

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Sisters of Selma - Bearing Witness to Change

Church owes record of social activism to its avowed women

The Catholic Church owes much of its record of social activism to its avowed women, for whom service is the highest calling.

Most orders of nuns were founded for social service - teaching children, nursing the sick and performing all tasks "of which woman is capable." It is not surprising that in 1965 and thereafter the sisters came to the city of Selma, Ala., to help the oppressed - the African-American citizens of the South fighting for their civil rights.

A new generation of African-Americans challenged the status quo of the Deep South of the 1960s. These nuns of the Catholic Church (which had long been perceived as a "white" institution) joined the civil rights struggle...and in doing so, the church and the sisters were themselves transformed.

The first-hand accounts of how they served as unforeseen heroines and heroes during the Selma-to-Montgomery march and movements throughout the U.S. was recently profiled in the documentary "Sisters of Selma: Bearing Witness for



Sister Mary Antona



On an overcast morning on March 7, 1965, hundreds of Alabama residents walk across a bridge in Selma, Ala., heading for the state Capitol to demonstrate for voting rights. (AP photo)



The Franciscan Sisters of Mary arrived in St. Louis in 1872 determined to live a consecrated life, become self-supporting and help those in need.

Change" which aired this month on PBS stations across the country.

For decades, local laws had all but prevented blacks from voting. And those who did venture to protest often faced harassment - even death. Black Selmians, supported by Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., decided to march to the state capital of Montgomery to draw attention to their plight. On a Sunday in early spring, dozens of peaceful protesters on their way out of the city were brutally beaten back by state troopers and the sheriff's posse on horseback.

Once you have marched in Selma, Sister, you can never stay home again.

-- Sister Mary Peters, Secretary, 1965 National Catholic Council for Interracial Justice

The violence of "Bloody Sunday" stunned Americans, focusing nationwide attention on civil rights.

A group of American nuns from St. Louis were among the first to protest

the violence. At a time when many church leaders were reluctant to address the treatment of blacks in the South, these courageous women defied authority - and a long history of

simply praying for causes - to take their message to the streets of Selma.

The Missouri sisters were welcomed by the black residents. This was due in large part to the decades of bridge-building by sisters from Rochester, NY., who had met the education and health care needs of the poor blacks of Selma. The Archbishop of Mobile-Birmingham had prohibited them from joining the marches, so they fed, housed and cared for waves of civil rights activists from elsewhere.

Fashion, Music Ball Slated

The first annual Black History Month Fashion and Music Ball presented by Ideation Studios, Sameunderneath and Audacity Design House takes off on Saturday, Feb. 24 at 9:30 p.m. at the New Born Tribe on northeast Fremont and Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.

The event will consist of a trade,

fashion and live music shows, culminating with a dance party. All three parts should include the widest array of talent from Portland's emerging music, hip hop, and fashion circles.

The primary purpose of the event is to promote local black entrepreneurship, especially in these two industries, and culture.

Entrance to the show will be \$14 regular price, \$6 dollars for ladies in the first hour. VIP cards will be given to booth holders.

Participants and sponsors will have the opportunity to network with some of Portland's most avant-garde fashion and music enthusiasts.

For more information, call M. Makano at Audacity Design House, 503-975-5013; Illaj at 503-957-5975; or AD at 503-327-1755.

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BLACK HISTORY MONTH 2007

THE FOLLOWING PUBLIC AGENCIES IN THE PORTLAND METROPOLITAN AREA SALUTE

The Achievements of Black American Scientists & Inventors

Many skills and talents are needed to build a great country. Throughout American history, often under adverse conditions, African American scientists have advanced our nation through their research, inventions, patents, and innovations in technology. Here are a few examples:

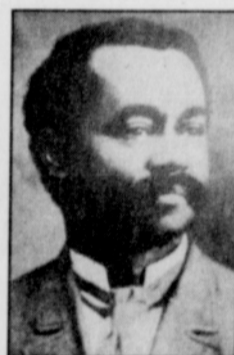
DR. DANIEL HALE WILLIAMS

(1856-1931) Daniel Hale Williams is credited with having performed open heart surgery on July 9, 1893 before such surgeries were established. In 1913, Daniel Hale Williams was the only African American member of the American College of Surgeons.



MADAME C. J. WALKER

Inventor and Entrepreneur (1867-1919) created hair care products and a national product distribution model that revolutionized the hair care and cosmetic industry for African women in the 20th century.



DR. CHARLES HENRY TURNER, PhD.

(1867-1923) was one of the very first African-American researchers in animal behavior. He published over 50 papers in the areas of physiology, invertebrate ecology and morphology. Dr. Turner is best known for his pioneering work demonstrating hearing in insects.

MAE JEMISON

(born 1956) Dr. Jemison earned her medical degree from Cornell University, and practiced international medicine before answering NASA's call. She became the first African American woman to enter space as a mission specialist with the Space Shuttle Endeavor in 1992. She now heads the Jemison group, with projects that include improving health care in Africa and advancing technology in developing countries. She is fluent in four languages.



DR. PERCY JULIAN, PhD.

(1899-1975) Dr. Julian was a chemist who synthesized physostigmine for treatment of glaucoma and cortisone for the treatment of rheumatoid arthritis. Among his many research achievements, Dr. Julian developed and held a patent for a fire-retardant foam used to extinguish gasoline and oil fires.



DR. NEIL DEGRASSE TYSON, PhD.

(born 1958) Dr. Tyson, an astrophysicist, is the Director of the Hayden Planetarium at the American Museum of Natural History, and Visiting Research Scientist and Lecturer at Princeton University. His research interests include star formation, exploding stars, dwarf galaxies, and the structure of our Milky Way. Dr. Tyson hosts the PBS Nova television series, Nova Science Now.



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