

Black History Month

Carter G. Woodson and Jesse Moorland founded an organization that established Negro History Week in 1926 to celebrate contributions of Black people. This evolved into Black History Month. Black History Month is also known as African American History Month. The celebration began officially in 1976. It has received recognition from the governments of the United States, Canada, Ireland and the United Kingdom.

Black History is actually American History. The recognition of Black people and African Americans has been considered controversial due to the discomfort that some people feel based on the realities of the horrors of our American History. As a reminder, it should be noted that the celebration of the history and contributions of Black Americans deserves to be incorporated in each month all year long. The month of February has been designated as the month to highlight contributions and the history of Black people and we shall; I do however encourage the continued celebration throughout the entire year.

The history of America is riddled with both great triumphs and great horrors. It is difficult to face some of the things that people have done to Black people as a result of racism. While difficult and uncomfortable, ignoring the truth does not erase it, nor the impact of the actions. As Black people were enslaved in America, the mental, physical and emotional horrors were vast, wide and deep wounds

were inflicted. The fortitude and accomplishments that have been made by Black people despite this is remarkable and miraculous. It can be viewed with nothing less than tremendous awe. The excellence that has risen from Black people despite the conditions imposed during and post enslavement is again worthy of grand celebration that is difficult to confine to just one month. So let us begin by genuinely honoring the excellence of Black people of the past and the Black history makers of our present.

Honoring Black Americans A – Z

A – Alexander Asbourne – Invented the Biscuit Cutter in 1875

B – Benjamin Bradley – Invented the Steamboat Engine 1864

C – Clatonia Jaquin Dorticus – Invented the photo machine for embossing photographs in 1895

D – Desmond Howard - Won Super Bowl 1997, Super Bowl MVP, and the Heisman Trophy 1991

E – Edward Lewis – Co-founder of Essence Magazine in 1970

F – Frederick Douglas – American Social Reformer, Abolitionist, Orator, Writer and Statesman

G – Gloria Johnson Powell – Child Psychologist and one of the first African American Woman to attain tenure at Harvard Medical School.

H – Harriet Tubman – Help enslaved people get through the underground railroad

I – Ida B. Wells – Investigative Journalist, Educator, and a founder of the NAACP

J – James Baldwin – Writer and Activist

K – Kehinde Wiley – Brilliant Portrait Painter

L – Lonnie Johnson – Creator of the Super Soaker

M – Medgar Evers – Civil Rights Leader, NAACP Field Secretary

N – Nat Turner – Preacher who led a rebellion to free enslaved black people in Virginia

O – Otis Redding – Singer/Songwriter

P – Pearl Bailey – Singer, Emmy and Tony Award Winner, First African American to receive a Screen Actors Guild Lifetime Achievement Award

Q – Quincy Jones – American Record Producer

R – Ruby Bridges – Desegregated Elementary School in Louisiana

S – Sarah Willie Layton – Suffragist and Civil Rights Activist

T – Toni Morrison – Author and Poet

U – Unita Blackwell – First African American Woman to be elected mayor in the state of Mississippi in 1976

V – Venus Williams - Professional Tennis Champion

W – W.E.B. Du Bois – Educator, Writer and Civil Rights Activist

X – Xavier University – Only Catholic Historically Black College and University (HBCU)

Y – Yolanda Adams – Gospel Singer

Z – Zora Neale Hurston – Author, Anthropologist and Filmmaker

Friendly PSA:

Black people have been referred to as Black, Negro, African American, Afro-American and other group titles that are not always received as equivalent as a matter of respect. So how might you determine the best and most appropriate way to address an individual who is of African descent. If you truly want to know, ask that person. While it may begin as an uncomfortable discussion, the interest in Black people as individuals is worthy of exploration.

Resources:

<https://blog.frontrange.edu/2019/02/18/five-fascinating-facts-about-black-history-month/>

<https://nationaltoday.com/black-history-month/>

<https://www.signupgenius.com/how-to/schools/How-Schools-Can-Celebrate-Black-History-Month-and-Why-It-Matters>