

Portland Observer **Metro/The Focus**

Unsung hero for civil rights and public service honored on stamp

CONTRIBUTED STORY
FOR THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Patricia Roberts Harris, known for her steadfast determination and forthrightness, will become the 23rd American, and seventh woman, honored on a commemorative postage stamp in the Black Heritage series. Harris, lawyer and politician, joins outstanding African-American activists, theorists, writers, educators and leaders in the series. Postal Service Governor LeGree S. Daniels will officially dedicate the stamp on Thursday, Jan. 27 at noon (EST) in a first day of issue ceremony held at Howard University in Crampton Auditorium, Washington, D.C.

"In the era of the March on Washington, Patricia Roberts Harris stood tall for the needs of the disadvantaged and was a powerful advocate of fairness and equality for all Americans," said Daniels. "She had a meaningful impact on African-Americans, and she is an appropriate addition to the highly respected roster in the Postal Service's Black Heritage stamp series."

The daughter of a Pullman dining car waiter, Harris was born in 1924, in Mattoon, Illinois. An industrious and distinguished student, Harris graduated summa cum laude from Howard University in 1945, and later graduated from George Washington University National Law Center, finishing first in her class in 1960.

Harris, a well-known public figure because of her numerous appointments and civil rights activities, has been called "a woman of firsts." President Lyndon B. Johnson named her U.S. ambassador to Luxembourg making her the first African-American woman to serve in an ambassadorial post.

Her other achievements include: The first African-American to hold a U.S. Cabinet position when President Carter named her Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, and the first to hold two Cabinet positions when she became Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare; the first on major corporate Board of Directors including Chase Manhattan Bank; and the first to serve as Dean of Howard University School of Law. Upon the conception of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority's official national headquarters, Harris became the first national executive director under the leadership of Dorothy Height, the sorority's national president.

The stamp, designed by Howard Paine of Delaplane, Va., is the fifth in the Black Heritage series to feature a photograph.

The Postal Service continues its commitment to honoring the historical achievements and contributions of African-Americans on stamps. The Black Heritage stamp series is very popular, and given its significant educational importance, it will continue in the future.

Other notable Americans featured on stamps in the Black Heritage series include: Harriet Tubman, Martin Luther King, Jr., Benjamin Banneker, Whitney Moore Young, Jackie Robinson, Scott Joplin, Carter G. Woodson, Mary McLeod Bethune, Sojourner Truth, Jean Baptiste Point Du Sable, James Weldon Johnson, A. Philip Randolph, Ida B. Wells, Jan E. Matzeliger, W.E.B. DuBois, Percy Lavon Julian, Dr. Allison Davis, Bessie Coleman, Ernest E. Just, Benjamin O. Davis, Sr., Madam C.J. Walker and last year's Malcolm X (El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz).

On Jan 28, 2000, 150 million Patricia Roberts Harris self-adhesive 33-cent stamps will be available at post offices across the U.S.

To see an image of the Patricia Roberts Harris stamp, locate this news release (No. 00-005) on the Postal Service Website at www.usps.com/news and click on the news release's headline. The stamps can be ordered by calling 1 800 STAMP-24 or online, starting Jan. 27, at www.stampsonline.com.



How to order the first day of issue postmark

Customers have 30 days to obtain the first day of issue postmark by mail. They may purchase the stamps at their local post office, affix the stamps to envelopes of their choice, address the envelopes (to themselves or others), and place them into a larger envelope addressed to:

PATRICIA ROBERTS HARRIS STAMP POSTMASTER
900 BRENTWOOD RD NE WASHINGTON DC 20066-9991

After applying the first day of issue postmark, the Postal Service returns the envelopes through the mail. There is no charge for the postmark. All orders must be postmarked by February 26, 2000. Stamp Fulfillment Services also offers the first day covers for new stamp issues and postal stationery items postmarked with the official first day of issue cancellation. Each item has an individual catalog number and is offered in the quarterly USA Philatelic catalog. Customers may request a free catalog by writing to: INFORMATION FULFILLMENT, DEPT 6270, US POSTAL SERVICE, PO BOX 219014, KANSAS CITY MO 64121-9014, or by calling 1 800 STAMP-24.

First day covers remain on sale for at least one year after the stamp's issuance.

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