




Gallery Walk In Celebration Of Black History Month

Presented by Black Affinity Group (BAG)



The Insight

In recognition of distinguished historical and contemporary black individuals who have made key contributions to our society and inspired positive change.



**"You must first love and
know your own selves before
we're able to properly be in
community with others" -
Nikki Giovanni**

Michelle Obama



Raised on the South Side of Chicago, Michelle is a graduate of Princeton University and Harvard Law School. She was the first African-American woman to serve as first lady. She is the wife of the 44th President of the United States Barack Obama. As first lady, Obama worked as an advocate for poverty awareness, education, nutrition, physical activity, and healthy eating. She has written three books including her New York Times best-selling memoir *Becoming* (2018) and *The Light We Carry* (2022).

"You should never view your challenges as a disadvantage. Instead, it's important for you to understand that your experience facing and overcoming adversity is actually one of your biggest advantages. " -
Michelle Obama

Clareesa Shields



Shields was born and raised in Flint, Michigan. She is an American professional boxer and professional mixed martial artist. She has held multiple world championships in five weight classes, including the undisputed female light middleweight title in March 2021; the undisputed female middleweight title twice between 2019 and 2024; the World Boxing Council (WBC) and International Boxing Federation (IBF) female super middleweight titles from 2017 to 2018; the World Boxing Organization (WBO) female light heavyweight title and the undisputed female heavyweight title since February 2025.

"I tell all kids and the girls growing up that you control your own life, you control your destiny - not where you're born, not who your parents are."

- Clareesa Shields



Simone Biles

Biles born in Columbus, Ohio and raised in Spring, Texas. She is an American artistic gymnast. Her 11 Olympic medals and 30 World Championship medals make her the most decorated gymnast in history.[5] She is widely regarded as one of the greatest gymnasts of all time and one of the greatest Olympians of all time.

With 11 Olympic medals, she is tied with Věra Čáslavská as the second-most decorated female Olympic gymnast, and has the most Olympic medals earned by a U.S. gymnast.

"Be your own cheerleader: Celebrate your wins, no matter how small." - Simone Biles

Beyoncé

Raised in Houston, Texas

She is an American singer, songwriter, and businesswoman. Beyoncé is one of the best-selling music artists of all time, with estimated sales of over 200 million records. She has 13 Billboard Hot 100 number-one singles (including 9 as a solo artist) and is the only female artist to debut all of her eight solo albums at number one on the Billboard 200.

She is one of the most awarded artists of all time, and the most awarded and nominated artist in the history of the Grammy Awards, as well as the most awarded artist at the BET Awards, NAACP Image Awards, and Soul Train Music Awards. Beyoncé's inductions include the Guinness World Records Hall of Fame and the Black Music & Entertainment Walk of Fame.

"I don't like to gamble, but if there's one thing I'm willing to bet on, it's myself" Beyoncé



Kendrick Lamar



Born in Compton, California he is an American rapper. Regarded as one of the most influential hip-hop artists of his generation, Lamar was awarded the 2018 Pulitzer Prize for Music, becoming the first musician outside of the classical and jazz genres to receive the honor. Lamar has received various accolades throughout his career, including 22 Grammy Awards (the third-most won by a rapper), a Primetime Emmy Award, a Brit Award, four American Music Awards, six Billboard Music Awards, 11 MTV Video Music Awards (including two Video of the Year wins), and a record 37 BET Hip Hop Awards. Time listed him as one of the 100 most influential people in the world in 2016.

"My moms always told me, 'How long you gonna play the victim?' I can say I'm mad and I hate everything, but nothing really changes until I change myself." - Kendrick Lamar

Lebron James



Born in Akron, Ohio LeBron is an American professional basketball player for the Los Angeles Lakers of the National Basketball Association (NBA). Nicknamed "King James", he is widely regarded as one of the greatest basketball players of all time, and is frequently at the center of debates regarding the sport's all-time best, often being compared to Michael Jordan.

James has won four NBA championships from 10 NBA Finals appearances, having made eight consecutive appearances between 2011 and 2018. He also won the inaugural NBA Cup in 2023 with the Lakers, three Olympic gold medals as a member of the U.S. national team, and the Olympics MVP in the 2024 Summer Olympics. He is the NBA's all-time leading scorer.

"You can't be afraid to fail. It's the only way you succeed - you're not gonna succeed all the time, and I know that." -
Lebron James

Barack Obama



Born in Honolulu Barack is an American politician who served as the 44th president of the United States from 2009 to 2017. A member of the Democratic Party, he was the first African-American president in U.S. history.

Obama previously served as a U.S. senator representing Illinois from 2005 to 2008 and as an Illinois state senator from 1997 to 2004. Obama was awarded the 2009 Nobel Peace Prize for efforts in international diplomacy, a decision which drew both criticism and praise.

Outside of politics, Obama has published three books: *Dreams from My Father* (1995), *The Audacity of Hope* (2006), and *A Promised Land* (2020).

"Focusing your life solely on making a buck shows a certain poverty of ambition. It asks too little of yourself. Because it's only when you hitch your wagon to something larger than yourself that you realize your true potential." - Barack Obama

Denzel Washington



Born in Mount Vernon, New York Denzel is an American actor, producer, and director. Known for his dramatic roles on stage and screen, The New York Times named him the greatest actor of the 21st century in 2020. He has received several accolades, including two Academy Awards, three Golden Globe Awards, and a Tony Award as well as nominations for two Emmy Awards and a Grammy Award. Washington has been honored with the Cecil B. DeMille Award in 2016, AFI Life Achievement Award in 2019, and the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2025. As a leading man, Washington has starred in many commercially successful films.

He made his directorial film debut with Antwone Fisher (2002) followed by The Great Debaters (2007), Fences (2016), and A Journal for Jordan (2021).

I'm very proud to be black, but black is not all I am. That's my cultural historical background, my genetic makeup, but it's not all of who I am nor is it the basis from which I answer every question." -Denzel Washington

Jane Bolin

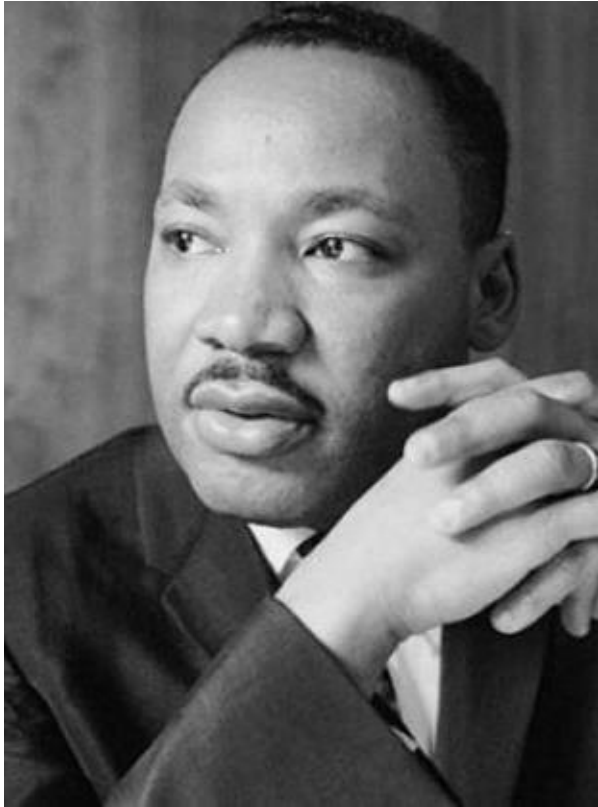


Born in Poughkeepsie, New York Jane was an American attorney and judge. She was the first black woman to graduate from Yale Law School, the first to join the New York City Bar Association and the first to join the New York City Law Department. Bolin became the first black woman to serve as a judge in the United States when she was sworn into the bench of the New York City Domestic Relations Court in 1939. After attending high school in Poughkeepsie, Bolin was prevented from enrolling at Vassar College as it did not accept black students at that time.

At 16 years old, she enrolled at Wellesley College in Massachusetts where she was one of only two black freshmen.[2] Having been socially rejected by the white students, she and the only other black student decided to live off campus together. She graduated from Wellesley in 1928 in the top 20 of her class. A career adviser at Wellesley College tried to discourage her from applying to Yale Law School due to her race and gender. Nevertheless, in 1931, she became the first black woman to graduate from Yale Law School[2] and passed the New York state bar examination in 1932.

"It is easy to imagine how a young, protected child who sees portrayals of brutality is forever scarred and becomes determined to contribute in her own small way to social justice"- Jane Bolin

Martin Luther King Jr.



Born in Atlanta, Georgia Martin was an American Baptist minister, activist, and political philosopher who was one of the most prominent leaders in the civil rights movement from 1955 until his assassination in 1968. King advanced civil rights for people of color in the United States through nonviolent resistance and nonviolent civil disobedience against Jim Crow laws and other forms of legalized discrimination.

A black church leader, King participated in and led marches for the right to vote, desegregation, labor rights, and other civil rights.[1] He oversaw the 1955 Montgomery bus boycott and later became the first president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). As president of the SCLC, he led the unsuccessful Albany Movement in Albany, Georgia, and helped organize some of the nonviolent 1963 protests in Birmingham, Alabama.

King was one of the leaders of the 1963 March on Washington, where he delivered his "I Have a Dream" speech on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, and helped organize two of the three Selma to Montgomery marches during the 1965 Selma voting rights movement. The civil rights movement achieved pivotal legislative gains in the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and the Fair Housing Act of 1968.

"The time is always right to do what is right." - Martin Luther King Jr.

Oprah Winfrey

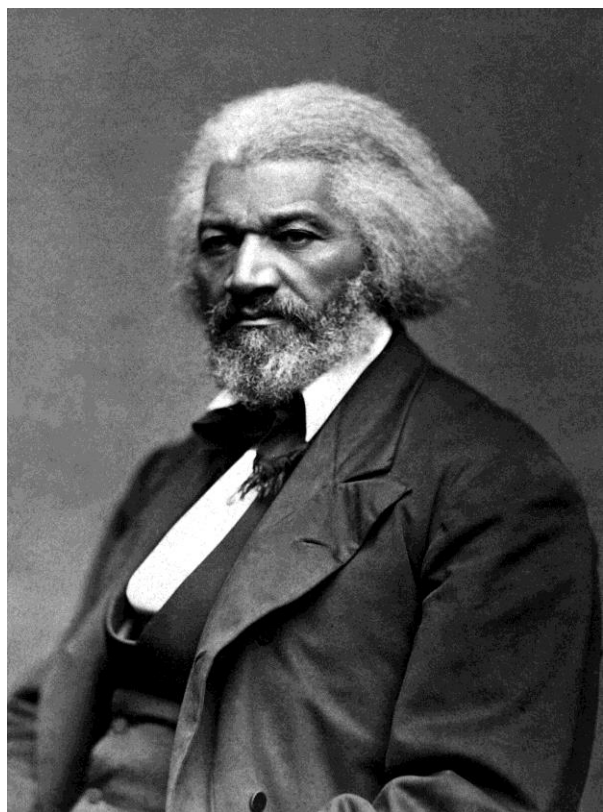


She was born in Kosciusko, Mississippi. Oprah, is an American talk show host, television producer, actress, author, and media proprietor. She is best known for her talk show, The Oprah Winfrey Show, broadcast from Chicago, which ran in national syndication for 25 years, from 1986 to 2011. Dubbed the "Queen of All Media", she was the richest African-American of the 20th century and was once the world's only black billionaire. By 2007, she was often ranked as the most influential woman in the world. In 1994, she was inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame.

Winfrey has won many awards throughout her career, including 19 Daytime Emmy Awards, a Tony Award, a Peabody Award, and the Jean Hersholt Humanitarian Award awarded by the Academy Awards, in addition to two competitive Academy Award nominations.

"The biggest adventure you can take is to live the life of your dreams." - Oprah Winfrey

Frederick Douglass



Born in Cordova, Maryland Frederick was an American social reformer, abolitionist, orator, writer, and statesman. He became the most important leader of the movement for African-American civil rights in the 19th century. After escaping from slavery in Maryland in 1838, Douglass became a national leader of the abolitionist movement in Massachusetts and New York and gained fame for his orato and incisive antislavery writings.

Douglass wrote three autobiographies, describing his experiences as an enslaved person in his *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave* (1845), which became a bestseller and was influential in promoting the cause of abolition, as was his second book, *My Bondage and My Freedom* (1855). Following the Civil War, Douglass was an active campaigner for the rights of freed slaves and wrote his last autobiography, *Life and Times of Frederick Douglass*.

“Find out just what any people will quietly submit to and you have the exact measure of the injustice and wrong which will be imposed on them.” - Frederick Douglass

Rihanna



Rihanna was born in Saint Michael, Barbados. She is a Barbadian singer, businesswoman and actress. She is noted as the best-selling female recording artist of the 21st century by Guinness World Records and the highest-certified female digital single artist by the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA).

As of 2024, Rihanna is the third wealthiest musician in the world. She has seven U.S. diamond certified singles and 14 number-one singles on the Billboard Hot 100. The recipient of various accolades, Rihanna is one of the best-selling recording artists of all time, with sales estimated at 250 million units globally.

Aside from music, Rihanna is recognized for her humanitarian involvement, entrepreneurship, and fashion industry influence. She established the Clara Lionel Foundation, cosmetics brand Fenty Beauty, and fashion house Fenty under LVMH, becoming the first black woman to lead a luxury brand for LVMH.

"If you don't live your life, then who will?" - Rihanna

Jay-Z



Jay-Z was born in Brooklyn, New York. He is an American rapper, businessman, and record executive. Rooted in East Coast hip-hop, he was named the greatest rapper of all time by Billboard and Vibe in 2023. He served as president and chief executive officer of Def Jam Recordings from 2004 to 2007 and founded the entertainment company Roc Nation the following year. He co-founded the record label Roc-A-Fella Records in 1994. Through his business ventures, Jay-Z became the first hip-hop billionaire in 2019.

In 1999, he co-founded the clothing retailer Rocawear and later founded the 40/40 Club, a luxury bar chain, in 2003. As both grew into multi-million-dollar businesses, he launched Roc Nation, a multi-disciplinary entertainment agency in 2008. In 2015, he acquired the technology company Aspiro and led the expansion of Tidal, the company's media streaming service.

As of 2025, he is the wealthiest musical artist in the world with a net worth of US\$2.5 billion. One of the world's best-selling music artists with 140 million records sold, Jay-Z has won 25 Grammy Awards, the tenth-most of all time and the most awarded for any hip-hop artist.

"Belief in oneself and knowing who you are, I mean, that's the foundation for everything great." - Jay-Z

Suzan-Lori Parks



Suzan-Lorn was born in Fort Knox, Kentucky. She is an American playwright, screenwriter, and novelist. Her play *Topdog/Underdog* won the Pulitzer Prize for Drama in 2002; Parks was the first African-American woman to receive the award for drama. She was named one of the 100 most influential people in the world by Time magazine in 2023. She has also received a number of grants including the MacArthur Foundation "Genius" Grant in 2001. She is a winner of the 2017 Poets, Essayists and Novelists (PEN) America Literary Awards in the category Master American Dramatist.

She received the 2018 Steinberg Distinguished Playwright Award. This biennial award is given to "established playwrights whose body of work has made significant contributions to the American theatre.

"Each moment is perfect and heaven-sent, in that each moment holds the seeds for growth." - Suzan-Lori Parks



Dwayne Johnson

Dwayne was born in Hayward, California. also known by his ring name the Rock, is an American actor, professional wrestler, seasonal singer and businessman. He is signed to WWE, where he performs on a part-time basis. Widely regarded as one of the greatest professional wrestlers of all time, Johnson was integral to the development and success of the World Wrestling Federation (WWF, now WWE) during the Attitude Era. He wrestled for the WWF full-time for eight years before pursuing an acting career.

His films have grossed over \$3.5 billion in North America and over \$12.5 billion worldwide, making him one of the world's highest-grossing and highest-paid actors. He is a co-owner of the United Football League, a member of the board of directors of TKO Group Holdings—the parent company of UFC and WWE—and co-founder of Seven Bucks Productions.

"I'm always asked, 'What's the secret to success?' But there are no secrets. Be humble. Be hungry. And always be the hardest worker in the room." - Dwayne Johnson



Fight The Power

By Public Enemy 1990 2nd Verse

As the rhythm designed to bounce
What counts is that the rhymes
Designed to fill your mind
Now that you've realized the pride's arrived
We got to pump the stuff to make us tough
From the heart
It's a start, a work of art
To revolutionize make a change nothing's strange
People, people we are the same
No we're not the same
'Cause we don't know the game
What we need is awareness, we can't get careless
You say what is this?
My beloved lets get down to business
Mental self defensive fitness
Don't rush the show
You gotta go for what you know
Make everybody see, in order to fight the powers that be
Lemme hear you say