



# LEADERS ON BLACK LEADERSHIP of the 20th Century

“It is a testament to the greatness of Martin Luther King, Jr., that nearly every major city in the U.S. has a street or school named after him,” says TIME national correspondent Jack E. White in his piece on our nation’s most prominent civil rights leader for *The Most Important People of the 20th Century*. Unfortunately, “it is a measure of how sorely his achievements are misunderstood,” he adds, “that most of them are located in black neighborhoods.”

Many of us take just such a short-sighted view of black history. Too often, these achievements are relegated to being recognized one month a year; often such recognition is done purely in the name of marketing. Black history is important because it is our history. Imagine, if you can, how different our nations and our world would be without the contributions of people like **Martin Luther King, George Washington Carver, Hank Aaron, Wilma Rudolph, Benjamin Banneker, Elijah McCoy, Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth, Thurgood Marshall, Frederick Douglass, Billie Holiday, Charles Clinton Spaulding, Satchel Paige** ... Everywhere you look, black culture, talent, and expression have played an enormous role in shaping our past, our present ... and our future.

The celebration of Black History Month grew from the inspiration of a brilliant and creative African- American scholar, Dr. Carter Godwin Woodson. A Harvard trained Ph.D., Dr. Woodson stepped down from his academic assignments to devote his life to the scientific study of the African experience in America, Africa and throughout the world. Under Woodson’s direction, and with contributions from both black and white scholars, the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History was founded. He was the time’s leading historian and a prolific writer, publishing studies and texts that included his famous work *The Mis-Education of the Negro* (1933, reprinted in 1990). “Negro History Week” was officially launched in 1926. According to Woodson, “We should emphasize not Negro History, but the Negro *in* history. What we need is not a history of selected races or nations, but the history of the world void of national bias, race hate, and religious prejudice.”

We’ve asked organizational leaders from around the globe to join us in just such a celebration; in the pages that follow, you’ll hear how they celebrate, who they emulate, and why it’s important to commemorate this history—our history—not just in February, but throughout the year.

# greatlivesremembered

The lives and words of some of the leaders we celebrate

## By Your Own Bootstraps: Booker T. Washington

In his book *The Betrayal of the Negro*, Rayford W. Logan described the turn of the century as the low point (or *nadir*) in black history. After Emancipation, it was clear that democracy was for whites only. Segregation in schools and in public accommodations was the law throughout the South. Violence and a lack of opportunity effectively kept blacks in their place as second-class citizens; only a few (through hard work, good fortune or both) were able to live fairly well. It was because of this time that there developed a school of thought among many black leaders to adopt an accommodating

stance, one that tolerated segregation and discrimination (for the moment) while appealing to white philanthropy to secure the education that would ensure blacks economic potential.

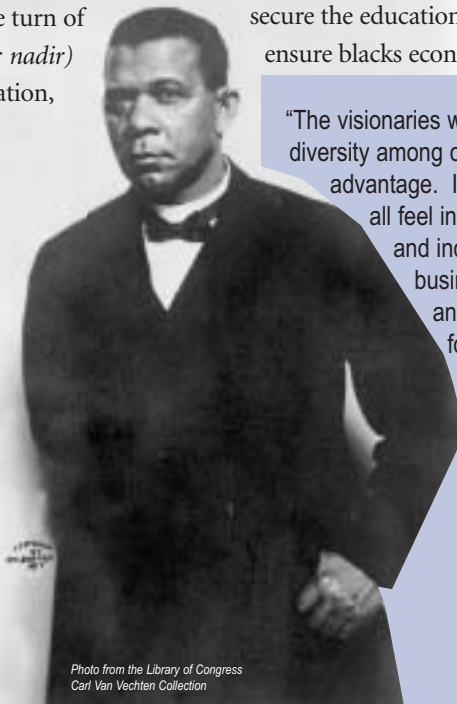


Photo from the Library of Congress  
Carl Van Vechten Collection

Such a leader was **Booker T. Washington**. One of the last black leaders to be born into slavery, he believed that racial democracy through Reconstruction failed so dismally because it began at the “wrong end,”

“The visionaries we honor this month helped forge a new way of thinking about diversity among corporate leaders. A truly diverse workforce is a major competitive advantage. It requires a working environment in which diversity is valued and all feel included. We at Shell have adopted a global standard on diversity and inclusiveness that clearly outlines our expectations of every Shell business; we hold respect for people as one of our key Shell values and we hold our people accountable for implementing our policies. Shell salutes the honorees and, as importantly, acknowledges the many unsung champions who are making their vision a reality in their own organizations.”



**Roxanne Decyk**  
Vice President, Corporate  
Affairs/Human Resources  
Shell Oil Company

“It is quite fitting and appropriate to recognize the contributions of black leaders of the 20th century, as they have had a positively profound and lasting impact on our society. These individuals collectively preserved and struggled through some of the most difficult circumstances imaginable, yet continued to fight for their belief that our society would be better if all segments of our citizenry—not just some—were allowed to attain the American dream. Their struggle to ensure access to educational, housing, employment and business opportunities paved the way for a better tomorrow for all Americans. They demonstrated through intellectual debate and action that America would be a stronger nation if **all Americans** warranting opportunities through merit were afforded a chance to succeed.

These pioneers of civil rights have been proven correct, as the value of diversity is quite apparent today, looking across the landscape of corporate America and seeing contributions from the likes of **Richard Parsons, Kenneth Chenault, Franklin Raines, Andrea Jung, Stanley O’Neal and Oprah Winfrey**. The same could easily be said about the contributions of minorities across all segments of our society, including the educational, governmental and professional sectors. By opening the doors of opportunity, the black leaders of the 20th century unequivocally contributed to making this country a better place for all regardless of race, creed or color. They are indeed deserving of a debt of gratitude.”



**Robert Marchman**  
Vice President, Enforcement Division  
and Diversity Council Chairman, New York Stock Exchange

emphasizing political means and predetermined rights rather than economic means and self-determination. Founder and head of Tuskegee Institute, a vocational school for blacks in Tuskegee, AL, Washington believed that blacks could benefit more from a practical, vocational education rather than a college education. He believed that the development of work skills would lead to economic prosperity. In his autobiography, *Up from Slavery*, Washington predicted that blacks would be granted civil and political rights only after gaining a strong economic foundation.

His politics were truly a product of his life and times. When slavery was abolished in 1865, his family moved to Malden, WV. There, as a child, Washington worked in coal mines and salt furnaces, and as a houseboy for the leading family of Malden. He fought to get a meager primary

education, enough to gain his admittance to Hampton Institute. There he proved an exemplary student, teacher, and speaker; the principal recommended Washington to Alabama officials who were trying to

him advisor to Presidents, Congressional members and governors on



Photo from the Library of Congress LC-USZ62-54231

## Would America have been America without her Negro people?

W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903)

establish a school for African Americans in their state. Thus in 1881, the Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute (now Tuskegee University) was founded; Washington took the helm and made the program a model of industrial education.

In 1895, he gave the speech that would define the politics of accepting segregation in exchange for economic advance, called the *Atlanta Compromise*, before an exposition in Atlanta. In it, Washington declared: "In all things that are purely social we can be as separate as the fingers, yet one

as the hand in all things essential to mutual progress." Widely quoted, it gave him the political clout that made



**David Ratcliffe**  
President and CEO  
Georgia Power

"Martin Luther King, Jr., a fellow Georgian, gained worldwide recognition of his faith-based approach to change. His belief in the inherent good in all people continues to have tremendous appeal, and is a testament to the power of one. One person and one belief unified hundreds of thousands, and changed the world forever."



**Geri Thomas**  
Diversity Executive, Bank of America

policies and political appointments.

Washington's political opposition was spearheaded by W.E.B. Du Bois, a historian and sociologist. In his pivotal book, *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903), Du Bois criticized Washington's educational and political philosophy and practices. While Du Bois accepted the need for industrial training in theory, he feared that the success of the industrial school might limit the development of higher education for blacks and limit their roles as leaders. He regarded Washington's politics as a surrender of rights and human dignity for economic gain and his acceptance as a political leader dangerous.

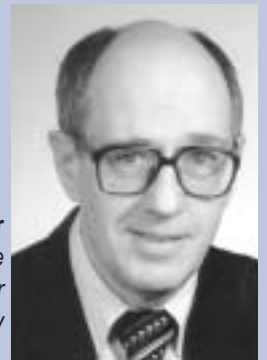
By 1910, time and change in the political climate saw Washington's political influence waning as Du Bois and others created vehicles like the NAACP to move the nation away from the politics of accommodation. However, Washington's influence on education and the values that determine success—hard work and determination—have not, nor will ever, change.

"Bank of America celebrates Black History Month out of a deep respect for the unique culture and contributions of African Americans. We are proud of our history of supporting African-American communities, helping children of all races succeed, and providing products and services that enable individuals to control their financial destiny. From fulfilling hopes for homeownership, higher education and small-business ownership to building vibrant communities and a diverse workforce, Bank of America has a rich heritage of helping people achieve their dreams."

**Booker T. Washington** had a grasp of gritty economics that transcended race and ethnicity: If you make yourself valuable to others, you will be rewarded. He drilled that proposition into his students at the college he founded and directed, Tuskegee Institute in Alabama. They learned skills in work, attitudes and thinking. They fanned out after graduation to fill demands for superior individuals who knew how to produce for others and thereby benefit themselves.

Washington felt anguish over those who shackled themselves into self-limiting behaviors. Learn, he preached. Know the world; know yourself. Show character. Be valuable.

After his death his influence went into eclipse. But now he has been vindicated. It's time to take his lessons into all ranges of life. He showed the way himself. As a lad after the Civil War he appeared at a school seeking admission at the end of an arduous journey by stagecoach, train and shoeleather, overnight campouts and even a temporary sojourn in a hovel underneath a wooden sidewalk. School officials balked at this grubby figure, but he pleaded for a chance to show what he could do. His defining task: Clean a schoolroom. Washington swept and dusted it with such diligence that afterwards the schoolmarm's white-gloved fingers could not detect a speck of dirt. He enrolled as a student, expanded his universe, learned the skill of powerful oratory and went on to become one of the most respected and effective people of his age. Character has value. Character matters. Knowledge matters. Diligence matters. His message is universal. A century later, to those of whatever race, color or creed, Booker T. Washington still speaks.



**Daniel Hager**  
Contributor to the  
Mackinac Center for  
Public Policy



Photo from the Library of Congress  
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**“Lift Every Voice:”  
James Weldon Johnson**

An extraordinarily talented man, James Weldon Johnson is known for his contributions to two different fields. Many know of his role as poet, novelist and leading black literary figure in the early 1900s. Others know him as the leader and true momentum behind the growth of the NAACP in the 1920s. In both theatres, Johnson played an important role in shaping the attitudes and actions of both black and white Americans in the early 20th Century.

Johnson was born in 1871 in Jacksonville, Florida and attended

“As I look at the African Americans who have influenced me, **Colin Powell** stands out in my mind. He came from a working class background and grew up in a segregated era when many options were not easily accessible to African Americans. It was not until college, when he joined the ROTC program, that he found his calling.

His willingness to take risks and his learning orientation allowed him to experience things which give him the unique perspective required in his current role as Secretary of State. He understands the relationship between social networking, hard work, and leading with integrity.

Secretary Powell has not let the criticism of others limit him or his commitment to do his best. And I feel strongly that our future as a country rests with his ability to rely on all of his experiences and perspectives when dealing with all of the nations around the world.”



**Michael C. Hyter**  
President & CEO  
Novations/  
J. Howard & Associates, Inc.

“In celebration of Black History Month, I’m reminded that the struggle for human rights is far from over—domestically and globally. I’m reminded of the sacrifices made by countless heroes in the fight for human equality—yesterday and still today.

**Rosa Parks**, in particular, is one hero who stands out in my mind for having made a significant impact on human rights and racial equality. I am inspired by her belief in the power and importance of every individual. Her simple act of refusing to give up her seat gave countless others the courage to stand up for freedom and change the course of our nation’s history. She was a pioneer with tremendous inner strength and determination, the embodiment of human dignity in the face of adversity.

Our freedoms can’t be taken for granted. As I consider other parts of the world and the conflict and inequality that others live with day-to-day, I think about how fortunate I am to be an American, and how grateful I am to my ancestors for the sacrifices they endured long ago.

Open communication and awareness cultivate change and understanding. Nationwide’s Black History Month observances are associate-led through an all-volunteer Black History Club. Club members plan events throughout the year with a focus on February. Using unique internal resources, the group communicates a message of inclusion, awareness and celebration of the contributions and accomplishments of African Americans. Outside speakers are invited to share their experiences and knowledge about topics that are important to employees in the workplace and as members of the larger community.

As we celebrate Black History Month and the compelling influence of black leaders and visionaries on changing the world, we must all have the fortitude to stand up for equality, to remember the past with understanding and to vigilantly protect our freedoms in the future.”

**Donna James**  
Executive Vice President and Chief Administrative Officer  
Nationwide



both high school and college with his older brother at Atlanta University, the conventional course of higher education in the day, where he pursued the study of law and gained considerable skills as both a writer and a speaker. He returned to Jacksonville in 1884 and became principal of the grammar school he had attended and in which his mother taught.

Johnson worked hard to become a prominent figure and a voice in the black community in Jacksonville, founding the nation’s first black newspaper, *The Daily American*, and serving as one of the community’s few black lawyers. He moved to New York with his younger brother, **Rosamond**, and formed a successful song-writing team. Over the next several years the duo wrote over 200 songs for Broadway musicals. In 1900, Johnson penned the poem “Lift Every Voice and Sing,” which gained popularity in the ‘40s and became an anthem for black rights in America.

It was while in New York that Johnson befriended **Booker T. Washington**. Upon Washington's recommendation, the State Department offered Johnson the U.S. consulship in Venezuela in 1906. His growing skills in leadership and diplomacy consequently led to appointments in Nicaragua in 1909 and the Azores in 1912. It was during these terms as consul that he penned the important novel "*The Autobiography of an ExColoured Man*."

This novel was one of the first accounts of a black man exploring different levels of American society by passing for white. The book sold poorly until the '20s, when it found acclaim during the Harlem Renaissance.

The leadership skills he honed during his positions in Central America, and his contributions to an influential black weekly called *New York Age*, brought him to the attention of the NAACP leadership in 1916. The seven-year-old organization, which had only 9,000 members and 7 branches at the time, needed a field secretary to organize

"I think everyone would agree that **Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.** has had a profound influence on the world. As for me, his vision has shaped me both personally and professionally. Civil rights leader, proponent of non-violence philosophies and Nobel Peace Prize winner are just some of Dr. King's accomplishments. He was a true visionary who was able to effect much needed cultural and social changes through non-traditional approaches. And, his 'I Have a Dream' speech has truly inspired me and millions of other people."

**Don H. Liu**

*Senior Vice President, General Counsel and Secretary  
IKON Office Solutions*



branches throughout the country. Over the next four years, Johnson's command of the position brought that membership to over 90,000. In 1920, he assumed leadership of the organization, a position which he held until retiring in 1930. His struggle for passage of the Dyer Anti-Lynching Bill will go down as one of his greatest achievements in that position.



**Thomas W. LaSorda**

*Executive Vice President—Manufacturing  
DaimlerChrysler*

"Black History Month inspires DaimlerChrysler—as a global company—to deepen our appreciation of how our unique cultural diversity is a source of pride, passion and innovation for our employees and the markets we serve. As the Co-chair of the Corporation's Diversity Council, I am inspired and

honored to support and to take part in DaimlerChrysler's celebration of Black History Month. Coordinated by the DaimlerChrysler African-American Employee Resource Group, it recognizes the collective ingenuity, creativity and cultural experience provided to our company by African-American employees and the achievements of great African-American leaders.

At DaimlerChrysler, our success is dependent on fully appreciating and utilizing the diverse talents and strengths of all employees. To this end, we support a diverse workforce through events like the Black History Month Celebration and other ethnic celebrations. It's part of our fundamental business strategy."

"Supreme Court Justice **Thurgood Marshall** and Air Force General **Benjamin O. Davis** were two extraordinary individuals that dedicated themselves to advocating social change and were deeply committed to their professions. Both succeeded in a climate of segregation and racial inequality by delivering results built on intelligence, honesty, integrity and the relentless pursuit of excellence.

A facet of both individuals' character that impresses me is how neither ever sought fame, yet both were recognized for great achievements they considered simply part of doing their jobs. The deep commitment demonstrated by both men helps enable me to have the greatest possible focus on delivering sustainable results.

Justice Marshall and General Davis also had the ability to influence the social conscience of the presidents under whom they served, Lyndon Johnson and Franklin Delano Roosevelt, respectively. I call to mind their ability to influence as I consider how to make a positive impact on those around me.

As I reflect upon Black History Month and my own contributions to society and Cendant Corporation's Hotel Group, I remember these two legendary American icons who greatly influenced me. I think of their struggles as I make my own way and reflect on their perseverance and wisdom every day."

**Milton C. Anderson**

*Senior Vice President, Human Resources  
Cendant Corporation, Hotel Group*



**An American Journalist:  
Ida Bell Wells-Barnett**

**Ida Bell Wells-Barnett** was an American journalist, reformer and activist, known for her campaign against the lynching of blacks at the turn of the century. Born a slave in Holly Springs, Mississippi in 1862, Ida was sent to school at a young age, often



Artist Unknown. Engraving c.1887  
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“Because of my age, the first black leader to inspire me was **Martin Luther King, Jr.** His non-violent approach to civil rights was very powerful. Although his battle was focused on civil rights for blacks, he took on other issues of importance. Because of the non-violent approach he was able to gain the buy-in of many whites. Because of his work I think that the issues minorities face are greatly improved today, although not ideal.

I think I was 13 when **Muhammad Ali** won the heavy-weight title. Here’s a guy that was thrust into a conflict with the government when he refused to accept induction into the Armed Forces. I think that he showed a great deal of courage in not accepting the draft. He knew that the Army would use him to fight exhibitions as opposed to carrying a rifle; however, he felt the Vietnam war represented the U.S. fighting a group of non-whites with no just cause. One of the most powerful statements that I can remember that put the war in its proper context for blacks was when Ali said, “No Viet Cong never called me ‘Nigger.’”

**Anthony W. Simmons**  
President and COO  
Simmons Associates, Inc.



accompanied by her mother who was also learning to read. She was orphaned in the yellow fever epidemic in 1878, and Wells assumed the responsibility for five of her younger surviving siblings. She passed the teachers’ exam and began teaching in the local county school.

Wells moved to Memphis with two of her younger sisters and became a teacher there. Her involvement in the teachers’ association gave her the opportunity to write, speak and debate, and she gained the attention of local newspaper editors, who offered her positions with the *Evening Star* and the *Living Way*. As the popularity of her writing grew, she contributed articles to national publications as well.

In 1889, Wells became part-owner and reporter of the *Memphis Free Speech*. In March of 1892, the focus of her work changed forever when three of her contemporaries—**Thomas Moss, Calvin McDowell, and Henry Seward**—successful managers of a grocery in the black section of town, were lynched. Like others who shared the same fate, the story was told that the three had tried to rape a white woman; however Wells knew they had been lynched simply because the owner of a competing white grocery store wanted to eliminate the competition.

In the editorial that followed, Wells urged Black citizens of Memphis to leave the town which would protect neither their lives nor their property, nor give them a fair trial.

“Despite the obstacles many of these leaders faced, each of them remained remarkably undaunted in their drive to affect positive social change. That determination and will—and their successes—inspires Xerox and Xerox employees to do our part to help solve community problems and make the world a better place. Indeed, they demonstrate the amazing difference that just one courageous person can make.”

**Barbara Koontz**  
Director, Diversity and Staffing  
Xerox Corporation



She also wrote a scathing editorial attacking white female purity. Luckily for Wells, she was attending a conference in Philadelphia when the editorial appeared; the newspaper office was destroyed and threats were made against her life. She never returned to Memphis, but moved to New York and continued her exposé on lynching.

Wells went on to become a leading national figure in the African-American civil rights and women’s rights movements. She toured abroad, speaking on the plight of African Americans. Active in the women’s club movement, Wells founded the Chicago

“Discussions of great African Americans usually revolve around legends such as **Martin Luther King, Jr., Rosa Parks, Medgar Evers, Jesse Jackson, Booker T. Washington** and so many other civil rights, political and religious leaders. They are beacons of social progress and racial balance.

When I think of the African American who has influenced me the most, one name comes to mind: **Sidney Poitier**. Though his primary mission was not to lead the movement, nor drive new legislation, he influenced my belief that change was within my grasp.

The roles he portrayed were in such stark contrast to the countless cinematic images of subservience of the time. While political and civil rights leaders extolled the need for change, Poitier depicted it in each of his roles. He allowed me to visualize images of the end result. I was inspired as he demanded respect as “Mr. Tibbs,” metamorphosed racist students as “Sir” and mesmerized the affluent parents of his white fiancée when he came to dinner.

Poitier never billed himself as an advocate of change. He was, after all, merely an actor but his portrayals motivated me to make life imitate his art. His work made me a believer that we are only bound by the reach of our imagination. After living vicariously through Poitier’s future I could never be content wading in life’s safe shallow end.”

**Stephen Young**  
Senior Vice President, Global Diversity  
JPMorgan Chase



Negro Fellowship League, which aided newly arrived migrants from the South. She was also a women's rights advocate, founding what may have been the first black women's suffrage group, Chicago's Alpha

Suffrage Club. Her autobiography, *Crusade for Justice*, was published posthumously in 1970.

**"I can accept failure. Everyone fails at something. But I can't accept not trying."**

Michael Jordan, *I Can't Accept Not Trying* (1994)

**The Businessman's Role Model: Charles Clinton Spaulding**

The story of Charles Clinton Spaulding, the most powerful black businessman of the first half of the twentieth century, has all the hallmarks of a Horatio Alger story. At the time of his death in 1952, his North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance Company had become the nation's largest black-owned business and was worth nearly \$40 million. Had he had a formal education or any solid business foundation—other than an unshakeable belief in the value of hard work and determination—his story would still have been remarkable. But how Charles Clinton Spaulding got there, and what he did to better his community and to advance the cause of civil rights in America, makes it even more memorable.

Spaulding was born in 1874 on the family farm in Columbus County, NC; his father, a community patriarch, served as county sheriff and ruled his family of 10 with an iron hand. Young Charles grew up in an environment where hard work and pride in one's accomplishments was its own reward.

At the age of 20, Spaulding left his father's farm and moved to Durham where, under the tutelage of his uncle, Dr. Aaron McDuffie Moore, he worked at a series of menial jobs and completed what was equivalent to a high school education. In 1889, he became the manager of a black-owned grocery store. There his entrepreneurial



Photo from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Libraries: The Upbuilding of Black Durham W.E.B. Du Bois

spirit captured the attention of his uncle and Durham's only black physician, John Merrick, partner-owners of the North Carolina Mutual and Provident Association, which had been founded the year before, and was already in near-ruin. The two made Spaulding full-time general manager, the company's only full-time position, and the rest is history.

Spaulding was elevated to vice president in 1908, and then to secretary-treasurer in 1919, when Merrick, the first of the original partners, died and the firm officially

"Singling out a leader from the U.S. civil rights movement is difficult, as is choosing a single person from that movement who influenced my life. I heard James Farmer with the Congress on Racial Equality in person, and who hasn't read the speeches of Martin Luther King, Jr., seen the videos and marveled at the power of the man who led this important change in our country.

I'm a product of the '60s. The history of that period is my living memory. At some point, and I can't say the exact moment, a monumental realization hit me: those who led the civil rights movement were fighting for what all of us, as U.S. citizens, take for granted as our rights. I recognized the gross inequities I would have had to face if not for an accident of birth. Would I, had I been placed in that position, have had the courage to fight for the rights that so many of us take for granted?

Martin Luther King touched the heart of America. Hearing his voice and his message, the majority said: "This is not fair and we don't want to live in a country that treats people this way." The change for the minority was a majority decision—and the right one for our country."

**Pete Nanos**  
Acting Director  
Los Alamos National Laboratory

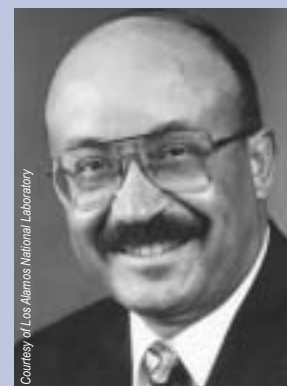


Courtesy of Los Alamos National Laboratory

"Dr. Mordecai W. Johnson was a great educator and leading spokesman for the importance of higher education in the achievement of black people. He was President of Howard University for many years. During his tenure, he insisted upon absolute excellence in the faculty and student body of Howard University. The University attracted outstanding educators from the broadest ranges of disciplines, from Anthropology to Zoology. The high standards he insisted upon led to a much-deserved outstanding reputation for Howard.

Impressed with his mark upon Howard, I took a sabbatical, in 1979, from Los Alamos National Laboratory to serve a year on the Mechanical Engineering faculty there. I was extremely impressed with the institution. I later served on the Board of Trustees for five years when the University was under the leadership of Dr. James Cheek. Johnson's legacy of excellence influenced institutional decision-making at Howard for decades after he left. His standard of quality had a great impact on my life in the selection and promotion of scientists at our research institution."

**Warren "Pete" Miller**  
Senior Advisor to the Acting Director  
Los Alamos National Laboratory



Courtesy of Los Alamos National Laboratory

changed its name to the North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance Company. By 1920 the company had over 1,000 employees and several offices along the East Coast. Upon the death of his uncle in 1923, Spaulding became president, a position he held until his death in 1952.

Although he was best noted for his business leadership, Spaulding was also involved in political and educational issues. As national chairman of the Urban League's Emergency Advisory Council in the 1930s, he campaigned to secure New Deal jobs for African-Americans. As chairman of the Durham Committee on Negro Affairs, he engaged in voter registration efforts and worked with city officials. Spaulding also served as a trustee for Howard University, Shaw University, and North Carolina College.

### Master of Diplomacy: Whitney Moore Young, Jr.

In the late 1950s, the National Urban League found itself in need of a strategy overhaul. In the face of America's emerging civil rights movement, supporters were charging that the organization dedicated to improving employment opportunities for black workers was mired in conservatism and unwilling to speak out against social issues. Funding was lagging, and the organization realized that new leadership was required for a changing time. They found that leadership in Whitney Moore Young, Jr.

One of the greatest mediators of the civil rights movement, Whitney Moore Young, Jr. was born in Lincoln Ridge, KY, and spent his childhood at Lincoln Institute, where his parents were



Photo from the Moorland-Springarn Research Center, Howard University, Washington D.C.

### "Freedom is never given; it is won."

A. Philip Randolph, from the keynote speech Second National Negro Congress, 1937

"Creating a diverse workforce and an equitable, supportive workplace is a strategic business priority for BMO Financial Group. To turn this priority into a reality, BMO's Chairman's Council on an Equitable Workplace is supported by internal Diversity Advisory Councils (16 in the U.S. and 8 in Canada) and Affinity Groups, which draw members from all levels of the organization. These groups fulfill a grassroots role by collecting and disseminating information to employees and providing advice and counsel to senior decision-makers. In fact, they are actively involved in increasing awareness and advocating for inclusion across the enterprise.

The internal Advisory Councils reflect the organization's own diversity: for example, there are Aboriginal sharing circles within BMO's Canadian operations, and U.S. Affinity Groups offer mentoring and career support for African Americans, Asian Americans and Hispanics as well as a transnational group of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender employees.

To celebrate Black History Month, BMO's Diversity Advisory Councils and Affinity Groups are coordinating and organizing a variety of awareness-raising events. February will be filled with celebratory activities including art exhibits (pictured), 'Lunch and Learns' and book club discussions celebrating African-American writers."



The Employees of BMO Financial Group

"Cingular Wireless believes strongly in following the words of Mary McLeod Bethune, who wrote, 'Invest in the human soul. Who knows, it may be a diamond in the rough.' From internship programs to employee volunteerism and corporate sponsorships, Cingular embraces diversity in all aspects of our business. We will continue to offer our workforce opportunities to develop and celebrate their unique talents."



Gloria Johnson  
VP Diversity, Cingular Wireless

teachers. He graduated from Kentucky State Industrial College in 1941 and, after Pearl Harbor, joined the Army Specialized Training Program in the hope of being sent to medical school. Instead, he found himself in Europe in an all-black regiment with a white captain. Here, Young's legendary skill as a "powerbroker" between whites and blacks was cultivated; more often than not, Young acted as a mediator between that captain and the troops, defusing racial tension.

The experience gave Young a new direction. After his discharge, he headed to the University of Minnesota to pursue graduate study in social work. There Young was first introduced to the Urban League; in 1947, he joined the organization as director of industrial relations and vocational guidance. In 1950, he became executive director of the Omaha Urban League, and taught at area

universities. In 1954, he became dean of the Atlanta University School of Social Work where he came face-to-face with the emerging civil rights movement. He worked actively for social change as a member of the Atlanta chapter of the NAACP and founded the Atlanta Committee for Cooperative Action, an organization of young black professionals and businessmen who provided research and technical assistance for civil rights activism.

The National Urban League asked Young to take the helm in 1960, succeeding **Lester B. Granger**. As president, he revolutionized the inner workings of the League, restructured the national headquarters, and expanded the scope of the work. The budget was increased tenfold, the staff quadrupled, and the number of regional offices increased from 63 to 98.

In 1962, Young began to meet regularly with other civil rights leaders, among them **Martin Luther King, Jr., James Foreman, A. Philip Randolph, Roy Wilkins, and Dorothy Height**. Following the assassination of **Medgar Evers** in June, 1963, this group formed a formal organization, the Council of United Civil Rights Leadership (CUCRL).

With demonstrations now occurring throughout the country, the League had to take an official stance. In 1963, when the League was asked to support the March on Washington, Young persuaded the League's board that sponsorship of activism was now necessary. In his speech at the march,

"AGL Resources is based in Atlanta, the home of **Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.** and a cradle of the civil rights movement. Dr. King's dream permeates the city's culture, and as a leader in Atlanta's business community, AGL Resources is inspired by his legacy.

We have encouraged and welcomed diversity throughout our organization—a diversity of racial and ethnic heritage, economic and educational backgrounds, even urban and suburban lifestyles. We believe that embracing a multitude of voices and opinions will make us stronger as a company and more responsive to our customers and our community."



**Melanie M. Platt**  
Senior Vice President, Business Support  
AGL Resources

Young said the League's presence "says, and I hope loud and clear, that while intelligence, maturity and strategy dictate that as Civil Rights agencies we use different methods, we are all united as never before on the goal of securing first class citizenship for all Americans—NOW!"

That march was a turning point for the League; while it was always necessary for Young to walk a diplomatic tightrope throughout the '60s (his role as mediator was often misconstrued by blacks and whites alike) his counsel was sought by three administrations and by organizations across the nation.



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"On Jan. 8, 2003, Georgia-Pacific celebrated MLK Day with a broadcast to our 400 facilities across the U.S. During the program I spoke to the students of my alma mater, Booker T. Washington High School in Atlanta, GA, where forty Georgia-Pacific employees mentor students. Dr. King also attended Washington High, and I described to the audience the emphasis that he had placed on education.

I explained how I quit school in the eighth grade, quickly learned what a mistake I had made, and returned to school to begin an educational journey that changed my life. I also reminded the students that many of the black leaders of the past 50 years were not afforded the conveniences and opportunities that are available to them. My key message was that each and every student can achieve great



things if they stay in school, focus on their future, and make learning a cornerstone of their lives."

**James Dallas**  
Vice President—  
Information Technology  
Chief Information Officer  
Georgia-Pacific Corp.

"**Dr. Dorothy Height** and her work as president of the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW) has been an inspiration to me personally and professionally. Her commitment to mentoring and networking has positively impacted African-American women throughout the past 40 years. As someone who's responsible for and directs Public Policy for State Government Affairs of Abbott Laboratories, I am involved in several women's leadership groups, including Abbott's Women's Leadership Initiative networking organization, and I mentor several individuals. Throughout my life—as a single mother, and now as a married woman with a family of eight—Dorothy's work to promote the well-being of African-American women has been a model of vision and perseverance for myself and my family."



**Sonja Cherry-Mendenhall**  
Public Policy

Abbott Laboratories