



ABCA NEWSPOINTS

Black History Month | February 2015 | Volume 35



"Promoting Civil and Human Rights Around The World"

Black History Month, or National African American History Month, is an annual celebration of achievements by black Americans and a time for recognizing the central role of African Americans in U.S. history. The event grew out of "Negro History Week," the brainchild of noted historian Carter G. Woodson and other prominent African Americans. Since 1976, every U.S. president has officially designated the month of February as Black History Month. Other countries around the world, including Canada and the United Kingdom, also devote a month to celebrating black history. *The story of Black History Month begins in 1915, half a century after the Thirteenth Amendment abolished slavery in the United States.* That September, the Harvard-trained historian Carter G. Woodson and the prominent minister Jesse E. Moorland founded the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History (ASNLH), an organization dedicated to researching and promoting achievements by black Americans and other peoples of African descent. Known today as the Association for the Study of African American Life and History

(ASALH), the group sponsored a national Negro History week in 1926, choosing the second week of February to coincide with the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass. The event inspired schools and communities nationwide to organize local celebrations, establish history clubs and host performances and lectures. In the decades that followed, mayors of cities across the country began issuing yearly proclamations recognizing Negro History Week. By the late 1960s, thanks in part to the Civil Rights Movement and a growing awareness of black identity, Negro History Week had evolved into Black History Month on many college campuses. President Gerald R. Ford officially recognized Black History Month in 1976, calling upon the public to "seize the opportunity to honor the too-often neglected accomplishments of black Americans in every area of endeavor throughout our history." Since then, every American president has designated February as Black History Month and endorsed a specific theme. The 2012 theme pays tribute to the ways in which black women have shaped the United States and its history.

Civil Rights Movement

Nearly 100 years after the Emancipation Proclamation, African Americans in Southern states still inhabited a starkly unequal world of disenfranchisement, segregation and various forms of oppression, including race-inspired violence. "Jim Crow" laws at the local and state levels barred them from classrooms and bathrooms, from theaters and train cars, from juries and legislatures. In 1954, the U.S. Supreme Court struck down the "separate but equal" doctrine that formed the basis for state-sanctioned discrimination, drawing national and international attention to African Americans' plight. In the turbulent decade and a half that followed, civil rights activists used nonviolent protest and civil disobedience to bring about change, and the federal government made legislative headway with initiatives such as the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and the Civil Rights Act of 1968. Many leaders from within the African American community and beyond rose to prominence during the Civil Rights era, including Martin Luther King, Jr., Rosa Parks, Malcolm X, Andrew Goodman and others. They risked—and sometimes lost—their

lives in the name of freedom and equality.

Martin Luther King Jr.

Martin Luther King Jr. (1929-1968) was a Baptist minister and social activist who played a key role in the American civil rights movement from the mid-1950s until his assassination in 1968. Inspired by advocates of nonviolence such as Mahatma Gandhi, King sought equality for African Americans, the economically disadvantaged and victims of injustice through peaceful protest. He was the driving force behind watershed events such as the Montgomery Bus Boycott and the March on Washington, which helped bring about such landmark legislation as the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. King was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964 and is remembered each year on Martin Luther King Jr. Day, a U.S. federal holiday since 1986.

Black History Facts

Black History Month began as "Negro History Week," which was created in 1926 by Carter G. Woodson, a noted African American historian, scholar, educator, and publisher. It became a month-long celebration in 1976. The month of February was chosen to coincide with the birthdays of Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

Barack Hussein Obama II *born August 4, 1961*) is the 44th and current President of the United States, and the first African American to hold the office. Born in Honolulu, Hawaii, Obama is a graduate of Columbia University and Harvard Law School, where he served as president of the *Harvard Law Review*. He was a community organizer in Chicago before earning his law degree. He worked as a civil rights attorney and taught constitutional law at the University of Chicago Law School from 1992 to 2004. He served three terms representing the 13th District in the Illinois Senate from 1997 to 2004, running unsuccessfully for the United States House of Representatives in 2000. In 2004, Obama received national attention during his campaign to represent Illinois in the United States Senate with his victory in the March Democratic Party primary, his keynote address at the Democratic National Convention in July, and his election to the Senate in November. He began his presidential campaign in 2007 and, after a close primary campaign against Hillary Rodham Clinton in 2008, he won sufficient delegates in the Democratic Party primaries to receive the presidential nomination. He then defeated Republican nominee John McCain in the general election, and was inaugurated as president on January 20, 2009. Nine months after his election, Obama was named the 2009 Nobel Peace Prize laureate. During his first two years in office, Obama signed into law economic stimulus legislation in response to the Great Recession in the form of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 and the Tax Relief, Unemployment Insurance Reauthorization, and Job Creation Act of 2010. Other major domestic initiatives in his first term included the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, often referred to as "Obamacare"; the Dodd–Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act; and the Don't Ask, Don't Tell Repeal Act of 2010. In foreign policy, Obama ended U.S. military involvement in the Iraq War, increased U.S. troop levels in Afghanistan, signed the New START arms control treaty with Russia, ordered U.S. military involvement in Libya, and ordered the military operation that resulted in the death of Osama bin Laden. In January 2011, the Republicans regained control of the House of Representatives as the Democratic Party lost a total of 63 seats; and, after a lengthy debate over federal spending and whether or not to raise the nation's debt limit, Obama signed the Budget Control Act of 2011 and the American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012. Obama was **re-elected president in November 2012**, defeating Republican nominee



Mitt Romney, and was sworn in for a second term on January 20, 2013. During his second term, Obama has promoted domestic policies related to gun control in response to the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting, and has called for full equality for LGBT Americans, while his administration has filed briefs which urged the Supreme Court to strike down the Defense of Marriage Act of 1996 and California's Proposition 8 as unconstitutional. In foreign policy, Obama ordered U.S. military involvement in Iraq in response to gains made by the Islamic State in Iraq after the 2011 withdrawal from Iraq, continued the process of ending U.S. combat operations in Afghanistan, and has sought to normalize U.S. relations with Cuba.

Source: [Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia](#)

Report: Black Business Owners in Texas Face Challenges

Business report shows significant barriers to growth and profitability

They say everything is "bigger in Texas", but apparently not black owned businesses in the lone star state. According to a new [report, from the Bureau of Business Research at The University of Texas at Austin](#), the vast majority (95%) of black-owned businesses in Texas have no paid employees other than the owner. In sales and number of employees, black-owned businesses lagged behind state averages. In 2007, the average black-owned business had 10 employees and \$60,000 in sales, while the average Texas business had 23 employees and \$1.2 million in sales. On a brighter note, the report also shows, "the number of black-owned businesses in Texas is growing faster than the state average for all businesses. The state saw a 74% jump in the number of black-owned businesses between 2002 and 2007, compared with a 25% rise in the number of Texas businesses overall during the same period. In their responses, most black business owners indicated they had the education and skills needed to succeed. But they conceded they will need improvement in the areas of political access and contracting opportunities. But during a survey that was used in the research, a majority of those surveyed (76%) said "they perceive black-owned businesses to have less access than other firms to government decision makers who influence procurement opportunities. A majority of survey respondents also believed that black-owned businesses were unfairly excluded from taking part in contracting opportunities with government (63%) and the private sector (70%).

Source: [The Bureau of Business Research, part of the IC2 Institute at The University of Texas at Austin](#) | Photo: [Smith Concrete Construction, City of Austin Certified MBE/DBE and ABCA Member](#)



CARTER G. WOODSON FOUNDER OF BLACK HISTORY MONTH



*Carter G. Woodson was born in 1875 in New Canton, Virginia. One of the first African Americans to receive a doctorate from Harvard, Woodson dedicated his career to the field of African-American history and lobbied extensively to establish Black History Month as a nationwide institution. He also wrote many historical works, including the 1933 book *The Mis-Education of the Negro*. He died in Washington, D.C., in 1950.*

Early Life

Carter Godwin Woodson was born on December 19, 1875, in New Canton, Virginia, to Anna Eliza and James Woodson. The first son of nine children, the young Woodson worked as a sharecropper and a miner to help his family. He began high school in his late teens and proved to be an excellent student, completing a four-year course of study in less than two years.

After attending Berea College in Kentucky, Woodson worked for the U.S. government as an education superintendent in the Philippines and undertook more travels before returning to the U.S. Woodson then earned his bachelor's and master's from the University of Chicago and went on to receive a doctorate from Harvard University in 1912—becoming the second African American to earn a Ph.D. from the prestigious institution, after W.E.B. Du Bois. After finishing his education, Woodson dedicated himself to the field of African-American history, working to make sure that the subject was taught in schools and studied by scholars. For his efforts, Woodson is often called the "Father of Black History."

Writing 'Mis-Education of the Negro'

In 1915, Carter G. Woodson helped found the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History (which later became the Association for the Study of Afro-American Life and History), which had the goal of placing African-American historical contributions front and center. The next year he established the *Journal of Negro History*, a scholarly publication.

Woodson also formed the African-American-owned Associated Publishers Press in 1921 and would go on to write more than a dozen books over the years, including *A Century of Negro Migration* (1918), *The History of the Negro Church* (1921), *The Negro in Our History* (1922) and *Mis-Education of the Negro* (1933). *Mis-Education*—with its focus on the Western indoctrination system and African-American self-empowerment—is a particularly noted work and has become regularly course adopted by college institutions.

In addition to his writing pursuits, Woodson also worked in a number of educational positions, serving as a principal for Washington, D.C.'s Armstrong Manual Training School before working as a college dean at Howard University and the West Virginia Collegiate Institute.

Creating Black History Month

Woodson lobbied schools and organizations to participate in a special program to encourage the study of African-American history, which began in February 1926 with Negro History Week.

The program was later expanded and renamed Black History Month. **(Woodson had chosen February for the initial weeklong celebration to honor the birth months of abolitionist Frederick Douglass and President Abraham Lincoln.)**

To help teachers with African-American studies, Woodson later created the *Negro History Bulletin* in 1937 and also penned literature for elementary and secondary school students.

Woodson died on April 3, 1950, a respected and honored figure who received accolades for his vision. His legacy continues on, with Black History Month being a national cultural force recognized by a variety of media formats, organizations and educational institutions.

Quotable Quotes by Carter G. Woodson Father and Founder of Black History Month

- *When you control a man's thinking you do not have to worry about his actions.*
- *Those who have no record of what their forebears have accomplished lose the inspiration which comes from the teaching of biography and history.*
- *If a race has no history, if it has no worthwhile tradition, it becomes a negligible factor in the thought of the world, and it stands in danger of being exterminated.*
- *If the Negroes are to remain forever removed from the producing atmosphere, and the present discrimination continues, there will be nothing left for them to do.*
- *Negroes who have been so long inconvenienced and denied opportunities for development are naturally afraid of anything that sounds like discrimination.*
- *The large majority of the Negroes who have put on the finishing touches of our best colleges are all but worthless in the development of their people.*
- *The differentness of races, moreover, is no evidence of superiority or of inferiority. This merely indicates that each race has certain gifts which the others do not possess.*

Source: Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia



Herman J. Russell, an entrepreneur and philanthropist who turned a small plastering firm into one of the most successful African-American-owned real estate development and construction companies in America, died Saturday, Atlanta Mayor Kasim Reed and multiple people close to the Russell family told The Atlanta-Journal-Constitution. He was 83. Russell, a lifelong Atlantan who counted among his friends several presidents and the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., helped shape the city's skyline and wielded influence far beyond the Capitol of the South. He bought his first piece of land when he was 16 for \$125. Soon after, he formed a plastering company that over several decades became a successful real estate development and construction conglomerate. Along the way, he broke virtually every racial and economic barrier. H.J. Russell & Co. built much of Atlanta's skyline (often through joint ventures), from the Georgia-Pacific headquarters to the Georgia Dome.

The firm is a partner in the joint venture selected to build the new nearly \$1.3 billion Atlanta Falcons stadium, which is slated to open in 2017. Russell also was the first black member of what was then called the Atlanta Chamber of Commerce and the second African-American to serve as its president (a title now known as chairman).

Reprint from the Atlanta Constitution: Mr. Russell passed on Nov 15, 2014.



President & CEO Emmitt Smith Enterprises

A respected entrepreneur, a sought-after speaker, bestselling author and one of the most valuable personal brands in the sports-entertainment field — these are just a few of the ways to describe Emmitt Smith.

As President & CEO of Emmitt Smith Enterprises, Inc., Smith leads a team

of talented individuals who oversee the company's many ventures — including Pat & Emmitt Smith Charities, the company's four core businesses (E Smith Realty Partners, E Smith Legacy, E Smith Capital Partners and EJ Smith Construction), as well as mobile authentication company, Prova Group, Inc.

EJ Smith Construction is a Dallas-based Construction Manager and General Contractor with in-house self-perform concrete capabilities. ***The company specializes in commercial building construction (general contracting, structural concrete and site concrete), civil construction (heavy highways, light rail structural and flatwork) and staff augmentation.***

Business Segments

- Hospitality
- Hospitals
- Aviation
- K-12 through University
- Sports facilities
- Public works
- Civil Projects including Heavy Highway

The supply side of the company functions as a wholesale Distributor and regular dealer in construction related materials and equipment. Smith's vision for his companies is best summed up in Emmitt Smith Enterprises core purpose statement, "Building Bridges to Open Doors." That means quite literally whether the company is building bridges via its construction arm — already recognized as one of the leading African-American owned bridge builders in Texas — or opening doors for the less fortunate through its many philanthropic endeavors, Emmitt Smith Enterprises has a passion for making a difference.

Smith first rose to prominence via an illustrious football career, which included three Super Bowl championships as a member of the Dallas Cowboys and the honor of being the only player to have won a Super Bowl MVP, NFL MVP and NFL Rushing Crown in the same season. Inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame as part of the Class of 2010, Smith is the NFL's all-time leading rusher, having amassed 18,355 yards during his 15 seasons.

Smith's charm and charisma, which made him one of the sports world's most popular personalities during his playing career, quickly translated to the world of entertainment following his retirement.

In 2006, Smith's cross-over appeal became even more apparent when he, along with dance partner Cheryl Burke, was crowned winner of the hit ABC reality show "Dancing with the Stars." In 2012, Emmitt and Cheryl returned to the dance floor for the first ever All-Stars season of "Dancing with the Stars," advancing to the semifinals during the highest level of competition in the show's history.

As well known for his character and integrity as he is for his athletic ability, Smith continues to give back to the community and support higher education via Pat & Emmitt Smith Charities, an organization that annually awards college scholarships and provides enrichment opportunities to underserved youth. Smith continues to share his personal and professional stories with organizations across the country. He has been a member of the President's Health and Fitness Council, and has been recognized by numerous organizations for his leadership and public service.

He also authored the 2011 book, *Game On: Find Your Purpose — Pursue Your Dreams*, which chronicles his story from humble beginnings growing up in Pensacola, Fla. to his rise in the business world. Smith is a graduate of the University of Florida with a Bachelor's Degree in Public Recreation. He is a member of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc. He is married and the father of five children.

Source: 2015 Emmitt Smith Enterprises Website, Google

5 Worst States for Black Americans

Home seekers may want to avoid these socially disproportionate states

The coming year for many may involve moving in search of new beginnings and better opportunities. When moving, you should research and consider social factors such as poverty and unemployment rates, mortality statistics and incarceration disparities, especially as they relate to black residents. There is an overall social and economic inequality of black Americans as compared to whites. According to **24/7 Wall St**, **“Black Americans make about 62 cents for every dollar earned by white Americans. Black Americans are also twice as likely to be unemployed and considerably more likely to live in poverty.”** Certain states have an even wider gap than the national averages, and are less than ideal places to live for black residents. **MSN.com** summarized 24/7 Wall St’s findings of worst states for black Americans and identified the top five.



1. Wisconsin

- Percentage of black residents: 6.2%
- Black homeownership rate: 28.1% (7th lowest)
- Black incarceration rate: 4,042 per 100,000 people (3rd highest)
- Black unemployment rate: 15.0% (tied-11th highest)
- Unemployment rate, all people: 6.7% (21st lowest)

Based on MSN’s index, *Wisconsin is the worst state for black Americans*. Most black households made roughly half the white median household income, a wider income gap than in the majority of states. Wisconsin’s black residents were also less likely than white residents to have health insurance with a gap of more than 30 percentage points. There were 980 deaths per 100,000 black people — one of the highest rates in the nation. This figure represents 288 more deaths than the comparable rate for white residents, nearly the largest gap reviewed. Black Wisconsin residents are also almost 10 times more likely than whites to go to prison, nearly the largest gap. Black children in Wisconsin had worse educational outcomes than their white classmates and their black peers in other states. *Milwaukee topped the nation’s most racially-segregated U.S. cities, which is also where the vast majority of the state’s black population lives.*

2. Minnesota

- Percentage of black residents: 5.4%
- Black homeownership rate: 25.7% (5th lowest)
- Black incarceration rate: 2,321 per 100,000 people (22nd lowest)
- Black unemployment rate: 15.0% (tied-11th lowest)
- Unemployment rate, all people: 4.9% (9th lowest)

Black households in Minnesota earned less than half the median income of white households in 2013, ranking even lower than the 62.3% nationwide. The high unemployment rate is likely the blame for the low incomes among the black population. Fifteen percent of the 5% of unemployed workers in 2013 were black, creating a gap nearly twice that of the national gap. **Only 6.9% of white residents did not have health insurance in 2013, compared to nearly 33% of blacks.** Black Minnesotan households were three times less likely than white households to own their homes, about twice as high as the rest of the nation. Across the country, black Americans were also more likely to be disenfranchised due to the criminal justice system. **More than 7% of Minnesota’s black population was denied the right to vote because of felony convictions or imprisonment.**

3. Rhode Island

- Percentage of black residents: 6.4%
- Black homeownership rate: 29.4% (10th lowest)
- Black incarceration rate: 1,884 per 100,000 people (11th lowest)
- Black unemployment rate: 16.0% (6th highest)
- Unemployment rate, all people: 9.2% (2nd highest)

Throughout the nation, black households earned 62.3% of the white median household income, but black homes in Rhode Island earned just 52.5% of white households in the state. Last year, there were 234 more deaths per 100,000 black people in Rhode Island compared to the white population; this is nearly the largest gap nationwide. Over 23% of black residents lived in poverty last year, while less than 11% of white residents lived in poverty. Sixty-seven percent of white households in the state were homeowners, compared to only 29.4% of black households. The 38 percentage points was wider than the nationwide gap of nearly 30 percentage points.

4. Illinois

- Percentage of black residents: 14.2%
- Black homeownership rate: 38.5% (25th highest)
- Black incarceration rate: 2,128 per 100,000 people (17th lowest)
- Black unemployment rate: 17.0% (3rd highest)
- Unemployment rate, all people: 9.1% (3rd highest)

There are disproportionate social and health outcomes between black and white residents. In 2013, 17% of black workers faced unemployment, versus 9.1% of the state’s workforce. The incarceration rate for black Americans is 2,128 per 100,000 people—more than eight times that of white residents. **Illinois also had one of the largest gaps in death rates between white and black Americans. The death rate for white residents in 2012 was 711.8 per 100,000 people, versus 925.6 deaths per 100,000 black residents.** Despite significant improvements in the past 20 years, the University of Michigan’s Institute for Social Research determined *Chicago was among the most segregated cities in the U.S. as of 2010.*

5. Pennsylvania

- Percentage of black residents: 11.0%
- Black homeownership rate: 43.1% (14th highest)
- Black incarceration rate: 3,269 per 100,000 people (10th highest)
- Black unemployment rate: 14.4% (15th highest)
- Unemployment rate, all people: 7.5% (20th highest)

Twenty-eight percent of the black population was without health insurance last year, compared to only 8.5% of the white population. African-American children also faced larger obstacles to opportunities than their white peers. The gaps in educational outcome may potentially be attributed to geographical segregation, as several cities—including Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, and Harrisburg—were identified among the nation’s 20 most racially-segregated cities. **Black residents were almost nine times as likely than white residents to go to prison, a larger incarceration rate gap than most states.**

Check-out ABCA's New Website

www.abcatx.com



View the *Bid Briefs'* link for a current construction procurement opportunities. Links have been also added for *Tool Box Tips* regarding current construction trends and the *ABCA Newspoints* newsletter for news and information!

Get certified with the City of Austin as a MBE, WBE or DBE, Call the — Small & Minority Business Resources Dept (SMBR) Certification Division at 512-974-7645



The Austin Area Black Contractors Association is reaching out to all

African American Construction Contractors located in Travis, Hays, Williamson, Bastrop and Caldwell Counties to get **MBE/WBE/DBE** Certified with the City of Austin.



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For More Information, Call 512-467-6894

Check-out ABCA's updated website at www.abcatx.com.

View online video training, upcoming construction opportunities, calendar of events, and tool box tips that are advertised in the weekly online Bid Briefs!

SMBR's Plan Room

The City of Austin's Small & Minority Business Resources (SMBR) Plan Room is open for business



weekdays from 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

SMBR's Plan Room provides free electronic access to the McGraw-Hill Dodge system of drawings and construction specifications for projects in 100 counties in South and Central Texas as well as hard copy plans and specifications from local, private, and public sector jobs that can be viewed onsite or copied for a minimal fee. For a list of the current available Plans and Specifications, you can access it on our website at www.austintexas.gov/snbr or visit this link <https://data.austintexas.gov/Business/Construction-Plans-in-SMBR-s-Plan-Room/x442-h34c> or for questions or to schedule a training as a first time user, please call (512) 974-7799.

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