

Fascinating Facts about Black History Month

Carter Woodson: The Father of Black History.

Woodson was tireless in his lobbying to establish Negro History Week as a program to encourage the study of African-American history. He dedicated his career to the subject and wrote many books on the topic. His most famous volume is *The Mis-Education of the Negro* (1933), which has become required reading at numerous colleges and universities.

February Was Chosen for a Reason.

Negro History Week was the second week of February. Why? To coincide with the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass. President Lincoln, of course, was the 16th U.S. president and paved the way for the abolition of slavery with his Emancipation Proclamation. Douglass was an escaped slave turned activist and author, and a prominent leader in the abolitionist movement to end slavery.

A Week Becomes a Month.

The civil rights movement of the 1960s helped elevate Negro History Week to national prominence... and turn it into a month-long celebration. As a result, in 1976, President Gerald Ford made things official, proclaiming February to be Black History Month.

Honoring African-American Men and Women.

You don't have to look far to notice the many impressive achievements of black men and women in the fields of science, politics, law, sports, entertainment, and many others. Below are just some of the impressive people we celebrate during Black History Month:

Mary Eliza Mahoney, Kenneth Frazier, JD, Helen Octavia Dickens, Dr. James McCune Smith, Alexa Canady, MD...

What do these people have in common? These are African American history makers and pioneers that have been integral contributors to the progress of health care, not only for other African Americans and other minority groups, but - for all of us. Their contributions in oncology, ophthalmology, cardiology, and neuroscience have saved thousands of lives.

This month we are sharing with you a snippet of the accomplishments of these amazing people in the medical field.

Please, take some time to read about their lives, the obstacles that they had to overcome and what their accomplishments mean to our lives today.

We added a little extra on Mary Eliza Mahoney the first African American nurse!



1. Alexander Augusta, MD. First black physician appointed director of a U.S. hospital.

Drafted to serve in the Civil War, Dr. Augusta became the first commissioned black surgeon in the U.S. Army. He later became the first black physician to direct a U.S. hospital — Freedman's Hospital in Washington D.C.



2. Patricia Bath, MD. First black female physician awarded a patent for a medical invention.

Dr. Bath's accomplishments include the invention of a new device and technique for cataract surgery known as laserphaco, for which she was the first black woman to receive a medical patent. She was the first woman appointed chair of ophthalmology at a U.S. medical institution (UCLA) in 1983.



3. Robert Boyd, MD. President and co-founder of the first professional organization for black physicians.

The National Medical Association is the nation's oldest and largest organization representing black physicians and healthcare professionals. Black physicians frustrated by professional disenfranchisement created the NMA to serve the black medical community. Robert Boyd, MD, of Nashville, Tenn., was appointed the group's first president in 1895.



4. Lonnie Bristow, MD. First black physician elected president of the American Medical Association.

Dr. Bristow joined the AMA in 1968 after the organization banned racial discrimination within its ranks and allowed black membership. In 1994, Dr. Bristow became the first black physician to lead the organization.



5. Alexa Canady, MD. First black female neurosurgeon.

By 1981, Dr. Canady had become America's first black female neurosurgeon. In her most notable role, she served as chief of neurosurgery at Detroit-based Children's Hospital of Michigan from 1987 to 2001.



6. Ben Carson, MD. First neurosurgeon to successfully separate conjoined twins attached at the back of the head.

Dr. Carson was one of the youngest physicians to direct pediatric neurosurgery at Baltimore-based Johns Hopkins Hospital. He successfully completed the first surgical separation of conjoined twins attached at the back of the head in 1987.



7. Donna Christian-Christensen, MD. First female physician elected to Congress.

Representing the U.S. Virgin Islands, Dr. Christian-Christensen is the first female physician to serve as an elected member of Congress. She served as chair of the Congressional Black Caucus's Health Braintrust in 1998, an advocacy group that leads efforts to oversee and advocate for minority health issues on national and international platforms.



8. Rebecca Crumpler, MD. First black woman awarded a medical degree from a U.S. college.

Rebecca Crumpler graduated from New England Female Medical College in Boston in 1864 as the first black woman awarded a medical degree from a U.S. university.



9. Helen Dickens, MD. First black woman admitted to the American College of Surgeons.

The only black woman in her graduating class, Helen Dickens earned her medical degree from the University of Illinois in Chicago in 1934. In 1945, Dr. Dickens was the first black woman to receive board certification in obstetrics and gynecology. Five years later, she became the first black woman admitted as a fellow of the American College of Surgeons.



10. Charles Drew, MD. First to use blood plasma to store blood for transfusion.

Charles Drew pioneered methods of storing blood plasma for transfusion and organized the first large-scale blood bank in the U.S. during WWII. Dr. Drew continued on to become chief surgeon at Freedman's Hospital in Washington D.C., and the first black examiner for the American Board of Surgery.



11. Joycelyn Elders, MD. First black female physician appointed surgeon general.

Gov. Bill Clinton appointed Dr. Elders director of the Arkansas Department of Health in 1987. As U.S. President, Mr. Clinton appointed Dr. Elders the first black U.S. surgeon general in 1993.



12. Roselyn Epps, MD. First black president of the American Medical Women's Association.

Her achievements include presiding as the first black president of the American Medical Women's Association in 1974 and serving as a scientific program admin at the National Institutes of Health. In her lifetime, Dr. Epps produced more than 90 articles in peer-reviewed journals and served as co-editor for both *The Women's Complete Healthbook* and *Developing a Child Care Program*.



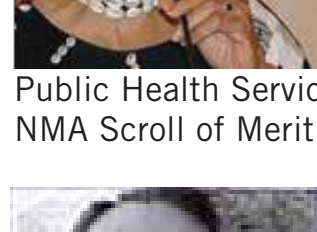
13. Kenneth Frazier, JD. First black man to lead a major pharmaceutical company.

In 1992, Mr. Frazier joined Merck & Co.'s public affairs division as general counsel, helping to define the pharmaceutical giant's legal strategy during the next 10 years. He rose through the management ranks at Merck until he was appointed chairman and CEO in 2011, becoming the first black man to lead a major pharmaceutical company.



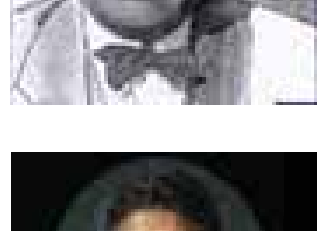
14. Solomon Fuller, MD. First black psychiatrist recognized by the American Psychiatric Association.

After earning his medical degree from Boston University School of Medicine in 1897, Dr. Fuller became the first black psychiatrist in the U.S. recognized by the American Psychiatric Association. The mental health program at bears Dr. Fuller's name today in honor of his contributions to psychiatric research.



15. Marilyn Gaston, MD. First black female director of an U.S. Public Health Service bureau.

Dr. Gaston was the first black female physician appointed director of HHS' Bureau of Primary Health Care in 1990, where she focused on improving healthcare access to underserved and minority communities. National and international organizations have recognized Dr. Gaston for her social and scientific achievements. She received each type of award given by the U.S. Public Health Service as well as the National Medical Association's most prestigious honor — the NMA Scroll of Merit.



16. William Hinton, MD. First black physician to teach at Harvard Medical School.

Dr. Hinton was appointed professor of preventive medicine and hygiene at Harvard Medical School in 1918 — the first black instructor in the school's history. In 1927, he developed a diagnostic test for syphilis, known as the Hinton test, which was eventually endorsed by the U.S. Public Health Service.



17. Risa Lavizzo-Mourey, MD, MBA. First black female president and CEO of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

Dr. Lavizzo-Mourey has more than 30 years of experience as a medical practitioner, policymaker, professor and non-profit executive. In 2003, she became the first black female president and CEO of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, one of America's largest philanthropic organizations devoted to public health and healthcare.



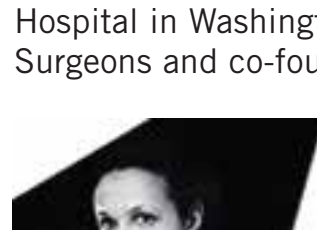
18. Mary Mahoney, RN. First black woman awarded a nursing degree.

Ms. Mahoney is credited as America's first black professional nurse. Graduated from Boston-based New England Hospital for Women and Children's training school for nurses in 1879 and became one of the first black members of the American Nurses Association. She was among the first women to register to vote in Boston following the ratification of the 19th Amendment on August 26, 1920. [Here is a little extra on Mary Eliza Mahoney the first African American nurse!](#)



19. James Smith, MD. First black man to practice with a medical degree in the U.S.

Smith was an American physician, abolitionist and author. He earned his medical degree from the University of Glasgow, Scotland, and returned to the U.S. as the first black man to hold and practice with a medical degree. He was also the first black physician to establish and run a pharmacy.



20. Daniel Williams, MD. One of the first physicians to perform a successful open-heart surgery; founded the first interracial and black-owned hospital.

Dr. Williams opened Provident Hospital in Chicago in 1893, the first black-owned hospital and the first medical facility with an interracial staff. He was one of the first physicians to complete a successful pericardial surgery, also known as open-heart surgery. He later became chief surgeon at Freedmen's Hospital in Washington, D.C. Dr. Williams was the first black member of the American College of Surgeons and co-founded the National Medical Association with Robert Boyd, MD.



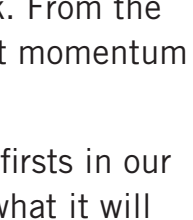
21. Jane Wright, MD. First woman elected president of the New York Cancer Society.

Her work is largely responsible for elevating chemotherapy from a last-ditch effort at treating cancer patients to a viable treatment option. In 1964, working as part of a team at New York University School of Medicine, Dr. Wright developed a nonsurgical method using a catheter system to deliver heavy doses of anticancer drugs to previously hard-to-reach tumor areas.

FROM FIRST TO NEXT

FEBRUARY 24, 2022 | NOON - 1:00
WATCH + PARTICIPATE IN THE LIVE ZOOM DISCUSSION

CELEBRATING COMMUNITY FIRSTS AND EMPOWERING THE NEXT GENERATION OF BLACK LEADERS IN CNY



Over the last decade Black Americans have achieved many "firsts" in Central New York. From the elected office to business office, great gains have been made. But how do we keep that momentum going?

On Thursday February 24, 2022, join a panel of people who have achieved significant firsts in our community as they reflect on their personal journey to reaching a first milestone, and what it will take to help the next generation to continue to blaze new trails in Central New York and beyond.

Panelists:
Helen Hudson, President – Syracuse Common Council
Michael Mondis, Chief – Syracuse Fire Department
Shawni Davis, Owner – Luminary Electrical

Moderator
Melanie Johnson, News Anchor & Reporter - CNY Central

This is a free event, open to everyone in Central New York!

REGISTER HERE!

Purpose Statement

SOS as a medical practice and a contributor to the local community is committed in its support of diversity, equity, and inclusion. SOS seeks to build patient and team-member relationships among individuals of all ages, races, ethnicities, genders, and sexual identities that fully represents many cultures, backgrounds and viewpoints and thereby cultivate a culture of tolerance where all feel welcome.

DEI Committee Members

Brandi Brown | Yolanda Brown | Melissa Butler | Helena Capone | Nicole Chidsey
Shelly Devries | Dr. Naven Duggal | Melissa Griffin | Cheryl Holdrege | Mike Humphrey
Diana Jones | Melissa Patnella | Victoria Rolls | Robert Taylor | Dr. Daniel Wnorowski

Please reach out to anyone in the DEI committee to share your thoughts and ideas.