

## Black History "Firsts"

Richard Greener - First African American graduate of Harvard College

Vanessa Williams - First African American Miss America; 1983

**Douglas Wilder -** First African American Governor since Reconstruction; 1990-1994

**John "Jack" Johnson -** Boxer; First African American world heavyweight champion; 1908-1915

Edmonia Lewis - First African American female sculptress to receive worldwide acclaim

Macon B. Allen - "Believed to be" the first African American Lawyer

**Robert "Lee" Elder -** First African American to play golf in the Masters Tournament; 1975

**Lincoln University -** 1854; First degree-granting Historically Black College/University (HBCU)

Cheney University - 1837; First Historically Black College/University (HBCU)

**Mae Jemison -** First African American female astronaut; in 1992, became the first African American woman in space

Oliver Lewis - Won the first Kentucky Derby; 1875

**Massachusetts -** First colony to legalize slavery

Jane Bolin - First African American female judge in the United States; 1939

**G.T. Sampson -** Patented the clothes dryer; 1892

**Joseph N. Jackson -** Invented the programmable remote control

**Barack Obama -** First African American elected President of the United States; 2008

**Lelia Foley -** First African American woman elected mayor in the United States; Taft, Oklahoma; 1973

**Sidney Poitier** - First African American male to win an Oscar in 1964; *Lilies of the Field* 

**Phyllis Wheatley** - First African American female poet to have her works published

**Booker T. Washington -** First African American to be honored with his picture on a U.S. postage stamp (1940) and a coin (1946)

Shirley Chisholm - First African American woman to serve in the U.S. Congress

Provident Hospital - First African American hospital in the U.S.; Chicago

Wilma Rudolph - First woman to win three gold medals in the Olympics

Carol Mosely Braun - First African American female U.S. Senator

**Dr. Minnie "Jocelyn" Elders -** First African American surgeon general of the United States

Thurgood Marshall - First African American Supreme Court Justice; 1967

**Jack "Jackie" Robinson** - First African American to play baseball in the major leagues

**Joseph Rainey -** First African American elected to the House of Representatives; 1869

**Rev. Channing Phillips** - First African American nominated for president by a major political party

Julian Bond - First African American nominated for vice-presidency; 1968

**Frederick "Fred" Gregory** - First African American to command a space flight; 1989

## Important Facts and Figures

Approximately **180,000** African Americans served in the Union Army during the Civil War

The Montgomery Bus Boycott- December 5, 1955-December 20, 1956

Dr. John Rock - coined the term "Black is Beautiful"

**Robert Williams II -** psychologist who created the term "Ebonics"

"for jobs and freedom" - slogan of the 1963 March on Washington

Plessy v. Ferguson - 1896 - Upheld "separate but equal" segregation laws and practices

**Brown v. Board of Education-** 1954 - Supreme Court decision ruled that separate but equal practices were unconstitutional

NAACP- founded in 1909; National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

Carter C. Woodson - "Father of Black History"; organized the first Negro History Week and founded the Association for the Study of African American Life and History

**Harriet Tubman** - helped 300 enslaved people escape through the Underground Railroad; called the "Moses of Her People"

Jim Crow - commonly used term for laws that enforced segregation in the South

**W.E.B. DuBois -** sociologist and activist; the first African American to receive his Ph.D in 1895 from Harvard University

**Ernest Green -** the first member of the Little Rock Nine to graduate from Little Rock Central High School; 1958

**Freedom Summer -** a 1964 campaign to register African American to vote in Mississippi

Buffalo Soldiers - African American soldiers who served in the West after the Civil War

## Arkansas Black History

**Annie Abrams** (1931) (Arkadelphia) educator and long-time social activist in Little Rock

**Alonzo "Lonnie" Clayton** (1876-1917) (North Little Rock) African American jockey; youngest Kentucky Derby winner in history

**Louis Jordan** (1908-1975) (Brinkley) "The King of the Jukebox"; saxophonist and songwriter

**Silas Hunt** (1922-1949) (Ashdown) first African American to enter the Univ. of Arkansas School of Law; 1948

**Edith Irby Jones** (1927-2019) (Conway) first African American admitted to UAMS; 1948

**Daisy Bates** (d. 1999) (Hutig) activist; important figure in the desegregation of Little Rock Central High School; co-owned the Arkansas State Press

**L.C. Bates** (1904-1980) civil rights advocate and long-time supporter of the NAACP; co-owned the Arkansas State Press

Mifflin Gibbs (1823-1915) elected the first black municipal judge in the U.S.; 1873

Haki Madhubuti (1942) (Little Rock) author and poet; born Donald L. Lee

**Dr. Patricia Washington McGraw** (1935) (Little Rock) first African-American professor at Little Rock University (now UALR); 1969

James Leary III (1946) (Little Rock) famous bass player for the Count Basie Orchestra now who played with Dizzy Gillespie, Max Roach, and numerous others

**Eldridge Cleaver** (1935-1998) (Wabbaseka) leader of the Black Panther Party, wrote *Soul on Ice* 

**Orean "Lencola" Sullivan** (1957) (Morrilton) first African-American to be named Miss Arkansas; 1980

Mildred Smith (1925-2020) (Washington) founder of Washington's Black History Museum

**Milton Crenchaw** (1919-2015) (Little Rock) first Arkansan federally trained as a licensed pilot; trained hundreds of pilots at Tuskegee; helped create Philander Smith College's flight program

**Maya Angelou** (1928-2014) (Stamps) author of *I Know why the Caged Bird Sings* and *Singin' and Swingin' and Gettin' Merry Like Christmas* 

Rev. Joseph Booker (1859-1926) (Portland) first president of Arkansas Baptist College

James Monroe Cox - President of Philander Smith College for 27 years

**Charles Bussey Jr.** (1918-1996) (Stamps) became Little Rock's first African American Mayor; 1981-1982

**John H. Johnson** (1918-2005) (Arkansas City) started his business with a \$500.00 loan; company published *Ebony* & Jet magazines

**Sidney Moncrief** (1957) (Little Rock) played college basketball for the Arkansas Razorbacks; NBA's Milwaukee Bucks and Atlanta Hawks; five-time NBA All-Star

**Bob Nash** (1947) (Texarkana) director of presidential personnel and president's assistant during the Clinton administration

**Curtis Sykes** (1930-2007) (Dark Hollow/NLR) first African American to receive a degree from Harding University. He was instrumental in establishing the Arkansas Black History Commission

**Scott Joplin** (d. 1917) (Texarkana), was a ragtime composer and musician; "King of Ragtime"

**Ernest Joshua, Sr.** (1928-2005) (Pulaski County) founder and CEO of JM Products, Inc. - a company that manufactured African American hair products

**Little Rock Nine -** nine African American students who were prevented from attending the all-white Central High School in 1957

**Scottie Pippen** (1965) (Hamburg) NBA Player; won six NBA World Championships with the Chicago Bulls

**Charlotte Stephens** (1854-1951) (Little Rock) became the first African American teacher in the Little Rock School District; taught for 70 years

**Dr. Samuel Kountz** (1930-1981) (Lexa) performed the first kidney transplant surgery between non-related individuals