

Black History Month



Carter Goodwin Woodson saw African American history in the history of the United States as a painful, speechless void in a sea of beautiful voices. Filling this void was his imperative, the sole purpose of his life. He understood that lack of recognition of contributions would lead to misconceptions and lack of appreciation for a people and ultimately to its devaluation whether deliberate or accidental. He also understood that the need to claim accomplishments of a people meant more than taking the credit and accolades that accompany any accomplishment. He is quoted as saying, "If a race has no recorded history, its achievements would be forgotten and, in time, claimed by other groups." In his research he found that achievements of those of African descent were overlooked, ignored or even suppressed by writers of history textbooks.

Prior to 1915, America had no knowledge nor acknowledgment of the contributions and achievements of its black citizens. In 1915, Dr. Carter G. Woodson, history's only person parented by persons formerly held as slaves to receive a Ph.D. in history, founded the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History. His goal was to add a forgotten chapter to history's great body of knowledge. Later on in 1926, he created Negro History Week which grew to become Black History Month. Other designated months of study would follow for the contributions of women, Native Americans, Asian and Pacific Islander Americans and Hispanic-Americans.

For the majority of his life, he dedicated his life to researching and recording the facts of African and African American history. He sacrificed health, happiness and professional gain to write what he felt was the single most barren, impoverished chapter in the wealth known as history. By the end of his life in 1950, Woodson had lived to see his dream and life's work result in black history being celebrated by parades, speeches, recitations, and banquets across the country as well as libraries, schools and museums offering booklets, books and research on the subject.

You are invited to learn more about the contributions, struggles and triumphs of African Americans. You may enjoy reviewing <http://www.deomi.org/SpecialObservance/presentations.cfm?CatID=2> for more information.



At top from left: Rev. Joseph Lowery, founder of the SCLC; Dr. Carter G. Woodson; RADM Bruce Grooms first black commandant U.S. Naval Academy; Jessye Norman, opera star; Venus Williams, tennis star and founder of EleVen fashion collection and V Starr Interior Designs. At bottom from left: Michael Anderson, fallen astronaut; Naomi Sims, first black supermodel and entrepreneur; Susan Rice, U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations; Condoleezza Rice, former U.S. Secretary of State; Aaron Williams, Peace Corps Director; Stephen Rochon, U.S.C.G. RADM (retired) and current Chief Usher at White House; Quincy Jones, music producer and author; Stevie Wonder, music legend.