

Beyond 28 days of February - A Continued Celebration of Black History

Lifting up our African American sisters upon whose activism we stand

African American women have played a significant role in our path toward justice, equity and inclusion. Their deep and rich history of advocacy for racial equity has pushed forward awareness and began an incremental change in a number of spaces. The dedication to their life's work also created a pathway, modeling activism and advocacy, for other persons of color as they themselves worked toward racial equity.

In our continued celebration of Black History, ARTI lifts up the early work of African American women. We introduce you to a few of the early "Agents of Good Trouble" and encourage you to learn more about their work...

Ida B. Wells (1862-1931): Born into slavery, Well's life-time work was combating prejudice and violence, and fighting for the equality of African American women. Wells was an investigative journalist and one of the founders of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).

<https://www.womenshistory.org/education-resources/biographies/ida-b-wells-barnett>

Harriet Jacobs (1813-1897): After escaping slavery, Jacobs wrote of the abuse she endured at the hands of her captors. Her acclaimed book "Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl" sheds light on the sexual violence perpetrated against enslaved Black women.

[Harriet Jacobs - Wikipedia](#)

Mary Church Terrell (1863-1954): A graduate of Oberlin College and member of the upper-class Black community, Terrell co-founded the National Association of Colored Women and the NAACP.

[Mary Church Terrell | National Women's History Museum \(womenshistory.org\)](#)

Pauli Murray (1910-1985): Murray was an author, lawyer, women's rights activist, the first Black person to earn a Doctor of the Science of Law degree from Yale, and the first Black woman to be ordained an Episcopal priest. Murray co-founded the Congress of Racial Equality and the National Organization for Women (1966). Pauli has been described as a transgender male but was "before his/their time" aka the term trans did not exist and she was denied hormone treatment.

[Pauli Murray | National Women's History Museum \(womenshistory.org\)](#)

Jo Ann Robinson (1912-1992): As a professor at Alabama State College and president of Montgomery's Women's Political Council, Robinson made desegregation of the city's buses her priority. She was a prominent leader behind the scenes of the Montgomery Improvement Association (MIA), largely contributing to the U.S. Supreme Court's 1956 ruling that segregated buses were unconstitutional. [Jo](#)

[Ann Robinson - Wikipedia](#)

Ella Baker (1903-1986): Baker co-founded an organization that raised money to fight Jim Crow laws. She also founded the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), which focused on nonviolent protest. In 1961 she helped organize the Freedom Rides and aided in registering Black voters.

[Ella Baker - Wikipedia](#)

Dorothy Height (1912-2010): Through her 40 years of serving as President of the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW), Height became one of the most trusted and leading voices for Black women during the civil rights movement.

[Dr. Dorothy Height Biography \(womenshistory.org\)](#)

Claudia Jones (1915-1964): As a journalist in the 1960's, Jones brought attention to the many injustices faced by Black women. She also brought Black women's voices and experiences to the forefront of political conversations.

[Claudia Jones - Wikipedia](#)

Ernestine Eckstein (1941-1992): Eckstein was a leading supporter of both civil and LGBTQ rights in the 1960s and 70s. Eckstein's most influential work was as Vice President of the New York chapter of Daughters of Bilitis, the first center solely for lesbians in NYC.

[Ernestine Eckstein - Wikipedia](#)

Marsha P. Johnson (1945-1992): Marsha "Pay It No Mind" Johnson was a successful drag queen who created the Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries (STAR) in 1970, an organization that worked to find housing for homeless transgender youth.

[Marsha P. Johnson | National Women's History Museum \(womenshistory.org\)](#)

Claudette Colvin: (1939-): nine months before Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat to a white passenger on a bus in Montgomery, Alabama, then 15-year-old Colvin did the same. On March 2, 1955, Colvin was taking the bus home from high school when the driver ordered her to give up her seat. She refused, saying she paid her fare, and it was her constitutional right, but was then arrested by two police officers. Colvin later became the main witness in the federal lawsuit *Browder v. Gayle*, which ended segregation on public transportation in Alabama.

[Claudette Colvin - Wikipedia](#)