

Focus

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National Black History

The contributions of African Americans has been tremendous and of benefit to all Americans. This is the 75th year

that our nation has officially marked the achievements and accomplishments of African Americans. Observed annually,

this special period honoring African Americans was launched in 1926 by Dr. Carter G. Woodson, a noted American

educator and historian. Join us as we present Black History Month, profiling notable firsts and heroines.

Famous African American Firsts

BY RON WEBER FOR THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Education

From the earliest of times, education for African Americans in this country has been a struggle. Black churches and sympathetic whites were often the only way a black child could read. Quaker churches

and northern white women played a huge role in the education of black children in the nineteenth century. A Quaker named Anthony Benezet established a school in his home that operated at night during the mid-1700's. In 1787, the Manumission Society founded a school for African American children named the New York African Free School.

Found in the hull of a ship in 1761,

a slave girl of unknown origin was only about six years old when she was found. Bought by a rich white woman, she was named Phillis Wheatley. Under her master's tutelage, she was given a fine education and became the first black female poetess in this country. Although she had an early death, she went on to publish a book of poems and stunned the literary world by writing

award-winning poetry at the age of 14. Though many Southern whites worried, not wanting their slaves and their families to become well-educated. Christians and other concerned Americans struggled to do everything they could to educate African Americans.

Science and Technology

Science is one of the areas least explored by African Americans in the early developmental years of this country. When the Industrial Revolution came into play, those doors slowly began to open. When Alexander Graham Bell invented the telephone, he chose Lewis Latimer to draft the plans. Latimer would go on to be-



Ralph W. Ellison novel "Invisible Man" was a first for describing the racial attitudes toward black men in American society, from the perspective of an African American.

invented the telephone, he chose Lewis Latimer to draft the plans. Latimer would go on to become a member of the Edison Pioneers, a group of inventors who worked for Edison from 1884 to 1912.

Another early black pioneer in science was Benjamin Banneker. While living as a free man in the 1700's, he was considered the first African American scientist. He studied mathematics and astronomy and was a close friend with a white Quaker neighbor. Banneker invented what



Me Jemison was the first African American woman to enter NASA's astronaut program in June of 1987. Her specialty was conducting experiments on the Endeavor ship, using biofeedback in countering motion sickness, the effects of space on human calcium levels, and the effects of weightlessness on the development of other organisms.



Mt. Hood Community College salutes the contributions African-Americans have made to our community and looks forward to the achievements of tomorrow.



Larry Dawkins
MHCC
Speech Instructor

"Black history is about Americans recognizing that we are great because of the contributions of all of our brothers and sisters be they black, brown, red, yellow or white. Black history says that this country can tell the truth about its history. We no longer need to tell fairy tales because we are afraid that it might frighten the children."



Dr. Paul Killpatrick
MHCC
Vice President

"While we have come far in educating our children our system is still in need of more teachers of color. I encourage you to consider becoming an educator, a role model for our students. MHCC is committed to attracting a staff that is representative of our community."

**Registration for spring term begins March 7.
FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL 503-491-6422**

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