



Our Defining Moments

The Century That Changed Everything *Milestones in Black American History*



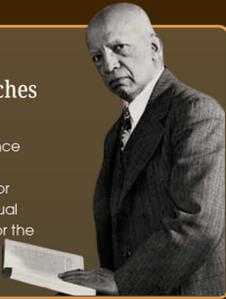
100 Years of Black History Month

ERA I · 1926-1945

Foundations & Sacrifice

FEBRUARY 1926
Carter G. Woodson Launches Negro History Week

Woodson established this observance to reclaim Black narratives from erasure, choosing February to honor Douglass and Lincoln. This intellectual intervention laid the groundwork for the 1976 federal recognition of Black History Month.



1927 Zora Neale Hurston documents Fort Mose near St. Augustine — the first free Black settlement in North America.

1928 Oscar DePriest elected — first Black congressman of the 20th century.

1929 Bethune-Cookman College formed in Daytona Beach by Mary McLeod Bethune. ↑

1930 Howard University Gallery of Art opens — first U.S. gallery directed by African Americans.

1931 Scottsboro Boys arrested — nine Black teenagers falsely accused, sparking landmark Supreme Court rulings.

1932 Tuskegee Syphilis Study begins — a 40-year government experiment on Black men without their consent.

1933 The Mis-Education of the Negro published by Carter G. Woodson.

1934 Apollo Theater opens in Harlem — becomes the defining stage for Black artistic excellence

1935 Mules and Men published — Zora Neale Hurston preserves Black Southern folklore gathered in Central Florida. ↑

1936 Judge Henderson founds ILA Local 1416 in Miami — recruiting 10 men at \$1.75 each to charter the union. ↑

1937 William H. Hastie confirmed as first Black federal judge — appointed by FDR to the Virgin Islands U.S. District Court.

1938 Joe Louis knocks out Max Schmeling in symbolic defeat of fascism.

1939 Marian Anderson performs at the Lincoln Memorial after being barred from Constitution Hall.

1940 Hattie McDaniel wins the Oscar — first Black Academy Award winner.

1941 Executive Order 8802 bans discriminatory hiring practices by federal agencies, unions and businesses engaged in war-related work.

1942 Dust Tracks on a Road published — Zora Neale Hurston's autobiography from Eatonville to the Harlem Renaissance.

1943 Detroit Race Riot — 34 dead, proving racial violence extends far beyond the Jim Crow South.

1944 Miami swears in its first five Black police officers, assigned to Overtown. ↑

MAY 1945
DADE COUNTY PARKS VIRGINIA BEACH COLORED ONLY
The Miami Wade-Ins & Virginia Key Desegregation
Seven Black leaders, including Judge Lawson E. Thomas, staged a "wade-in" at the whites-only Haulover Beach to protest segregation, prompting officials to designate Virginia Key as a "colored-only" beach that became a cherished cultural sanctuary and a testament to the power of direct action in Miami.

ERA II · 1946-1965

Breaking & Building

1946 Moore's Ford lynching — a white mob executes four Black sharecroppers, in the last mass lynching in America.

1947 Jackie Robinson debuts for Brooklyn Dodgers — breaking the major league color barrier.

1948 Executive Order 9981 — President Truman officially desegregates the U.S. Armed Forces.

1949 Virgil Hawkins sues UF — legal fight to integrate Florida's higher education begins. ↑

1950 Gwendolyn Brooks wins Pulitzer — first African American to receive the honor.

1951 Harry T. and Harriette Moore assassinated in Mims — pioneers of voter registration and early martyrs. ↑

1952 Invisible Man published — Ralph Ellison's definitive novel on the Black experience.

1953 FAMU achieves university status — Florida A&M expands its academic and legal programs in Tallahassee. ↑

1946 Mules and Men published — Zora Neale Hurston preserves Black Southern folklore gathered in Central Florida. ↑

MAY 1954
Brown v. Board of Education Strikes Down "Separate But Equal"
The Supreme Court unanimously ruled that racial segregation in public schools violated the 14th Amendment, dismantling the foundation of Jim Crow that had stood for nearly 60 years. The South responded with fierce resistance — but the ruling ignited a movement that could no longer be stopped.

1955 Emmett Till murdered — brutal tragedy sparks global outrage and the modern movement.

1956 Tallahassee Bus Boycott — FAMU students and Rev. Steele successfully end segregated seating. ↑

1957 Civil Rights Act of 1957 — first federal civil rights law since Reconstruction.

1958 Alvin Ailey Dance Theater founded — dedicated to preserving African American cultural heritage.

1959 A Raisin in the Sun premieres — first play by a Black woman on Broadway.

1960 Miami Sit-Ins — direct action desegregates lunch counters at Burdines and downtown stores. ↑

1961 The Freedom Rides — activists challenge illegal interstate travel segregation across the Deep South. ↑

1962 James Meredith integrates Ole Miss — federal troops sent to enforce Supreme Court orders.

1963 March on Washington — 250,000 gather for "Jobs and Freedom" and the "I Have a Dream" speech.

JUNE 1964
St. Augustine Movement Precipitates Civil Rights Act
While the nation focused on Alabama, Dr. King and the SCLC targeted St. Augustine, FL, knowing its violent backlash would sway Congress. The brutal footage helped break a 75-day Senate filibuster, clearing the way for the signing of Civil Rights Act of 1964.

1965 M. Athalie Range elected — first African American woman on the Miami City Commission. ↑

ERA III · 1966-1985

Power & Pain

1966 Black Panther Party founded — advocates for self-defense and community survival programs. ↑

1967 Thurgood Marshall confirmed — first Black Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court.

1968 Liberty City Riots — uprising during the RNC exposes Miami's deep economic exclusion. ↑

1969 Fred Hampton assassinated — Chicago police and FBI raid marks peak of COINTELPRO violence.

1970 Essence magazine launched — cultural institution affirming Black beauty and politics.

1971 Congressional Black Caucus founded — 13 members leverage federal power for Black interests.

1972 Shirley Chisholm runs for President — first Black major-party bid by the "Unbought and Unbossed" pioneer. ↑

1973 Maynard Jackson elected — first Black mayor of Atlanta and a major Southern city.

1974 Hank Aaron breaks home run record — surmounting racial hatred with stoic excellence.

1975 Joseph W. Hatchett joins Florida Supreme Court — first Black justice in FL since Reconstruction. ↑

FEBRUARY 1976
Black History Month Officially Recognized

During the Bicentennial, President Gerald Ford urged Americans to "seize the opportunity to honor the too-often neglected accomplishments of Black Americans." This fulfilled Woodson's 1926 vision, establishing the federal observance celebrated today.

1977 Roots captivates the nation — television adaptation sparks massive interest in Black genealogy.

1978 FAMU wins National Championship — inaugural NCAA Division I-AA title. ↑

1979 Arthur McDuffie killed — fatal beating by Miami police becomes a flashpoint for brutality. ↑

MAY 1980
When Miami Burned: The McDuffie Uprising

When an all-white Tampa jury acquitted four white Dade County police officers in the beating death of Arthur McDuffie — a Black Marine veteran and insurance executive stopped for running a red light — Miami's Black community reached its breaking point. Within hours, unrest in Liberty City and Overtown left 18 people dead, 400 injured, and caused over \$100 million in property damage.

1981 Bob Marley dies in Miami — global icon's passing solidifies city's Caribbean link. ↑

1982 Overtown Riots — unrest follows the police killing of Nevell Johnson Jr. ↑

1983 MLK Holiday signed into law — federal recognition following a 15-year struggle.

1984 Jesse Jackson's "Rainbow Coalition" — presidential campaign shifts the national platform.

1985 The MOVE bombing — Philadelphia police drop a bomb on Black radical group headquarters.

ERA IV · 1986-2005

Excellence & Glass Ceilings

1986 The Oprah Winfrey Show goes national — first Black woman to host a national talk show.

1987 Aretha Franklin inducted into Hall of Fame — first woman in the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame.

1988 Doug Williams wins Super Bowl MVP — first Black quarterback to win the title. ↑

1989 Lozano verdict and Miami Riots — fatal police shooting disrupts Super Bowl festivities. ↑

JULY 1990
The Nelson Mandela "Quiet Riot" Boycott

When Miami's Cuban-American political leaders refused to welcome Nelson Mandela during his first U.S. visit after his release from prison, Black attorney H.T. Smith and other community leaders answered with economic withdrawal rather than protest. Their tourism boycott lasted nearly 1,000 days and cost the city an estimated \$20 million in lost convention and tourism revenue.

1991 Rodney King beaten by Los Angeles police officers — viral video validates complaints of systemic brutality.

NOVEMBER 1992
Florida Elects First Black Congressmembers Since Reconstruction

Following landmark redistricting, Florida sent three Blacks to Congress for the first time since 1876, ending a 116-year drought of Black federal representation. Miami's Carrie Meek, Fort Lauderdale's Alcee Hastings, and Jacksonville's Corrine Brown brought distinct voices to Capitol Hill; Meek also made history as the first freshman ever appointed to the powerful House Appropriations Committee.

1993 Toni Morrison wins Nobel Prize — first Black woman to win the Nobel in Literature.

1994 Wilkie D. Ferguson Jr. appointed — first Black judge on the Miami-Dade Circuit and U.S. District Courts. ↑

1995 The Million Man March — massive gathering calls for atonement and responsibility.

1996 St. Petersburg Riots — unrest following Tyron Lewis's death exposes Tampa Bay disparities. ↑

1997 Tiger Woods wins the Masters — shattering racial barriers at age 21 at Augusta National. ↑

1998 Community Partnership for Homeless — Miami model shifts focus from criminalization to rehabilitation. ↑

1999 Serena Williams wins first Grand Slam — 17-year-old begins era of tennis dominance. ↑

2000 Venus Williams wins Wimbledon — first Black female champion since Althea Gibson. ↑

2001 Colin Powell confirmed — first Black Secretary of State and highest-ranking diplomat.

2002 Dual Oscar victories — Denzel Washington and Halle Berry win top acting honors.

2003 Miami Gardens incorporated — Florida's largest Black-majority city formed for self-determination. ↑

2004 Wangari Maathai wins Nobel Peace Prize — linking environmental justice with human rights.

2005 Death of Rosa Parks — "Mother of the Movement" lies in honor in the U.S. Capitol.

ERA V · 2006-2026

Reckoning & Renaissance

2006 Death of Coretta Scott King — passing of a primary architect of King's global legacy.

2007 Barack Obama announces candidacy — historic mobilization redefines digital organizing.

2008 Barack Obama elected President — shattering a 232-year racial barrier.

2009 Barack Obama inaugurated — first Black family enters the White House built by enslaved labor.

2010 Frederica Wilson elected to Congress — founder of '5000 Role Models' represents Miami. ↑

2011 MLK Memorial dedicated — King takes his place among the Founding Fathers on the Mall.

NOVEMBER 2012
A Hoodie, A Bag of Skittles, and the Shot That Woke a Generation

When Sanford police declined to arrest the man who shot 17-year-old Trayvon Martin, citing Florida's "Stand Your Ground" law, the grief of a Miami Gardens family became a national flashpoint. The case forced a reckoning on the criminalization of Black youth and racial profiling — from that outrage came #BlackLivesMatter, a movement that would reshape the global conversation on race and justice.

2013 Black Lives Matter founded — decentralized global resistance against systemic racism. ↑

2014 Ferguson Uprising — Michael Brown's death transforms BLM into a ground movement.

2015 Charleston Church massacre — white supremacist attack sparks a wave of monument removals.

2016 Moonlight released — Barry Jenkins' film showcases Miami's Liberty City stories. ↑

2017 Moonlight wins Best Picture — first all-Black cast film to win the top honor. ↑

2018 Andrew Gillum nominated — first Black major-party nominee for Governor of Florida. ↑

2019 The 1619 Project published — reframing American history through the lens of slavery. ↑

2020 George Floyd Protests — largest protests in U.S. history shut down Miami's I-95. ↑

2021 Juneteenth becomes federal holiday — commemorating the final end of slavery in the U.S.

APRIL 2022

Ketanji Brown Jackson Confirmed to the Supreme Court

A Miami Palmetto High alumna became the first Black woman in history to serve as an Associate Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court.

2023 Florida History Standards controversy — state adoption of 'benefit' language sparks national outcry. ↑

2024 Kamala Harris nominated for president — the first Black woman to lead a major party's presidential ticket.

2025 The DEI rollback — President Trump eliminates federal diversity programs and cancel BHM at federal agencies.

2026 The Centennial of Negro History Week — born in defiance, grown into a movement, and now more contested than ever.