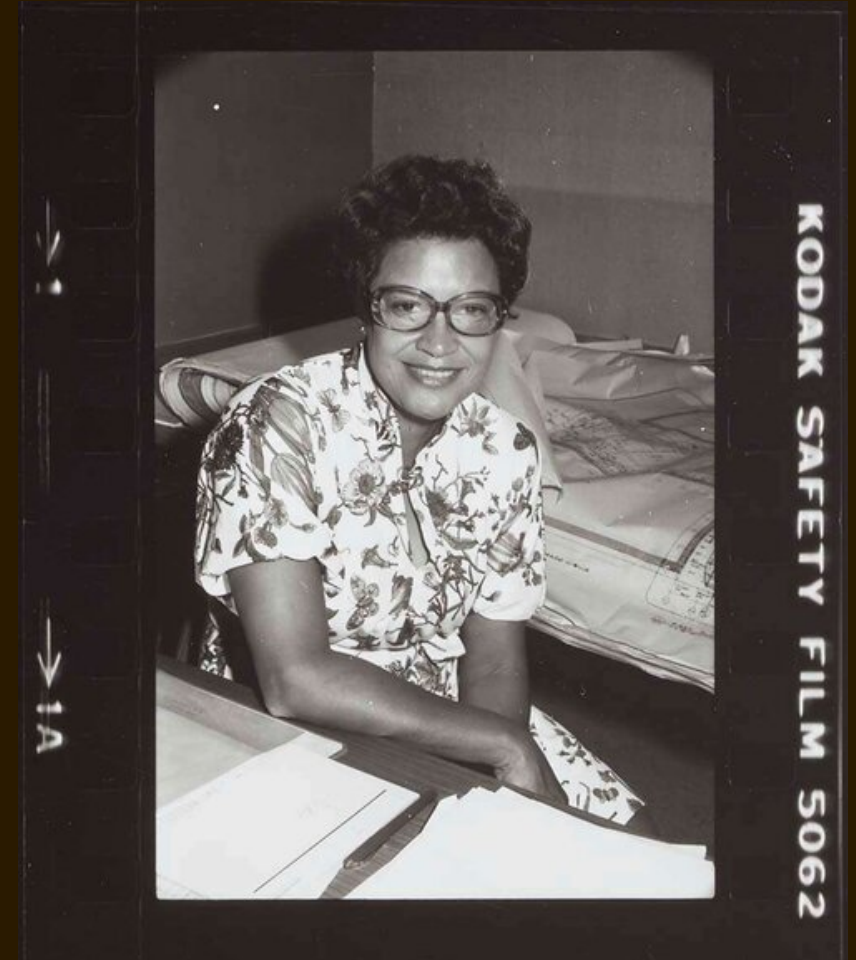
Once called “The Rosa Parks of architecture” by AIA board member Anthony Costello, Harlem-born Norma Merrick Sklarek overcame racism and sexism to become the first licensed black female architect in New York in 1954, the first black female member of the AIA in 1959, the first licensed black female architect in California in 1962, the first black female Fellow of the AIA in 1980, and cofounder of the nation’s largest woman-owned architecture firm (Siegel Sklarek Diamond) and the first black woman to co-own an architecture firm in 1985. As an architecture student at Barnard College and Columbia University, she was one of two women and the only black student in her 1950 class.

Source: The Modernist.org



DIVERSITY • EQUITY • INCLUSION

ARCHITECTURE NORMA MERRICK SKLAREK



Actor James Earl Jones was born on January 17, 1931, in Arkabutla, Mississippi. As a child, Jones developed a severe stutter. Through an arduous program of public speaking, James Earl Jones overcame his handicap, and today he is one of America's most celebrated actors, renowned for what critics have called "the voice of the century."

He has won multiple Tony, Emmy and Grammy Awards for his stage, television and recording work, and an Oscar for Lifetime Achievement in motion pictures. He has been heard by millions as the voice of Mustafa in *The Lion King*, and Darth Vader in the *Star Wars* films. This triumphant star is the recipient of the National Medal of Arts — awarded in tribute to his outstanding contributions to the cultural life of the United States — and of the Tony Award for Lifetime Achievement in the American theater.

He went on to star in a long list of successful movies and plays, becoming widely known as the voice of Darth Vader in the *Star Wars* film franchise. Jones won Tony Awards for his performances in *The Great White Hope* and *Fences*, and garnered an honorary Academy Award in 2011. He is also a two-time Emmy Award winner.



DIVERSITY • EQUITY • INCLUSION

Biography.com

THEATER, FILM, AND THE ARTS

JAMES EARL JONES



The impact Robinson made on Major League Baseball is one that will be forever remembered. On April 15 each season, every team in the majors celebrates Jackie Robinson Day in honor of when he broke the color barrier in baseball, becoming the first African-American player in the 20th century to take the field in the big leagues. He opened the door for many others and will forever be honored for his contribution to the game.

Robinson stood up for equal rights even before he did so in baseball. He was arrested and court martialed during while he was serving in the Army for refusing to move to the back of a segregated bus. He was eventually acquitted of the charges and received an honorable discharge. He then started his professional baseball career.

“Jackie Robinson made my success possible,” said Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. “Without him, I would never have been able to do what I did.”

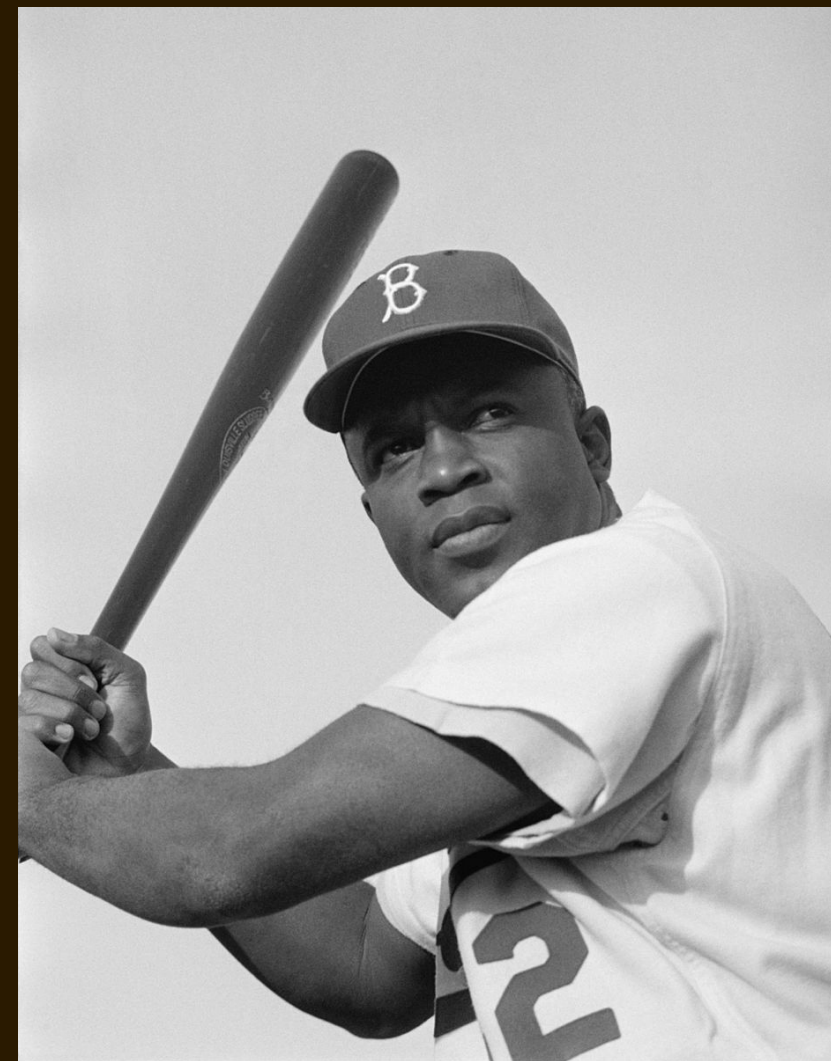
Robinson was elected to the Hall of Fame in 1962.



DIVERSITY • EQUITY • INCLUSION

SPORTS

JACKIE ROBINSON



Baseballhall.org

Francis Sumner, PhD, is referred to as the “Father of Black Psychology” because he was the first African American to receive a PhD degree in psychology. Sumner became a professor at various universities and managed to publish several articles despite the refusal of research agencies to provide funding for him because of his color.

He was interested in understanding racial bias and supporting educational justice. Sumner is also credited as one of the founders of the psychology department at Howard University, which he chaired from 1928 until his death in 1954.

Source: apa.org



DIVERSITY • EQUITY • INCLUSION

PSYCHOLOGY **FRANCIS SUMNER, PHD**



Quincy Delight Jones Jr. is an American record producer, multi-instrumentalist, songwriter, composer, arranger, and film and television producer. His career spans over 60 years in the entertainment industry with a record 80 Grammy Award nominations, 28 Grammys, and a Grammy Legend Award in 1992.

In 1964 he was named a vice president at Mercury, thereby becoming one of the first African Americans to hold a top executive position at a major American record label.

Wikipedia.com and Britannica.com

MUSIC **QUINCY JONES**



DIVERSITY • EQUITY • INCLUSION

Zelda Barbour Wynn Valdes was an African American fashion and costume designer.

In 1948 at the age of forty-seven, Valdes opened the first African American owned boutique in Manhattan on Broadway and West 158th Street with her sister, Mary Barbour, who worked as her assistant. She called her store, Chez Zelda. Valdes's boutique soon attracted numerous celebrities and society women. She would later move Chez Zelda to midtown Manhattan, setting up shop on 57th Street.

In 1949 Valdes was elected president of the New York Chapter of the National Association of Fashion and Accessory Designers (NAFAD), an organization of black designers that was founded by educator and political activist [Mary McLeod Bethune](#). In 1958 Playboy Magazine founder Hugh Hefner hired Valdes to design the first Playboy Bunny costumes. In 1958 Playboy Magazine founder Hugh Hefner hired Valdes to design the first Playboy Bunny costumes.



DIVERSITY • EQUITY • INCLUSION

Blackpast.org

FASHION

ZELDA BARBOUR WYNN VALDES



Charlotte E. Ray was both the first woman to practice law in Washington, DC, and the first Black female lawyer in the US.

In 1869, Ray began teaching at Howard University, which was established in 1867 to educate emancipated slaves and their descendants. During her first year of teaching, Ray was accepted into the Howard School of Law, where she applied under the name “C.E. Ray” because the university was reluctant to admit women to its law program.

Upon graduating in 1872, Ray opened a law practice, specializing in commercial law. However, Ray was unable to maintain her practice due to race and gender discrimination. She returned to New York in 1879 where she worked as a teacher in Brooklyn. She was active in the women’s suffrage movement until her death at age 60.

Baylegal.org



DIVERSITY • EQUITY • INCLUSION

CRIMINAL JUSTICE CHARLOTTE RAY



Billionaire media executive and philanthropist Oprah Winfrey is best known for hosting her own internationally popular talk show from 1986 to 2011. From there she launched her own television network, OWN.

According to Forbes magazine, Winfrey was the richest African American of the 20th century and the world's only Black billionaire for three years running. Life magazine hailed her as the most influential woman of her generation. In September 2002, Winfrey was named the first recipient of the Academy of Television Arts & Sciences' Bob Hope Humanitarian Award.

In 2005, Business Week named Winfrey the greatest Black philanthropist in American history. Oprah's Angel Network raised more than \$50 million for charitable programs, including girls' education in South Africa and relief to the victims of Hurricane Katrina.

Winfrey is a dedicated activist for children's rights; in 1994, President Clinton signed a bill into law that Winfrey had proposed to Congress, creating a nationwide database of convicted child abusers.



DIVERSITY • EQUITY • INCLUSION

COMMUNICATIONS & BUSINESS OPRAH WINFREY



Biography.com

Toni Morrison is one of the most celebrated authors in the world. In addition to writing plays, and children's books, her novels have earned her countless prestigious awards including the Pulitzer Prize and the Presidential Medal of Freedom from President Barack Obama.

While writing and producing, Morrison was also a professor in the Creative Writing Program at Princeton University. Her work earned her an honorary Doctorate degree from the University of Oxford, and the opportunity to be a guest curator at the Louvre museum in Paris. In 2000, she was named a Living Legend by the Library of Congress.

As the first African-American woman to win the Nobel Prize in Literature, Morrison's work has inspired a generation of writers to follow in her footsteps.

Source: Womenshistory.org

LITERATURE TONI MORRISON

