

Black Women

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Black History Month: an annual celebration of all the achievements and contributions that African American people have brought and are continually bringing to American society. Black History Month is not only an opportunity to learn beyond the racism, discrimination, and stereotypes that white America has brought upon the Black community. A chance to learn how African American people are fighting through all the negativity and embracing their roots. Black History Month not only offers the opportunity to learn about the hardships that the Black Community has faced, but also the accomplishments that are continuing to be made by the Black community. In this article I highlight a handful of prominent Black women who have shaped not only the Black community but the society as a whole.

Mary McLeod Bethune (July 10, 1875-May 18, 1955) Maysville, South Carolina



PC: myblackhistory.net

Mary McLeod-Bethune; educator, community organizer, political activist, and the first African American woman to serve as a college president at her own university, Daytona Literacy and Industrial School for African American Girls in 1904, which later fused with the Cookman Institute, an all-male school, and became the Bethune-Cookman University in 2007. The first and only child out of 17 siblings born from former slaves to receive an education. Bethune dedicated her life to ensure the right to education and freedom for discrimination, especially African American girls. Bethune founded the National Council of Negro Women, which gave African American women the opportunity to realize their dreams and goals for social justice and human rights. Mary McLeod Bethune passed on May 18th, 1955, in Daytona Beach, Florida due to a heart attack.

Flo Kennedy (February 11, 1916-December 21, 2000) Kansas City, Missouri

Florynce Rae Kennedy (Flo Kennedy); American lawyer, feminist, civil rights advocate, lecturer, and activist. In her cowboy hat and pink sunglasses, Kennedy gained the reputation as a flamboyant activist who stood up to authority and could care less about what people said about her. The second Black woman to graduate from Columbia Law School, after being rejected not due to her race, but because of being a woman and filing a lawsuit against the school. In 1954, Kennedy opened her own law office in Manhattan, one of the 19 Black female lawyers in the state. Throughout Kennedy's career she represented high profile legal clients such as H. Rap Brown, several Black Panther members of the eastern branch, Charlie Parker, and Billie Holiday. When Kennedy's career as a lawyer came to an end, she shifted into activism and began her lifelong career of public protests. Along with being an influential person when it came to public protests Kennedy was one of the founding members of NOW (National Organization for Women), the National Feminist Party, Women's Political Caucus, and the National Black Feminist organization. Kennedy passed in her Manhattan apartment on December 21, 2000.



PC: theblackwallstimes.com

Shirley Chisholm (November 30, 1924-January 1, 2005) Brooklyn, New York



PC: allthatintresting.com

Shirley Chisholm; The first African-American women in the United States congress and the first Black women to seek nomination for president of the United States form one of the two major political parties, educator, and author. Advocating for women and minorities during her seven terms in the U.S. house of representatives. Initially working as a nursery school worker, she later earned a master's degree from Columbia University in early childhood education. While working as the consultant to the New York City Division of Day Care and being aware of racial and gender inequality, she joined local chapters of Women Voters, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the Urban League, as well as the Democratic Party club. In 1964, Chisholm ran and became the second Black women in the New York Legislature, winning a seat in congress in 1968. From there "Fighting Shirley" introduced more than 50 pieces of legislation and championed racial and gender equality. In 1977, Shirley became the first Black women and second women to ever serve on the powerful House Rules Committee. During Chisholm quest for the 1972 Democratic Party presidential nomination, she was blocked from participating in the televised primary debates and after taking legal action she was permitted to making one speech. Shirley Chisholm passed in Ormond Beach, Florida after suffering several strokes.

Dorothy Height (March 24, 1912-April 20, 2010) Richmond, Virginia

Dorothy Height; A leader in addressing the unjust and unbalanced rights for women and African American people. Height started advocating for equal rights in high school when she started participating in anti-lynching campaigns. Height had been applied and been accepted into Barnard College in New York, but when it was time for school started the college revoked Height's spot in the school due to them already meeting their 2 black students allowed quota, she later applied to New York University. After working as a social worker Height joined the Harlem Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA), while working in that program Height had a life-changing encounter with educator and founder of the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW) Mary McLeod Bethune and Eleanor Roosevelt. After this encounter Height started taking the advancement of women and African American rights, later joining the NCNW and becoming the 4th president for 40 years. In 1963, Height was one of the organizers for the March on Washington even though despite her skills as speaker, women were not allowed to speak at the march. Dorothy Height passed due to natural causes in Washington D.C. at the Howard University Hospital.



PC: blackpast.org