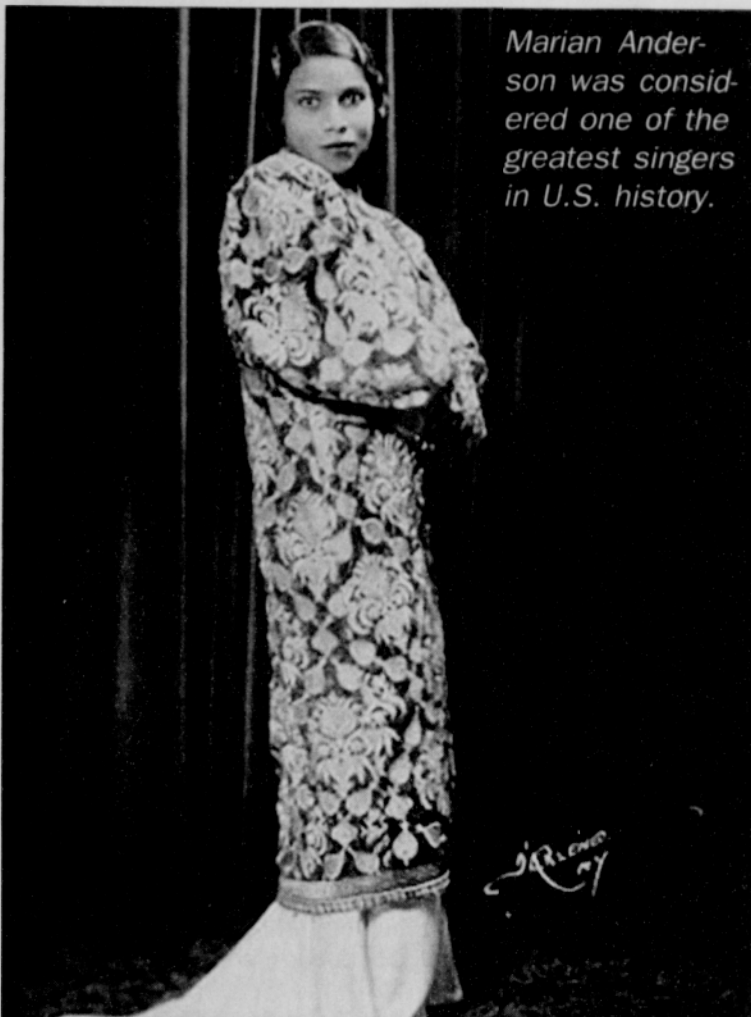


Black History Month

Marion Anderson Rose in Stature in Europe



Marion Anderson was considered one of the greatest singers in U.S. history.

Escaped constraints of black life in America

Marion Anderson was born Feb. 27, 1897, in Philadelphia. Recognizing her talent for music and her need to study with professional teachers, members of her community raised funds for her musical training.

In that era, American classical musicians rose in professional stature at home by studying and performing in Europe. Anderson made her first journey to Europe in late October of 1927. In 1930, she was awarded a fellowship that allowed her to study in Berlin. Her time abroad was immensely important to her emotional and artistic growth,

enabling her to deepen her understanding of the languages she sang, to make professional connections, and to escape many of the constraints of black life in America.

After American producer Sol Hurok heard Anderson sing in Paris, he began to represent her in the United States, where his business practices effectively made her the equal of white concert artists. On Dec. 30, 1935, he presented Anderson at Town Hall in New York. The concert was a grand success and a New York Times critic hailed Anderson as "one of the great singers of our time."

Aware of Anderson's growing reputation, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt invited her to

sing for guests at a White House dinner party in 1936.

Anderson became the first black singer to appear on the stage of New York's Metropolitan Opera when in January 1955 she sang the role of the sorceress Ulrica in Verdi's "Un Ballo in Maschere." The following year, she published a successful autobiography, "My Lord, What a Morning."

As she neared the twilight of her musical career, Anderson became more active in politics. She performed at an inaugural ceremony for President Dwight D. Eisenhower's second term and for the inauguration of President John F. Kennedy. The State Department named her a goodwill ambas-

sador to Asia; in 1958, she was appointed a delegate to the 13th session of the United Nations.

At the historic March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom in August 1963, Anderson again sang at the Lincoln Memorial. The following December, she was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

Anderson won the United Nations Peace Prize in 1977, and her 75th birthday was marked by a gala concert at Carnegie Hall, where she received New York City's Handel Medallion and a congressional resolution of congratulations delivered by First Lady Rosalyn Carter. Many more honors were bestowed upon Anderson including the Eleanor Roosevelt Human Rights Award, and in 1991, she received a Grammy Award for Lifetime Achievement.

Anderson died April 8, 1993, in Portland, where she had moved to be with her nephew James DePriest, Oregon Symphony Conductor Laureate.

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New Stamp Honors Famed Opera Singer

The U.S. Postal Service celebrates Black History Month with the Marion Anderson stamp, the 28th in the Black Heritage commemorative stamp series.

Famed for her contralto voice, Anderson was honored during first-day-of-issue ceremonies in DAR Constitution Hall, the Washington venue where the singer was once denied a chance to perform because of her skin color.

Former Oregon Symphony Conductor James DePriest, Anderson's nephew attended the ceremony.

"There is no one more richly deserving of such an honor," commented DePriest, currently director of conducting at The Julliard School in New York.

"I hope that it will give an opportunity for there to be a focus of

attention on her, particularly her artistry," he said.

DePriest likened Anderson's success to that of Jackie Robinson, the first black major league baseball player.

"When history collides with what you just want to do, your career, then what happens depends on how much grace resides within you," he said. "It was the combination of talent and grace that enabled both Jackie and, in the case of my aunt, not only to be able to handle obstacles, but to be able to handle them in such a way they became inspirations."

"The power of my aunt resided in the power of her art," DePriest concluded.

The initial snub at Constitutional Hall in 1939 caused first lady Eleanor



Marion Anderson, illustrated in this new U.S. Postal stamp, was James DePriest's aunt.

Roosevelt to resign from the Daughters of the American Revolution and to arrange for Anderson to perform before thousands at the Lincoln Memorial.

In later years Anderson did perform at the venue, including a 1942 concert to aid World War II relief efforts, and she began her farewell tour there in 1964.

The 37-cent stamp shows an oil painting of Anderson by Albert Slark of Ajax, Ontario, Canada, based on a black-and-white photograph believed to have been made by Moise Benkow in Stockholm in the mid-1930s.

Deputy Postmaster General John M. Nolan called the stamp "a powerful reminder of her unprecedented contribution to music and to her great sacrifice for justice."

Pioneering Banker Dies

continued from Front

State Bank was to offer opportunities for minorities to work and obtain financing in the banking industry, something that wasn't common in the 1970s. He believed in traditional business ethic, where each client was treated with the utmost importance and esteem. Booker ran American State Bank for 32 years, when he sold his assets to Albina Community Bank in 2000.

Before his banking career, he served in World War II with the U.S. Army in England and France.

He later graduated from the Portland School of Music and obtained a real estate license in 1964. Booker was also a member of the Moose Lodge in Camas, Wash.

Beyond his workaholic nature, Booker was an avid fan of disco dancing with his wife on Saturday nights.

Booker is survived by his wife, Susan; mother-in-law Lily; three daughters, Amy, April and Cheryl; one son Michael; daughter-in-law, Rose and sons-in-law Ehrin and John. A memorial service was held on Feb. 4 in the Gateway Chapel of the Chimes.



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