



Black Women in History

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Meet Your Hosts

Cassandra West is a Junior at Howard University, majoring in Psychology and double minoring in Strategic Communications and Sociology. She further works as a Government Relations Intern for The ONE Campaign.



Catherine West is an eighth grader on the High Honor Roll at McCarthy Middle School. She will be attending Chelmsford High School as an Honors Student pursuing her academic and extracurricular goals.



Ciarra Coston is a freshman currently studying astrophysics at Oxford College of Emory University. After her doctorate degree, She wants explore space related phenomena at NASA, JPL or even in the commercial space such as SpaceX, Virgin Galactic, or Blue Origins.





Cicely Tyson (1924-2021)

- Cicely Tyson is an American actress, model, and civil rights activist.
- She was one of the first successful black actresses to wear her hair in an afro.
- The first black actress to star in TV drama, Eastside/Westside.
- Tyson received three **Primetime Emmy Awards**, four **Black Reel Awards**, one **Screen Actors Guild Award**, one **Tony Award**, an **honorary Academy Award**, and a **Peabody Award**.
- In 1977, Cicely was inducted into the Black Filmmakers Hall of Fame.
- In 2015, she was named a Kennedy Center honoree.

Dr. Valerie L Thomas (1943-present)

- Valerie Thomas is an African American scientist and inventor best known for her patented illusion transmitter which creates 3D projections
- develop programs that supported research on Halley's Comet, the ozone layer, and satellite technology.
- Thomas received a number of NASA awards
- In addition to her work at NASA, she mentored youths through the National Technical Association and Science Mathematics Aerospace Research and





Marsha P. Johnson (1945-1992)

- Marsha P. Johnson is an activist for civil and LGBTQ+ rights. She is was a Black trans woman, a self-identified drag queen, a performer, and a survivor.
- After transitioning, she adopted the P in her name, “Pay-no-Mind”.
- Johnson quickly became a prominent fixture in the LGBTQ community serving as a “drag mother” helping homeless and struggling LGBTQ youth.
- On June 28, 1969 at Stonewall Inn on Christopher St., members of the LGBTQ+ community, including Marsha, were being harassed by the NYPD. Marsha led the group of people in defending themselves in the event that would escalate to be known as the Stonewall Riots.
- In the aftermath of her bravery and activism, pro-LGBTQ+ legislation began to be talked about, pride month was established, and the world began to re-evaluate its education and biases regarding the LGBTQ community.

Jane Bolin (1908-2007)

- Jane Bolin is the first African-American woman to graduate from Yale Law School, earning her J.D. in 1931
- In the 1930s, she became the first African-American woman to serve as assistant corporate counsel for New York City.
- In 1939, Jane Bolin became the first African-American female judge in the United States.
- Bolin fought against racial discrimination within the system and was a fierce advocate for children
- Outside the courtroom, she was also a board member of the N.A.A.C.P., work with the Child Welfare League of America and belonged to the Urban League





Henrietta Lacks (1920-1951)

- Henrietta Lacks is a mother, daughter, and victim of the American medical system.
- She was raised in Halifax County, Virginia and started her own family in Baltimore County, Maryland.
- In January of 1951, Lacks went to Johns Hopkins after noticing a knot in her cervix.
 - She was then told that she has an epidermoid carcinoma of the cervix.
 - Years later was discovered to actually be an adenocarcinoma
- During her cancer treatments, doctors took samples of her cervix without her knowledge or permission.
 - Her cell's unusually high reproduction rate earned the nickname "immortal".
 - They used the HeLa cell line to forge breakthroughs in biomedical research.
- Henrietta died from her cancer in October of 1951.

Zora Neale Hurston (1891-1960)

- A Harlem Renaissance writer that celebrated the culture created by Southern African Americans
- She published her first novel, *Jonah's Gourd Vine*, in 1934
- She went on to establish a school of dramatic arts at Bethune-Cookman College
- Sadly her work was not well known until after her death, but now she is ranked as the best writer of the 20th century.





Mary Church Terrell (1863-1954)

- African American activist who championed racial equality and women's suffrage in the late 19th and early 20th century
- One of the first African American women to earn a masters in 1888, from Oberlin College
- Her activism was sparked in 1892, when an old friend, Thomas Moss, was lynched because his business was more successful than the local white business
- Terrell joined Ida B. Wells-Barnett in anti-lynching campaigns, but focused on the notion of racial uplift
- “Lifting as we climb”

Alice Coachman (1923-2014)

- At the 1948 Olympics in London when she leaped to a record-breaking height of 5 feet, 6 and 1/8 inches in the high jump finals to become the first Black woman to win an Olympic gold medal.
- Before even stepping foot on a college team, she broke high school and college records barefooted
- In 1952 she also became the first african american to earn an endorsement deal
- She went on to support young athletes and older, retired Olympic veterans through the Alice Coachman Track and Field Foundation.
- Now she is inducted into 9 different halls of fame





Audre Lorde (1934-1992)

- “black, lesbian, mother, warrior, poet,”
- dedicated to confronting injustices of racism, sexism, classism, and homophobia.
- emphasizes the need for different groups to find common ground, but also to face difference directly
- Encouraging her readers to constructively channel their anger and rage incited by oppression is another crucial theme throughout her works.

Zendaya (1996-)

- Zendaya is an American actress, singer, model, dancer, and producer.
- Zendaya got her first major role at the age of 14 for a Disney show called “Shake It Up”.
- She was the youngest woman to win best actress in a drama series at the Emmys for her portrayal in the show “Euphoria”.
- She was runner up on the 16th season of the popular show “Dancing With The Stars”, and held the record of youngest dancer on the show until 2015.
- She had main roles in shows including Shake It Up, KC Undercover, Euphoria, and movies including Zapped, Frenemies, and her newest movie Malcolm and Marie.





Kamala Harris (1964-)

- Kamala Harris is a barrier breaking lawyer and politician.
- She grew up a part of the bussing program in elementary school in Berkeley's attempt to desegregate.
- Graduated from Howard University in 1986 and from the University of California at Hastings College of Law in 1989.
- District Attorney of San Francisco (2004-2011)
 - First person of color
- Attorney General of California (2011-2017)
 - First woman
 - First African American
 - First South Asian American
- U.S. Senator from California (2017-2021)
- 46th Vice President of the United States (2021-?)
 - First woman
 - First African American
 - First South Asian American

“Anytime you get more than a couple Black Women together, you’re creating this powerful mechanism for change.”

- Kimberly Bryant