

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Governor Newsom, last year, issued a proclamation declaring February Black History Month. In part, it stated "the history of democracy in the United States is one of struggle and triumph. Equality and freedom, denied from the beginning to African Americans, were only made truer as our country marched forward to realize our founding ideals. Black History Month, first proposed by scholar Carter G. Woodson in 1926, seeks to rightfully center the efforts of African Americans in our national narrative. Woodson's vision for Black History Month and all who have taken up his cause have helped us tell a fuller story of America."

Black history is American history. At Rosemont High School, we would like to recognize some pioneers in the fields of Culinary arts, Engineering, Construction and Design and Arts, Media and Entertainment.

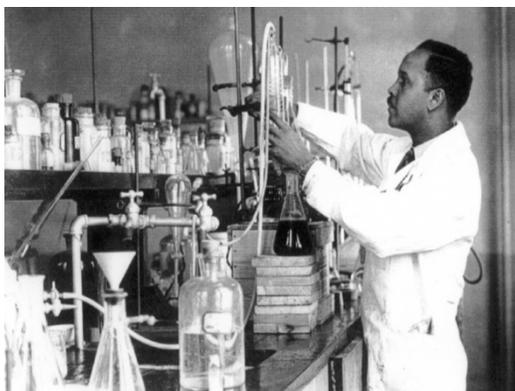
Engineering and Science

Ursula Burns



- In 2014, Forbes rated her the 22nd most powerful woman in the world.^[12]
- Burns provides leadership counsel to community, educational and non-profit organizations including FIRST ([For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology](#)), [National Academy Foundation](#), [MIT](#), and the [U.S. Olympic Committee](#), among others.^[33]

Percy Lavon Julian



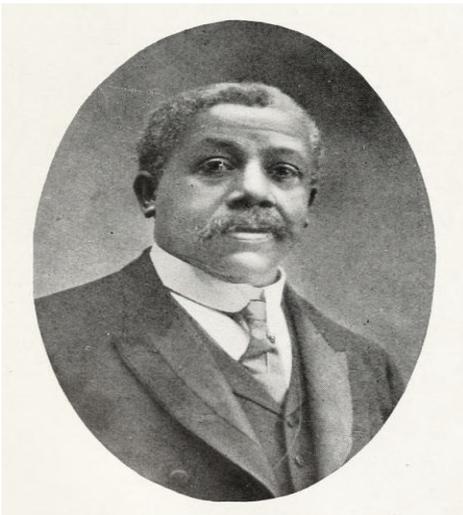
- A steroid chemist and an entrepreneur, [Percy Julian](#) ingeniously figured out how to synthesize important medicinal compounds from abundant plant sources, making them more affordable to mass-produce.
- Julian received more than 130 chemical patents. He was one of the first African Americans to receive a doctorate in chemistry. He was the first African-American chemists inducted into the [National Academy of Sciences](#), and the second African-American scientist inducted (after [David Blackwell](#)) from any field.^[5]

Katherine Johnson



- When asked to name her greatest contribution to space exploration, Johnson would talk about the calculations that helped sync [Project Apollo's Lunar Module with the lunar-orbiting Command and Service Module](#).
- During her 35-year career at NASA and its predecessor, she earned a reputation for mastering complex manual calculations and helped pioneer the use of computers to perform the tasks. The space agency noted her "historical role as one of the first [African-American](#) women to work as a NASA scientist".^[2]

Edward Bouchet



- [He](#) was an American physicist and educator and was the first African American to earn a Ph.D from any American university, completing his [dissertation](#) in physics at Yale in 1876.
- Over his career in teaching, [Bouchet had educated many black youth in science](#), but black people were still excluded from most scientific education and careers for many year

Mae Jemison



- [She](#) became the first black woman to travel into space when she served as a mission specialist aboard the [Space Shuttle Endeavour](#).
- Jemison has been inducted into the [National Women's Hall of Fame](#) and the International Space Hall of Fame.

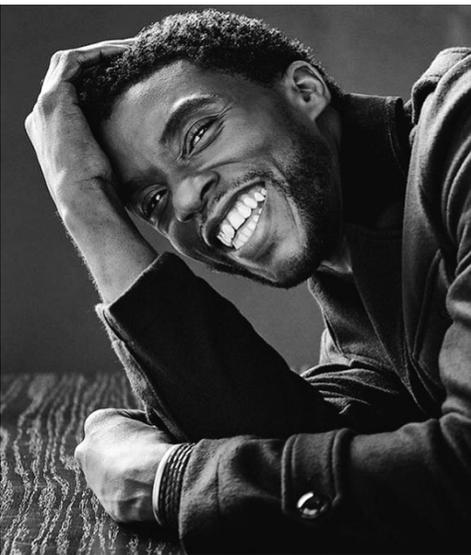
Arts, Media and Entertainment

Amanda Gorman



- Amanda was born and raised in Los Angeles, California.
- She graduated from Harvard University in 2020.
- She previously served as the youth poet laureate of Los Angeles, and she is the founder and executive director of One Pen One Page, an organization providing free creative writing programs for underserved youth.
- Amanda delivered her poem "The Hill We Climb" at the inauguration of U.S. President Joe Biden.

Chadwick Boseman



- He was an American actor and playwright who studied at [Howard University](#)
- Boseman broke through to the big screen with his 2013 performance as baseball player [Jackie Robinson](#) before being chosen for his most iconic role in Black Panther.
- Tragically, he passed away at 43 after stoically battling colon cancer.

Langston Hughes



American poet, social activist, novelist, playwright, and columnist from [Joplin, Missouri](#). One of the earliest innovators of the then-new literary art form called [jazz poetry](#), Hughes is best known as a leader of the [Harlem Renaissance](#). He also published several non-fiction works. From 1942 to 1962, as the [civil rights movement](#) was gaining traction, he wrote an in-depth weekly column in a leading black newspaper, [The Chicago Defender](#).

Cicely Tyson



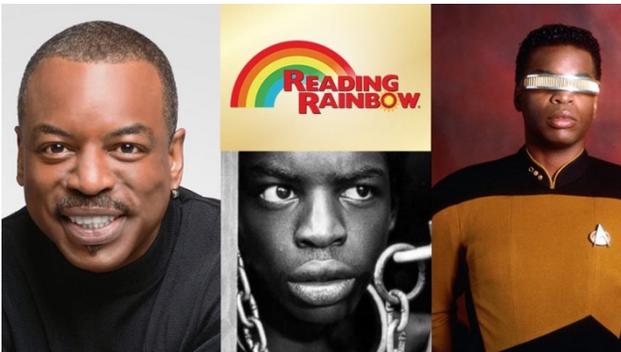
American [actress](#) and [fashion model](#). In a career spanning more than seven decades, she became known for her portrayal of strong [African-American women](#). Tyson received three [Primetime Emmy Awards](#), four [Black Reel Awards](#), one [Screen Actors Guild Award](#), one [Tony Award](#), an [honorary Academy Award](#), and a [Peabody Award](#).

Kara Walker



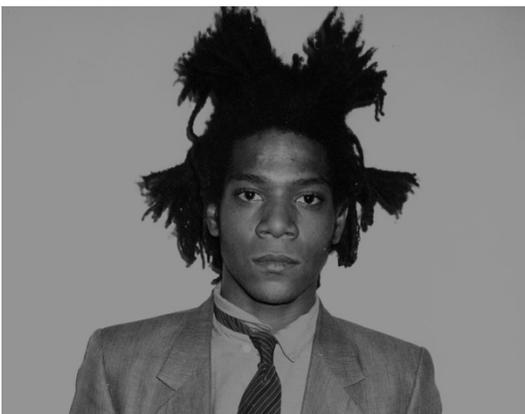
American contemporary painter, silhouettist, print-maker, installation artist, and film-maker who explores race, gender, sexuality, violence, and identity in her work. She is best known for her room-size tableaux of black cut-paper silhouettes. Walker lives in New York City and has taught extensively at [Columbia University](#).

Levar Burton



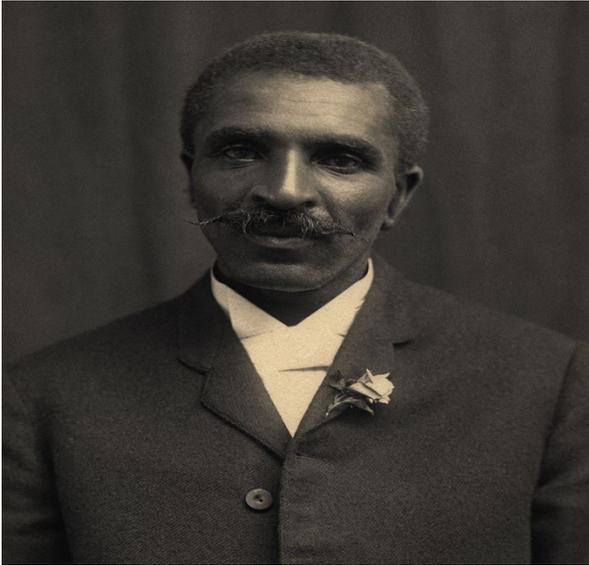
Beloved American actor, director, and children's television host. He is best known for his role as Lt. Commander [Geordi La Forge](#) in [Star Trek: The Next Generation](#), his role as [Kunta Kinte](#) in the [ABC](#) miniseries [Roots](#) (1977), and as host of [Reading Rainbow](#) for 23 years.

John Michael Basquiat



American artist Jean-Michael Basquiat first achieved fame as part of [SAMO](#), a [graffiti](#) duo who wrote enigmatic epigrams in the cultural hotbed of the Lower East side of Manhattan during the late 1970s, where rap, punk, and street art coalesced into early [hip-hop music](#) culture. Basquiat's art focused on dichotomies such as wealth versus poverty, integration versus segregation, and inner versus outer experience.

George Washington Carver



Culinary

- He was an American agricultural scientist and inventor who promoted alternative crops to cotton and methods to prevent [soil depletion](#).^[2] He was the most prominent black scientist of the early 20th century.
- While a professor at [Tuskegee Institute](#), Carver developed techniques to improve soils depleted by repeated plantings of cotton. He wanted poor farmers to grow other crops, such as peanuts and sweet potatoes, as a source of their own food and to improve their quality of life. The most popular of his 44 practical bulletins for farmers contained 105 food recipes using peanuts. Although he spent years developing and promoting numerous products made from peanuts, none became commercially successful.^[3]

- Apart from his work to improve the lives of farmers, Carver was also a leader in promoting [environmentalism](#).^[4] He received numerous honors for his work, including the [Spingarn Medal](#) of the [NAACP](#).

Todd Richards, Atlanta



Twice a James Beard Award semifinalist, [Todd Richards](#) is a fixture of the Atlanta culinary scene. He worked in fine-dining restaurants across town, such as The Four Seasons Hotel, the Ritz-Carlton Buckhead and White Oak Kitchen & Cocktails, before opening Richard's Southern Fried, a fried chicken restaurant at Krog Street Market, in 2016. Richards' [new cookbook, Soul](#), was released last May, and was our first guest on our podcast, [Sunday Supper](#).

James Hemings



- Hemings was born in Virginia in 1765; at 8 years old, he became Thomas Jefferson's slave through an inheritance. (His younger sister Sally was also enslaved by Jefferson and later bore several of Jefferson's children.)
- He was the first American to train as a chef in France
- Hemings cooked the historic meal between Alexander Hamilton and Thomas Jefferson (immortalized in the musical "Hamilton" in the song "The Room Where It Happens")
- He also introduced European-style macaroni and cheese, French fries, crème brûlée and ice cream to America

Tiffany Derry, Dallas



- Chef Tiffany Derry worked in restaurants throughout the Houston and Dallas areas before landing a spot on "Top Chef."
- She appeared on two seasons of the show, garnering the fan favorite award in Season 7, and placing fourth in "Top Chef All-Stars."
- Her first restaurant, Private|Social, was a critical darling for its two years of operation. Derry recently opened a new restaurant, Roots Chicken Shack, in Plano and just finished judging the first season of Top Chef, Jr.

Mashama Bailey, Savannah



Chef Mashama Bailey came out of seemingly nowhere (OK, not nowhere, New York) in 2014 to completely upend our expectations of what Savannah food could be. Her restaurant, [The Grey](#), has [earned Best New Restaurant nods from Eater](#), Esquire, Food and Wine, and Bon Appetit, and was a semifinalist for a James Beard Award in the same category. Sure, Bailey's food is Southern, but it's got her own experience woven in — collards are imbued with pecan smoke and local pork comes served in a "Parm broth."

Here are some resources for exploring other Black Americans who have contributed to our nation's rich history:

- <http://kids.nationalgeographic.com>
- <http://oprahmag.com>
- <https://blackhistoryintwominutes.com/>

Here are some sources for exploring historically black colleges:

- <https://hbculifestyle.com/list-of-hbcu-schools/>
- <https://sites.ed.gov/whhbcu/one-hundred-and-five-historically-black-colleges-and-universities/>