

# February Black History Month

31 January

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"A people without knowledge of their history is like a tree without its roots." —[Marcus Garvey](#)

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The oldest Black female Greek-letter organization, [Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. \(AKA\)](#), was founded at Howard University in 1908. [Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. \(Alpha\)](#), the first Black male Greek-letter organization, was founded in 1906 at Cornell University.

21

The ironing board (invented by [Sarah Boone](#)), the traffic light system (invented by [Garrett Morgan](#)), and the home security system (invented [Marie Van Brittan Brown](#)) all came down to us from Black inventors.

28

"We all require and want respect, man or woman, black or white. It's our basic human right." —[Aretha Franklin](#)

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1 February

Black Historian Carter G. Woodson began celebrating Negro History Week in the second week of February 1926 because it is the birthday to both President Abraham Lincoln, and abolitionist. To learn more [click here](#).

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Feb. 8, 1986 - [Oprah Winfrey](#) becomes the first African American woman to host a nationally syndicated talk show.

15

[Barack Obama](#) was the 44th president of the United States and the first African American commander-in-chief. He served two terms, in 2008 and 2012

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In 1921, [Bessie Coleman](#) became the first black American pilot.

1 March

"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." — [Nelson Mandela](#)

"We must never forget that Black History is American History. The achievements of African Americans have contributed to our nation's greatness." — [Yvette Clarke](#)

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"It's important for us to also understand that the phrase 'Black Lives Matter' simply refers to the notion that there's a specific vulnerability for African Americans that needs to be addressed. It's not meant to suggest that other lives don't matter. It's to suggest that other folks aren't experiencing this particular vulnerability." —

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[Barack Obama](#)

[Thurgood Marshall](#) became the first African American to serve in the U.S. Supreme Court. Officially nominated by President Lyndon B. Johnson in 1967, he served as a justice until 1991.

16

"I can accept failure. Everyone falls at something. But I can't accept not trying." —[Michael Jordan](#)

23

In 2012, at the London Olympics, [Gabby Douglas](#) became the first Black gymnast to win the individual All-Around title.

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"Won't it be wonderful when black history and Native American history and Jewish history and all of U.S. history is taught from one book. Just U.S. history." —[Maya Angelou](#)

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Feb. 10, 1964 - After 12 days of debate and voting on 125 amendments, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the [Civil Rights Act of 1964](#) by a vote of [290-130](#).

17

In 2021, [Kamala Harris](#) became the first woman of African or Asian descent to become vice president. Harris's mother immigrated to the United States from India and her father immigrated from Jamaica.

24

"True heroism is remarkably sober, very undramatic. It is not the urge to surpass all others at whatever cost, but the urge to serve others at whatever cost." —[Arthur Ashe](#)

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"Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." —[Martin Luther King, Jr.](#)

"Black History Month must be more than just a month of remembrance; it should be a tribute to our history and reminder of the work that lies in the months and years ahead." —[Marty Meehan](#)

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Poet Laureate [Amanda Gorman](#) read her poem, "[The Hill We Climb](#)" at President Joe Biden's inauguration on January 20, 2021. She is the youngest Black poet to read at a presidential inauguration in United States history.

11

In 1940, [Hattie McDaniel](#) became the first Black person to win an Oscar for her supporting role in *Gone With the Wind*. 24 years later, [Sidney Poitier](#) became the first Black man to win an Oscar for his leading role in *Lilies of the Field*.

18

Acclaimed writer and poet Maya Angelou (1928–2014) had another noteworthy distinction: In 1944, she became [the first female Black cable car conductor in San Francisco](#).

25

Feb. 25, 1870 — [Hiram Rhodes Revels](#) of Mississippi was sworn in as first black U.S. Senator and first black Representative in Congress. He represented the state of Mississippi from February 1870 to March 1871.

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5/6

[Toni Morrison](#) won a Pulitzer Prize for fiction for the critically acclaimed novel *Beloved* (1987). She received the [Nobel Prize for Literature in 1993](#). In 2012 she was awarded the [U.S. Presidential Medal of Freedom](#).

12/13

[The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People \(NAACP\)](#), was formed by a group of Black leaders on February 12, 1909 after the [Springfield race riots](#). The inception date was chosen because it was the centennial anniversary of the birth of Abraham Lincoln.

19/20

[Althea Gibson](#) (1927–2003) was the first Black tennis player to win a tennis Grand Slam in 1956. She won 11 Grand Slam tournaments over the course of her career.

26/27

I am America. I am the part you won't recognize. But get used to me. Black, confident, cocky; my name, not yours; my religion, not yours; my goals, my own; get used to me." —[Muhammad Ali](#)

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