

African-American Women Make History

by Bonnie Freeman
PM Editorial Services



Photo courtesy of Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University

Leontyne Price, the first international opera "prima donna assoluta."

give up her seat on a Montgomery, Ala., bus. Parks' arrest ignited the historic Montgomery bus boycott, and her arrest was a catalyst in the civil rights movement. She challenged the system and helped dismantle the laws of segregation on public transportation in Alabama.

The political arena was taken by storm in 1966 when Barbara Jordan was elected to the Texas Senate. She became the first black senator to serve in the Texas Senate since 1883 and the first black female senator ever in Texas. In 1972, Jordan was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives where she served three terms.

Meanwhile, Shirley Chisholm shaped history by serving the state of New York in the U.S. Congress from 1968 to 1982. Chisholm was the first black woman elected to the U.S. Congress. In 1972, she launched an unprecedented bid for the presidential nomination of the Democratic Party.

Another accomplished politician, Maxine Waters is considered the most

powerful woman in California politics today, as well as the most influential black woman in the Democratic Party. Elected to the California State Assembly in 1976, Waters was instrumental in passing a wide range of legislation. Waters maintained her political momentum by being elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1990.

Politically, 1990 proved to be a stellar year for African-American women. Another landmark accomplishment was recorded when Sharon Pratt Dixon became the first female, African-American mayor of Washington, D.C.

Accomplishments of black women in other areas have been equally outstanding. One of the most compelling events in the world of arts and entertainment took place on Easter 1939, when Marian Anderson — considered to be the greatest contralto of her generation — performed outdoors before a crowd of 75,000 in Washington, D.C., after being denied permission to sing at Constitution Hall. In 1955, Anderson made history by becoming the first black soloist to sing at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York City. Anderson demolished racial barriers in classical music.

Vestiges of Anderson's efforts remained in place, and in 1961, when Leontyne Price debuted at the Metropolitan Opera House, she received a 42-minute ovation for her performance in the opera "Il Trovatore." Price was the first to achieve international status as a "prima donna assoluta."

All these women faced daunting obstacles, yet they waged battle against incredible odds using their courage and perseverance to eliminate inequities in this country — not only among the races, but among the sexes — further enriching life for us all. **ll**

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Sixty-five years have passed since historian Carter G. Woodson started Negro History Week to heighten cultural awareness among blacks at a time when segregation and racial unrest were a way of life around the nation. That week has since evolved into Black History Month celebrated in February. It continues to showcase excellence among individuals in the fields of science and technology, politics, literature, arts and entertainment, and athletics.

Martin Luther King Jr. — leader of the civil rights movement — is perhaps the most recognizable individual associated with Black History Month. Others include Frederick Douglass, who was born into slavery and devoted his life to abolition; George Washington Carver, the scientist who developed hundreds of products from the peanut, revolutionizing Southern agriculture; Thurgood Marshall, who remains the only African-American to be appointed to the U.S. Supreme Court, the highest court in the nation; and Douglas Wilder, who made history in 1990 when he took the oath as governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia — becoming the first African-American governor in modern history.

The accomplishments of these exceptional men are equaled by the pioneering efforts of countless African-American women. Rosa Parks, Barbara Jordan, Shirley Chisholm, Maxine Waters and, most recently, Sharon Pratt Dixon, along with Marian Anderson and Leontyne Price, are just a few examples of women who defied the odds to direct the course of history.

Rosa Parks gained notoriety in 1955 when she was arrested for refusing to

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Minority Student Tuition Waivers Announced At PSU

Minority students with good academic records are eligible for special tuition waivers at Portland State University, according to Dan Fortmiller, Director of the Academic Support Center at PSU.

30-35 scholarships will be available to students in each of two groups, Fortmiller said.

The Underrepresented Minorities Achievement Scholarship awards tuition waivers to entering freshmen. The

Underrepresented Minorities Achievement Scholarship for College Juniors awards waivers for students with junior level standing.

"We get a high caliber of students applying for these scholarships," says Fortmiller. "Last year's grade point average for freshmen scholarship applicants was just under a 3.0. It's really competitive."

The program is part of the Oregon State System of Higher Education's

minority student enrollment initiative. 135 PSU students are currently on the OSSHE scholarships.

Deadlines for scholarship applications for academic year 1991-92 are March 1 (for entering freshman) and April 1, 1991 (for juniors).

For more information or to receive a scholarship application; call PSU's Offices of Admissions, 725-3511, Minority Students Recruitment, 725-4457, or Academic Support Center, 725-4005.

Celebrating 25 Years Of Service to the Community (Spring Term Registration Gets Underway At MHCC)

Spring term registration at Mt. Hood Community College begins March 4 for continuing students with appointments. Open registration begins March 11.

Appointment cards will be available for continuing students beginning February 26 at 7:30 a.m. in the College Theatre. After 10:30 a.m., appointment cards will be handed out in the Admissions and Records Office.

Registration for students with ap-

in Newark last year and joined the army in order to receive the benefits of getting a college education.

Ms. Deborah Talley, Robert's mother stated, "I am extremely proud of my son and the efforts and contributions that he has made on behalf of his country, although I am concerned about the large percentage of African Americans serving in the military. I am likewise concerned that while African Americans are serving in the military at such large numbers, the President vetoed the Civil Rights Bill offered protection to us from racial discrimination." The family of Robert Talley should also be commended. His mother Deborah, and his grandmother, Lou Ann Monroe have been outspoken in challenging the immorality of the war itself.

Robert Talley wanted to be a doctor. He was killed by a U.S. Lt. Col. who fired a U.S. "Hellfire" missile that hit the armored personnel carrier transporting Talley and seven other U.S. soldiers. The United States refers to Talley's death as being the result of "friendly fire." But there was nothing "friendly" about this tragedy. How is it that a young person joins the U.S. Army and in less than 6 months time is ordered stationed on the frontline of a ferocious war? Do Army recruiters instruct young people "volunteering" for a tour of duty with the military concerning the life-threatening risks involved?

President Bush hails the military

as being the greatest equal opportunity employment agency in the nation. If this is true, then the President's assertion becomes a confession to the reality of the institutionalized racism that operates throughout this society to deny equal opportunity based on race at all levels of our society.

Grandmother Lou Ann Monroe sighed, "To think that my grandson died for a drop of oil makes me sick. Robert didn't even get a chance to live his life." Since the news of Robert's death, thousands of persons throughout the nation have sent expressions of sympathy to the family. At the funeral held at Mount Calvary Baptist Church in Newark, numerous tributes were made in honor of Robert Talley including from Newark Mayor Sharpe James, Congressman Donald Payne (D-NJ), and the Rev. Jesse Jackson.

We must not allow Robert Talley's death to be in vain. Neither should we allow the deaths of all of those from our communities who were sacrificed in this immoral war to be in vain. Our best tribute to Robert Talley and to the others who lost their lives in the Gulf War is to demand justice and peace at home as well as abroad. We must not allow Robert Talley's name to become just a statistic at the Pentagon but rather the memory of Talley should serve as a constant reminder of our collective responsibilities to prevent war and to make our society more just and equitable.

March 18-22, Monday-Thursday, 1-7:30; Friday, 9:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. March 25-29 telephone registration is available Monday-Friday, 9:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Students registering by phone should have their course and section numbers, visa or MasterCard number and social security number ready when they call.

For more information call the MHCC Admissions and Records office at 667-7392.

