

Black Heritage

Short bios of of the African Americans celebrated by the U.S. Postal Service.
See p. 16 for pictures of the stamps.

Harriet Tubman — Born a slave in 1821, Tubman created a network of black churches known as the Underground Railroad. She personally helped some 200 people escape slavery.

Martin Luther King Jr.— King credited the passive resistance techniques of Gandhi for his own strategies of nonviolent resistance. In 1964, he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

Benjamin Banneker — Banneker, mathematician, astronomer and inventor, was appointed by George Washington in 1790 to work on the new capital of Washington, D.C.

Whitney Moore Young — Considered the father of affirmative action, Young used his position as executive director of the National Urban League to convince corporate leaders and philanthropists to help inner city poor.

Jackie Robinson — In 1947, Robinson became the first black player in major league baseball playing for the Brooklyn Dodgers. He proved to be one of the best players of the era.

Scott Joplin — Though populare, Joplin did not receive recognition as a serious composer until some 50 years after his death. In 1976, his 1911 opera “Treemonisha” won the Pulitzer Prize.

Carter Godwin Woodson — He originated Black History Week in 1926, which evolved into Black History Month. Woodson worked in West Virginia coal mines before earning his doctorate in history from Harvard.

Mary McLeod Bethune — Bethune built the Daytona Normal School for Negro Girls into Bethune-Cookman College. Under President Calvin Coolidge, and later Herbert Hoover, she became involved in the National Child Welfare Commission.

Sojourner Truth — During the Civil War, Truth traveled the country advocating the rights of all people to be free and for women to participate fully in society.

Jean Baptiste Point Du Sable — One of the first black frontiersmen to arrive in Michigan Territory, Du Sable has been credited with the founding of Chicago.

James Weldon Johnson — American writer, educator, diplomat, and lawyer, Johnson was a founder and secretary (1916–30) of the NAACP. He was American consul (1906–12), first in Venezuela and then in Nicaragua.

A. Philip Randolph — Randolph organized the first all-black labor union, the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters. Randolph’s efforts were essential to the formation of the first Fair Employment Practices Committee and the integration of the armed services in the 1940s.

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Ida B. Wells — At the turn of the century, Wells led the anti-lynching crusade. A writer, she became part-owner of a newspaper, the *Memphis Free Speech*, and was a founder of the NAACP.

Jan E. Matzeliger — Matzeliger patented his Lasting Machine in 1880. Until then, a cobbler could produce about 50 shoes a day; with the machine, the number increased to at least 150.

W.E.B. Du Bois — A civil rights pioneer, historian author and educator, Du Bois was a founder of the NAACP and edited the influential *Crisis* magazine.

Percy Lavon Julian — In 1935, Julian synthesized physostigmine from the calabar bean to treat glaucoma. Despite this, DePauw University denied him a professorship because of his race. Julian is noted most for his synthesis of cortisone, used to treat arthritis.

Dr. Allison Davis — Dr. Davis, social anthropologist and educator, challenged the cultural bias of standardized intelligence tests and fought for an understanding of human potential beyond racial class and caste. His work helped end legalized racial segregation.

Bessie Coleman — Coleman was denied admission to aviation schools in the U.S. because of her race and gender. In 1921, she earned an international pilot's license in Paris and returned to the U.S. where she gained fame for high-flying stunts.

Ernest E. Just — Just was known primarily for his work in marine biology. Throughout the 1930s, he conducted research in Germany, France and Italy, and published 50 papers. He was one of the founders of the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity.

Benjamin O. Davis Sr. — In a distinguished military career, Davis rose from private to become the nation's first black brigadier general.

Not part of the Black Heritage Month commemorative stamps, these stamps also are pictured:

Paul Dunbar — Born June 27, 1872, Dunbar was a poet of distinction. Also notable are his novel, *The Uncalled*, and a newspaper that he founded, *The Tattler*.

Roberto Clemente — Born in Puerto Rico, Clemente in 1973 he became the first Hispanic member of the Baseball Hall of Fame.

Joe Louis — Joseph Louis Barrow, "The Brown Bomber," did as much for blacks in the sport of boxing as Jackie Robinson did for baseball. Louis earned his place on top in June 1937.

Duke Ellington — Born Edward Kennedy "Duke" Ellington in 1899, he was a pioneering band leader and composer from about 1918 to 1974.

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