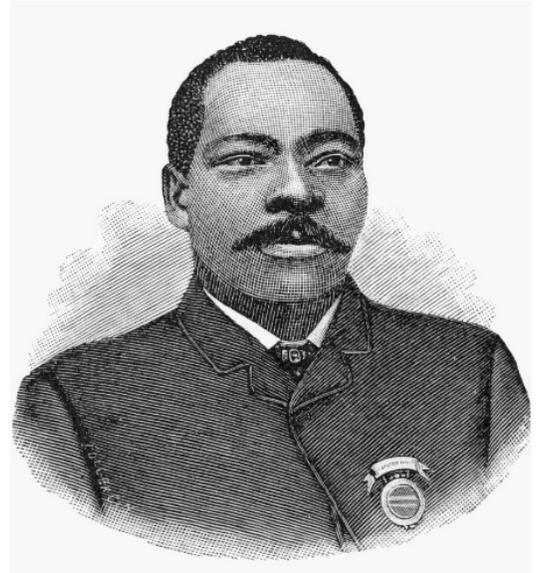


Granville T. Woods, Inventor (1856 – 1910)

Known as the “Black Edison,” Woods was a talented and prolific mechanical and electrical engineer. He created or contributed to a variety of innovations at a time when electricity was dramatically changing communications and transportation. He focused on making trains, streetcars, and subways safer and more efficient and is remembered for improvements to such crucial features as the air brake and third rail.



Forced by family poverty to leave school at age 10, he was largely self-taught. As a young man, he worked on trains and steamers, quickly working his way up from fireman to engineer. In 1880, he established himself as an electrical engineer and inventor. After patenting the Synchronous Multiplex Railway Telegraph, which made it possible to send messages between train stations and moving trains, he reorganized his Cincinnati company as the Woods Electric Company. In 1892, he moved his research operations to New York City.

During his career, Woods obtained more than 50 patents but sometimes found himself fighting to protect them from both corporations and other inventors. When he died, he was buried in an unmarked grave, having sold many of his patents to corporations such as General Electric and Westinghouse. His burial place acquired a headstone only through a historian’s fundraising — 65 years later. However, his achievements were finally recognized in the 21st century, when the New York City Transit Authority organized an exhibition commemorating his contributions, he was inducted into the National Inventors Hall of Fame, and New York City named both a street and an elementary school in his honor.

Wikipedia: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Granville_Woods

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4PB6pYrUrr8>

Gladys Brown West, Mathematician (1930 – 2026)

Born into a sharecropper family in rural Virginia, West worked in the fields before and after school even as a young child. Encouraged by her family and teachers, she graduated from her segregated high school at the top of her class, which earned her a scholarship at Virginia State College, now Virginia State University, a historically Black public university. Soon after she completed her master's degree in mathematics in 1955, she was recruited by the United States Navy. She is most known for her contributions to the mathematical modeling of the shape of the earth and for her work on the development of satellite geodesy models, later incorporated into the Global Positioning System (GPS). Among her many honors were induction into the United States Air Force Hall of Fame and receiving the Webby Lifetime Achievement Award for the development of satellite geodesy models.

Wikipedia: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gladys_West

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IVAw62L9MG8>



Dorothy Height, Civil Rights & Women's Rights Activist (1912 – 2010)

Height led the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW) for four decades. She worked with Eleanor Roosevelt, Mary McLeod Bethune, and the YWCA to fight against racial and gender inequality and injustice. Height's involvement in civic leadership started early. Her mother was active in the Pennsylvania Federation of Colored Women's Clubs and took Dorothy along to meetings. Accepted to Barnard College of Columbia University in 1929, Height was denied entrance because the school had an unwritten policy of admitting only two Black students per year. She enrolled instead at New York University, where she earned bachelor's and master's degrees, and began a career in social work.



A chance encounter with Mary McLeod Bethune brought Height into the NCNW. Under her 40-year leadership, the NCNW supported voter registration in the South and funded civil rights activists throughout the country. Her prominence in the Civil Rights Movement and unmatched knowledge of organizing meant she was regularly called to give advice on political issues. For her efforts during the Civil Rights Movement, Height received numerous awards and recognitions, including the Citizens Medal Award and the Congressional Gold Medal. She was also inducted into the Democracy Hall of Fame International. When Height passed away at the age of 98, President Barack Obama delivered the

eulogy for her funeral service at the Washington National Cathedral.

Photo Credit: Adrian Hood

Wikipedia: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dorothy_Height

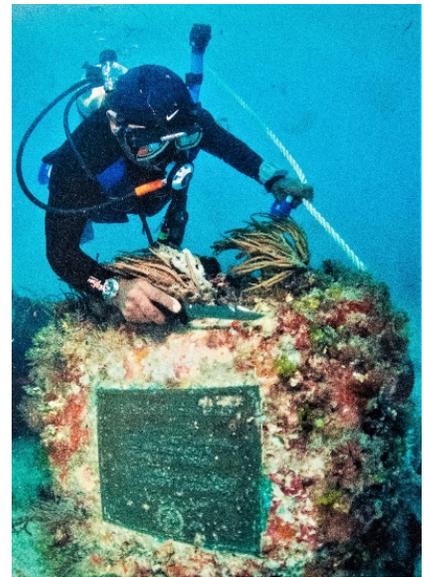
National Women's History Museum: <https://www.womenshistory.org/education-resources/biographies/dorothy-height>

Dr. Albert Jose Jones, Marine Biologist & Undersea Explorer

Dr. Albert Jose 'Doc' Jones is known as the 'godfather of Black scuba diving' and as the man who helped to break down the barriers that denied Black adults and children access to swimming. His passion for the water reflects traumatic life experiences. Because Black kids were not allowed in swimming pools where he was growing up in the 1940s, they headed to the river; and as a child he witnessed another child's drowning. Joining the military after high school graduation exposed him to diving for the first time, but it also sent him to Korea, where he earned the Purple Heart — and developed a lifelong aversion to noise, which he feels he shares with other combat veterans and which led him to cherish the quiet of being under water.

Jones holds a Ph. D. in marine biology from Georgetown University and is a Fulbright Scholar and National Science Foundation Fellow, as well as a co-founder of the National Association of Black Scuba Divers. He has certified over 2,000 divers and taught over 5,000 others to swim.

In 1959, he formed the first Black scuba diving club, the Underwater Adventure Seekers. Their exploration of the Henrietta Marie, an English slave ship that sank near Key West in 1700, led Jones to redirect much of his energy to the discovery and exploration of sunken slave ships and to the training of underwater archaeologists. He has described it as diving down into his own history and as a mission to honor his



ancestors. This photo shows Jones with the plaque they erected at the Henrietta Marie site, dedicated to the victims of slavery and facing east toward Africa.

Photo Credit: Harvard Gazette

PBS Video: <https://www.pbs.org/video/black-godfather-of-scuba-mwttsh/>

Black America Web: <https://blackamericaweb.com/2016/07/05/little-known-black-history-fact-dr-albert-jose-doc-jones/>

Diving With a Purpose: <https://divingwithapurpose.org/about-us/>

Face2Face Africa: <https://face2faceafrica.com/article/honor-the-godfather-of-black-scuba-diving-who-crushed-barriers-denying-african-americans-from-swimming>