

Bayard Rustin



ACTIVIST, CIVIL RIGHTS FIGURE



Bayard Rustin was an African-American leader in social movements for civil rights. He was a close advisor to Martin Luther King and an incredibly influential and effective organizer of the civil rights movement.

He played a crucial role in the organization of the March on Washington and advocated to end racial discrimination in employment.

Pauli Murray



LAWYER, PRIEST, ACTIVIST



Pauli Murray was the first American-American individual to earn a JSD degree from Yale Law School, with which they became a jurist. They also were the first African-American woman to become an Episcopalian priest and authored several books profoundly influential in challenging the legal foundations of racial discrimination.

Ella Baker



ACTIVIST, CIVIL RIGHTS FIGURE



Ella Baker was an African-American civil rights and human rights activist. Baker promoted grassroots organizing and was largely behind-the-scenes. She is known for her critique of racism in American culture and sexism in the civil rights movement.

Hiram Revels



MINISTER, VETERAN, POLITICAL FIGURE, ACTIVIST



Hiram Rhodes Revels was an American politician, minister in the African Methodist Episcopal Church, and a college administrator. Born free in North Carolina, he later lived and worked in Ohio, where he voted before the Civil War. Elected by the Mississippi legislature to the United States Senate as a Republican to represent Mississippi in 1870 and 1871 during the Reconstruction era, he was the first African American to serve in either house of the U.S. Congress. Revels made good use of his time in office, championing education for Black Americans, speaking out against racial segregation, and fighting efforts to undermine the civil and political rights of African Americans.

Amelia Boynton Robinson



MLK MEDAL OF FREEDOM RECIPIENT, ACTIVIST

Amelia Boynton Robinson was a civil rights pioneer who championed voting rights for African Americans. Amelia Boynton's earliest activism included holding Black voter registration drives in Selma, Alabama from the 1930s through the '50s. In 1964, she became both the first African American woman and the first female Democratic candidate to run for a seat in Congress from Alabama. The following year, she helped lead a civil rights march during which she and her fellow activists were brutally beaten by state troopers. The event, which became known as Bloody Sunday, drew nationwide attention to the civil rights movement. In 1990, Boynton was awarded the Martin Luther King Jr. Medal of Freedom.

Daisy Bates



ORGANIZER, JOURNALIST

Daisy Bates was an African American civil rights activist and newspaper publisher who documented the battle to end segregation in Arkansas. As the head of the NAACP's Arkansas branch, Bates played a crucial role in the fight against segregation. In 1954, the United States Supreme Court declared that school segregation was unconstitutional in the landmark case known as

Brown v. Board of Education. Even after that ruling, African American students who tried to enroll in white schools were turned away in Arkansas.

Bates and her husband chronicled this battle in their newspaper. In 1957, she helped nine African American students to become the first to attend the

all-white Central High School in Little Rock, who became known as the Little Rock Nine. Bates' home became the headquarters for the battle to integrate Central High School and she served as a personal advocate and supporter to the students. With U.S. soldiers providing security, the Little Rock Nine left from Bates' home for their first day of school on September

25, 1957. Bates remained close with the Little Rock Nine, offering her continuing support as they faced harassment and intimidation from people against desegregation. Three years later, her account of the school

integration battle was published as *The Long Shadow of Little Rock*. For her career in social activism, Bates received numerous awards, including an honorary degree from the University of Arkansas. She is best remembered as a guiding force behind one of the biggest battles for school integration in

the nation's history.

Bryan Stevenson



LAWYER, ACTIVIST, AUTHOR

Bryan Stevenson is an American lawyer, social justice activist, law professor, and the founder and executive director of the Equal Justice Initiative, a human rights organization in Montgomery, Alabama. He has initiated major new anti-poverty and anti-discrimination efforts that challenge inequality in America. Stevenson authored the book “Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption” that documents his career defending disadvantaged clients.

Barack Obama



POLITICIAN, AUTHOR, EDUCATOR



Barack Obama served as the 44th president of the United States. As the first Black president, his election was monumental. He was born in Hawaii. Obama began his academic career in Los Angeles, but later transferred to Columbia University. Upon graduation, he moved to Chicago and began doing community organizing on the south side, working to address systemic inequality. Eventually he chose to obtain a law degree from Harvard Law, and afterwards, moved back to Chicago to begin working at a firm doing civil rights law. In 1996, he was elected to the Illinois Senate, and in 2004 elected to the US senate for the state of Illinois. Months after his election to the US Senate, he spoke at the Democratic National Convention and received national accolades for his speaking. In 2008, he was elected president. During his first term, he tackled the recession, growing threats of terrorism, and won a Nobel Peace Prize. During his second term, he continued to focus on terrorism, signed a climate change accord, spoke at the 50th anniversary of the civil rights march from Selma to Montgomery, and commemorated the National Museum of African American History and Culture.

Oprah Winfrey



TV PERSONALITY, PHILANTHROPIST, AUTHOR

Born in rural Mississippi, Oprah had humble beginnings. Born into poverty and later going to live with her grandmother who taught her to read at an early age, she was centered in her community through her church. Oprah in her later life grew into being one of the most influential TV hosts in the country. Often attributed by various entities, she has been called the most influential woman in the world, and the most influential Black person in her generation. She has been a vocal activist for gender equality, racial equality, and an ally to the queer community. In 2008, her endorsement of candidate Barack Obama has been credited with his winning of the popular vote against rival Hillary Clinton. Her voice has been so large, she was offered Barack Obama's vacant senate seat by the governor of Illinois.

Tarana Burke



ACTIVIST

Tarana Burke has experience working with survivors of violence and abuse and used the phrase "Me Too" to create a safe place for women to talk. She later became known for being the founder of the #MeToo movement, which started in 2016. She was named "Times Magazine Person of the Year," among others who were recognized as "Silence Breakers." This movement had a major impact. On Twitter, #MeToo was used more than 19 million times and allowed victims and survivors of violence to freely speak out about their experiences of violence in public media. It still provides many women today with strength and power to stand together and face this issue.

Jackie Robinson



ATHLETE, ACTIVIST



Jackie Robinson's legacy still lives on in history as the first African American to play professional baseball.

He was number 42 on the Brooklyn Dodgers and played from 1947 to 1956. He played other sports such as football, basketball, and track. Even though he was successful on the field, he still faced discrimination from his teammates and the fans. He was named Rookie of the Year, led the Dodgers to six league Championships and one World Series win, and had a lifetime batting average of 0.311. After his baseball career, he engaged in activism. He wrote an autobiography called "I Never Had it Made."

Robinson was a well-rounded individual who was an athlete, activist, and an awardee of the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

Karamo Brown



TV PERSONALITY, AUTHOR, ACTIVIST, SOCIAL WORKER



Karamo Brown is an American television personality, author, activist, and social worker. Brown received a Bachelor of Arts degree from FAMU and worked as a licensed social worker and psychotherapist for over a decade. Brown is a co-founder of 6in10.org, an organization addressing mental health and self-esteem of individuals affected by HIV, and actively advocates for LGBTQ and civil rights, and gun-control. He is a graduate of Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School and voices his support for the #NeverAgain movement.

Mary McLeod Bethune



EDUCATOR, PHILANTHROPIST, HUMANITARIAN, CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVITST



Mary McLeod Bethune was an educator, activist, and leader. She was passionate about teaching and opened Daytona Educational and Industrial Training School in Daytona Beach, FL. Today this school is known as Bethune Cookman College. She was the president of Florida Federation of Colored Women, National Association of Colored Women, and founded the National Council of Negro Women. In these leadership positions, she advocated for her community through education, politics, and social action. Mary Bethune has left a legacy for black people today.

Toussaint Louverture



HAITIAN GENERAL

Also referred to as the Father of Haiti, Toussaint Louverture was instrumental in the world's first Black republic. Born into slavery, under the rule of the French crown Louverture was unaware of the life of activism before him. While he was born a slave, he eventually became a “freeman”, a formerly enslaved Black person with some rights on the island. He began climbing the social ranks on the island and became a loud voice for racial equality. At the onset of the slave rebellion, he entered the military. Quickly rising the ranks eventually the Haitian Army was under his control and he unified the island. He was named Lieutenant Governor for life and under his tenure trade agreements were negotiated with the UK and the USA. Eventually he was invited to France where he was arrested, jailed, and died. The legacy he left, carried the Haitian army to victory and his successor declared independence months after he passed.

Harriet Jacobs



AUTHOR, ACTIVIST

Harriet Jacobs was a former slave who escaped and wrote about her story of violence and abuse under the alias name Linda Brent. Her book, "Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl," revealed how women were sexually harassed or abused under their enslavers. Along with other authors who wrote about their experiences of slavery, they have recorded history to share with future generations. Harriet Jacobs taught others not to repeat the past, but to remember it.

Robert Smalls



POLITICIAN, LEGISLATOR, MARITIME PILOT

Robert Smalls was a former slave that fought in the Civil War and escaped by using a Confederate Army ship called the Planter. He disguised himself as a captain and took his family to freedom by turning over the ship to the Union. This act made him known and recognized as a leader who can stand up for others in the war. He later returned back to his hometown, Beaufort, South Carolina, to buy his former enslavers' house, open a business and school for black children, and start a newspaper. In 1868, he was elected as South Carolina state representative. In 1870, he was elected South Carolina State Senator. From 1874-1879, he served in the US House of Representative. Throughout his life, he showed others what can be done by embodying it is not where you start, it is where you finish.

Ida B. Wells-Barnett



ACTIVIST



Ida B. Wells-Barnett was a prominent journalist, activist, and researcher, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Born in Holly Springs, Mississippi to politically active parents, Wells-Barnett would go on to pave the way for black politicians and activists in her work. Her father was involved in the Freedman's Aid Society and the founding of Rust College. Wells-Barnett would go on to attend the college. In 1884, after moving to Memphis Wells-Barnett purchased a first class train ticket to Nashville. When she arrived she was forced by crew to the back train-car, despite her first class ticket. Wells-Barnett sued the railroad company and won but the decision was later overturned by the Tennessee Supreme Court. This experience led her to begin writing about the experiences of black Americans in the South. Wells-Barnett is most well known for her work as a journalist and her anti-lynching crusade. She went on to own two news papers: The Memphis Free Speech and Headlight and Free Speech. She would go on to be a founding member of the NAACP.

Alfred Lawson Jr.



BUSINESSMAN, POLITICIAN, LEGISLATOR

A Florida native, born in Midway, Fl, Lawson graduated from Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University in 1970. He went on to obtain his Master's degree from Florida State University in 1973. He served as a member of the Florida State House of Representatives from 1982-2000. He also served with the Florida State Senate from 2000-2010. His long career continued as he went on to be a Congressional Representative for the State of Florida from 2017-2023. Lawson garnered national attention as Chairman of the House Natural Resources Committee, where he authored one of the most important environmental laws in the country. This law created the largest state-funded land acquisition program in the United States. He also authored and passed the Apalachicola Bay Protection Act and was the primary sponsor of the Everglades Protection Act. He is well known for his efforts to pass the Rosewood Legislation, which sought to provide reparations to the survivors of the Rosewood Massacre.

Ketanji Brown Jackson



ASSOCIATE JUSTICE OF THE SUPREME COURT

In 2022, Ketanji Brown Jackson made history as the first Black woman to be appointed to the U.S. Supreme Court.

She graduated from Harvard University Magna Cum Laude and went on to attend Harvard Law School where she served on the Harvard Law Review. She has dedicated her career to protecting the rights of all.

Jane Matilda Bolin



ATTORNEY, JUDGE

Jane Matilda Bolin 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.

Bolin was an activist for children's rights and education. She worked to encourage racially integrated child services, ensuring that probation officers were assigned without regard to race or religion, and publicly funded childcare agencies accepted children without regard to ethnic background.

W.E.B. Du Bois



SOCIOLOGIST, HISTORIAN



William Edward Burghardt Du Bois was an American sociologist, socialist, historian, and Pan-Africanist civil rights activist. Born in Great Barrington, Massachusetts, Du Bois grew up in a relatively tolerant and integrated community. After completing graduate work at the University of Berlin and Harvard University, where he was the first African American to earn a doctorate, he became a professor of history, sociology, and economics at Atlanta University. Du Bois was one of the founders of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in 1909. Racism was the main target of Du Bois's polemic, and he strongly protested against lynching, Jim Crow laws, and discrimination in education and employment. His cause included people of color everywhere, particularly Africans and Asians in colonies.

Dr. Anya Elizabeth Johnson



MARINE BIOLOGIST, POLICY EXPERT, AND CONSERVATION STRATEGIST



Dr. Anya Elizabeth Johnson is a household name in oceanography and ocean conservation policy. She graduated from Harvard and got her Ph.D. in oceanography from Scripps Institution of Oceanography. Dr. Johnson became an appointed climate justice expert and has recently taken up a three-year position with the Roux Center for the Environment where she will be a tenured professor, starting July 2023. She also is co-founder of Urban Ocean Lab, a “think tank” that examines issues related to coastal cities and rising sea levels. Professors all around the nation refer to Dr. Johnson as an “inspiration” and credit her books and podcasts for their commitment to loving our planet. In 2020, Dr. Johnson released an acclaimed article in the Times titled “We Can’t Solve the Climate Crisis Unless Black Lives Matter” calling climate change leaders to welcome people of color as leaders for the movement.

Marie M. Daly



BIOCHEMIST

Marie M. Daly was the first black woman to receive a Ph.D. in Chemistry in the United States. She did not overcome the hurdles of racial bias but also the intersectionality of racial and gender biases for women in STEM. Dr. Daly received her doctorate degree from Columbia University where she researched how compounds produced in the body affect and participate in digestion. The title of her dissertation was "A Study of the Products Formed by the Action of Pancreatic Amylase on Corn Starch". She went on to become a professor and researcher. Besides being a leader in her profession, she developed programs to increase enrollment of minority students in medical school and graduate science programs, starting a scholarship for African American science students at Queens College.

Lena Horne



DANCER, ACTRESS, SINGER, CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVIST

Lena Horne was the first African-American woman to sign a contract with a major Hollywood studio. Besides being a singer and actress, Horne was an activist against racism in the entertainment industry. She performed at many civil rights rallies, including the march on Washington, where MLK gave his "I Have a Dream" speech. She was known for denying any roles that would portray stereotypes as African American women. Horne used jazz music as her refuge and way to express her struggles as a black woman in the entertainment business.