

America's Black Patriots

BY RON WEBER FOR THE PORTLAND OBSERVER
True freedom often comes with a price. Since the early history of this country, African Americans have made hard sacrifices to ensure freedom for all. Through this Black History special edition, the Portland Observer would like to acknowledge the many black heroes and heroines who have fought valiantly in the wars within our homeland and abroad.

Crispus Attucks, the First Black to Die for America's Freedom

As slavery weighed heavy on the hearts of many in this country, another challenge "stood taller." England ruled the colonies and the colonists were growing tired and frustrated with it.

On the afternoon of March 5, 1770 in Boston, someone would light a torch that was the start of a conflict that set America on an irreversible course towards freedom and independence.

Crispus Attucks, a runaway slave and merchant seaman, was eating dinner when he became aware of a fight between Boston men and several British soldiers. Attucks went to Dock Square to investigate. He picked up a stick and shouted to the crowd gathered there to follow him to King Street, leading the march against the monarchy for imposing an unfair tax. Cold and angry, the angry mob began yelling at the English soldiers. As the voices began to rumble louder and louder, it seemed as though cannons were going off. The small group of soldiers became more and more frightened. The angry mob had now grown to over four hundred people. As the crowd moved in, Attucks stood tall and strong at the front line. The same boiling frustration that caused him to run away from his master twenty years ago, now appeared again. Fearing death by an angry mob, the soldiers screamed back, warning the protestors to go away. Attucks moved forward. The crowd followed closely behind. There was no turning back. Running away would not be the act of a defeated coward; the act of a conquered slave.



The Boston Massacre of 1770 was headed by an escaped slave and seaman named Crispus Attucks. He was among the first to die for freedom during the bloody encounter with British soldiers.

As Crispus Attucks prepared for a fight to the death, something suddenly flew over his head. It was a large chunk of ice. Someone farther back in the mob had "cast the first stone." As his eyes followed the ice, he knew what to do: lunge forward and fight for his life. However, the second the heavy block of ice hit a British soldier with a loud thud, a deafening sound of rifle fire echoed through the streets of Boston. Before he had a chance to fight, Attucks was shot twice with two musket balls by a defending British soldier. Attucks died lying in the cold snow on that night, now known as the Boston Massacre.

Although four others died and six were wounded in the fight, Crispus was the first. A century later in 1888, a monument was erected on Boston Common to celebrate Crispus and the others. Their life-giving patriotism sent a strong message to England. A few years later, the colonies would unite together and defeat the British Empire.

First celebrated in 1926, **76th**
February 2002 is the

Black History Month

The Urban League of Portland

Joins with friends and neighbors in observance of Black History Month.

We welcome the opportunity to celebrate the accomplishments of African Americans whose achievements have contributed so much to this nation.

Our Message...

"To serve African Americans and all who strive toward economic self-reliance and social equality."

Dr. Ben Carson is the world-renowned director of pediatric neurosurgery at The Johns Hopkins Medical Institutions in Baltimore, Maryland. He has pioneered techniques for separating conjoined twins and for stopping intractable seizures. • As NASA's first African American female astronaut, Dr. Mae Jemison helped conduct life science experiments aboard the Space Shuttle Endeavour that were designed to help prepare humans for long-term space ventures. • In 1998, Dr. David Satcher became only the second person in history to hold simultaneously the positions of U.S. Surgeon General and Assistant Secretary for Health. • Dr. Samuel L. Kountz, Jr., developed a crucial technique for detecting and treating the body's rejection of transplanted kidneys. • A pioneer in cardiac surgery, Dr. Daniel Hale Williams performed the first open-heart surgery in 1893 when he removed a knife from the heart of a stabbing victim. He also helped found a training school for nurses. • Dr. Louis T. Wright gained national acclaim as both a premier surgeon and a champion of equal rights. In 1919, he became the

AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY MONTH

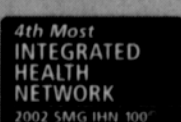
We salute the countless contributions that African Americans have made toward healthier lives for us all.

first African American doctor appointed to the staff of a municipal hospital in New York City. • Dr. Charles R. Drew's pioneering work in blood plasma research and in blood banking was responsible for saving innumerable lives during World War II. • Dr. Alexia Irene Canada became the first African American woman to be certified by the American Board of Neurological Surgery. She has taught at several distinguished institutions. • One of America's most eminent biologists of the 20th century, Dr. Ernest E. Just wrote a book titled "The Biology of the Cell Surface" that contributed important insights into germ cells....



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