

Notable African Americans

Scientists

- **Benjamin Banneker** (1731–1806). Mathematician and astronomer. He constructed the first striking clock to be made in America.
- **George Washington Carver** (1864–1943). Agricultural chemist. He advocated innovative agricultural methods and developed applications for agricultural products.
- **Charles Drew** (1904–1950). Physician, surgeon, medical researcher.
- **Percy Julian** (1899–1975). Chemist, known for being a pioneer in the synthesis of medicinal drugs such as cortisone and the birth control pill.

Inventors

- **Thomas Jennings** (1791–1856). The first known African American to hold a patent.
- **Louis Latimer** (1828-1948). Engineer and member of Thomas Edison’s team.
- **Granville T. Woods** (1856–1910). Known for contributions to the street car and the telephone.

Writers/Poets/Intellectuals

- **Maya Angelou** (1928– 2014). American author and poet who has been called “America’s most visible female autobiographer.”
- **James Baldwin** (1924–1987). Novelist, playwright, poet, and essayist. .
- **Frederick Douglass** (1818–1895). Civil rights activist and writer.
- **W.E.B. Du Bois** (1868–1963). Historian, civil rights activist, and writer.
- **Paul Laurence Dunbar** (1872–1906). Poet.
- **Ralph Ellison** (1914 –1994). Novelist, critic, and scholar.
- **Langston Hughes** (1902–1967). Poet and social activist, known for his work during the Harlem Renaissance.
- **Zora Neale Hurston** (1891–1960). Folklorist, anthropologist, and author during the Harlem Renaissance.
- **Toni Morrison** (1931–). Nobel Prize and Pulitzer Prize-winning novelist.

- **Alice Walker** (1944–). Author and poet who wrote *The Color Purple* and won the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction.
- **Booker T. Washington**. (1856–1915). Writer and political leader.

Politicians/Activists

- **Edward William Brooke III** (1919–1915). U.S. senator.
- **Julian Bond** (1940–). Founder of Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, first president of Southern Poverty Law Center, and former chairman of NAACP.
- **Ralph Bunche** (1903–1971). Diplomat and winner of the 1950 Nobel Peace Prize.
- **Shirley Chisholm** (1924–2005). First African American woman elected to Congress.
- **Marian Wright Edelman** (1939–). Activist for the rights of children.
- **Marcus Garvey** (1887–1940). Black nationalist; encouraged African Americans to migrate back to Africa.
- **Jesse Jackson Sr.** (1941–). Civil rights activist and Baptist minister.
- **James Weldon Johnson** (1871–1938). Author, known for his leadership within NAACP.
- **Barbara Jordan** (1936–1996). Congresswoman, educator and constitutionalist.
- **Alan Keyes** (1950–). Political activist, served as President Reagan’s assistant secretary of state for international organization affairs.
- **Martin Luther King Jr.** (1929–1968). Prominent leader of the civil rights movement.
- **Barack Obama** (1961–). Current U.S. president.
- **Rosa Parks** (1913–2005). Civil rights activist, known for refusing to give up her seat on a bus in 1955 and sparking the Montgomery Bus Boycott.
- **Colin Powell** (1937–). Statesman and retired four-star general of the U.S. Army. He also served as secretary of state under President George W. Bush.
- **Hiram Rhodes Revels** (1827–1901). First African American to serve in the U.S. Senate.

- **Condoleezza Rice** (1954–). Foreign policy expert who served as national security adviser and then secretary of state under President George W. Bush.
- **Carl Burton Stokes** (1927–1996). Elected mayor of Cleveland in 1967, he was the first African American mayor of a major U.S. city.
- **Sojourner Truth** (1797–1883). Abolitionist and women’s rights activist.
- **Harriet Tubman** (1820–1913). Abolitionist, humanitarian, and Union spy during the Civil War.
- **Malcolm X** (1925–1965). Muslim religious leader and human rights activist.

Notable Members of the Judicial and Legal Fields

- **Charles Hamilton Houston** (1895–1950). Dean of Howard University Law School, NAACP lawyer, and mentor to Thurgood Marshall.
- **Thurgood Marshall** (1908–1993). Civil rights lawyer and the first African-American justice on the U.S. Supreme Court.
- **Constance Baker Motley** (1921–2005). Civil rights activist, lawyer, judge, and state senator.
- **Judith Ann Wilson Rogers** (1939–) First African American female on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the DC Circuit.
- **Clarence Thomas** (1948–). Associate justice of the U.S. Supreme Court.
- **Ketanji Brown Jackson** (1970--). Associate justice of the U.S. Supreme Court.
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Athletes

- **Muhammad Ali** (1942–). Heavyweight champion boxer, philanthropist, and social activist.
- **Arthur Ashe** (1943-1993). Tennis champion
- **Michael Jordan** (1963–). Professional basketball player.
- **Jesse Owens** (1913–1980). Track and field star.

- **Jackie Robinson** (1919–1972). Civil rights leader and the first African-American Major League Baseball player.
- **Wilma Rudolph** (1940-1994). Three-time Olympic Gold medalist.

Entertainers

- **Louis Armstrong** (1901–1971). Jazz trumpeter and singer from New Orleans.
- **Ella Fitzgerald** (1917–1996). Known as the “First Lady of Song.”
- **Billie Holiday** (1915–1959). Jazz singer and songwriter.
- **BB King** (1925–). Blues guitarist and singer-songwriter.
- **Sidney Poitier** (1927–). Actor, film director, author, and diplomat.
- **Oprah Winfrey** (1954–). Entertainer and business leader.

