

Celebrating Black History Month: Recognizing the Historical and Contemporary Contributions and Leadership of Black Psychologists

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Black History Month is celebrated during February in the United States and was envisioned in 1926 as Black History week by historian Carter G. Woodson and the Association for the Study of African American Life and History to recognize and celebrate the contributions of people from the African diaspora.¹ In 1976, during the bicentennial year of the nation's independence, President Gerald R. Ford officially recognized Black History Month, calling on all citizens to participate in celebrating the contributions of Black Americans.²

As President of the Eastern Psychological Association this month, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize some of the historical and contemporary contributions of Black psychologists whose research, scholarship, practice, and leadership helped to change the field.

Inez Beverly Prosser (1891-1934)^{3,4,5}



Dr. Inez Beverly Prosser was born in south central Texas and began her college work at Prairie View A&M University, a Historically Black College northwest of Houston. In 1926 she completed her bachelor's degree from the Samuel Huston College in Austin. Due to segregation Inez Prosser left Texas and completed her master's degree in Colorado in 1927. In 1933 she became America's first African American woman to receive her Ph.D. in Psychology from the University of Cincinnati and the first black female psychologist. Her dissertation research examined self-esteem and personality variables in African American middle-school children, with half having attended segregated schools and the other half attending integrated schools. Her findings demonstrated that Black children performed better academically when their classmates were Black, and their teachers were Black. In 1934, Dr. Prosser met with a tragic car accident and

died one year after receiving her Ph.D. Although her life was cut short, Dr. Prosser, in 1933 and 1934, wrote seven articles published in the Mississippi Educational Journal. The articles focused on teaching English to African American children.

Francis Cecil Sumner (1895-1954) ^{3,4}



Francis Sumner was born in 1895 in Arkansas and, in 1916, completed a Bachelor of Arts in English from Clark University. Sumner later enrolled in Lincoln University as a graduate student and was mentored by G. Stanley Hall. Although he was a Ph.D. candidate at Lincoln University, he could not complete his degree because he was drafted into the army during World War 1. After returning from the war, Francis Sumner enrolled in Clark University and, in 1920, completed his Ph.D. in psychology. Dr. Sumner was the first African American to receive his Ph.D. in Psychology. Dr. Sumner taught at various universities, and his research focused on understanding racial bias and supporting educational justice. Dr. Sumner was also one of the founders of the psychology department at Howard University. He helped make the department independent of philosophy and chaired it from 1928 until he died on January 12, 1954.

Ruth Winifred Howard (1900-1997)⁶



Ruth Howard was born in Washington, D.C., on March 25, 1900. Her father was a minister, and her mother was a homemaker who encouraged her academic ambitions. In 1920 Ruth Howard enrolled in the social work division of Simmons College in Boston and, upon graduation, began work in social work with children living in dysfunctional families or in foster homes. In 1929 she enrolled at Columbia University's Teachers College and School of Social Work after receiving a Laura Spelman Rockefeller Fellowship for Parent Education. In 1930 she transferred to the University of Minnesota's Institute of Child Development, where she completed her doctorate in psychology. Dr. Ruth Howard became the first African American woman to obtain a doctoral degree in psychology (in a Psychology Department). Her dissertation was the first of its kind, which involved the study of the developmental history of 229 sets of triplets. Her work was eventually published in the *Journal of Psychology* (1946) and the *Journal of Genetic Psychology* (1947).

Herman George Canady (1901-1970) ^{3,7}



Herman George Canady was born in 1901 in Okmulgee, Oklahoma. In 1923 he entered the Northwestern University Theological School and became interested in sociology and psychology. In 1927 he completed his master's degree in clinical psychology and, in 1941, his Ph.D. in Psychology, both from Northwestern University. One of Dr. Canady's most important works was "The Effect of 'Rapport' on the I.Q.: A New Approach to the Problem of Racial Psychology," which was based on his master's thesis research. He was the first psychologist to examine the relationship between the race of the examiner and intelligence testing outcomes. Dr. Canady was a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and a Fellow of the American Psychological Association. He was also instrumental in founding the West Virginia Psychological Association, the West Virginia State Board of Psychological Examiners, and the Charleston (West Virginia) Guidance Clinic.

Mamie Phipps Clark (1917 -1983) ^{8,9,10}



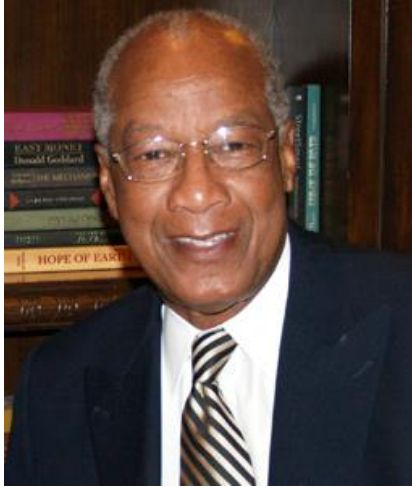
Mamie Phipps Clark was born in Hot Springs, Arkansas, on April 18, 1917. In 1934, Clark graduated high school. After receiving several scholarship offers from Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), she decided to attend Howard University on a merit scholarship, where she met Kenneth Clark. In 1938 she graduated magna cum laude with a B.A. in Psychology. After completing her B.A. and before beginning her graduate work, Mamie worked as a secretary for Charles Hamilton Houston, an NAACP lawyer whose office was the planning ground for challenging racial segregation in the United States. Her Master's thesis was influenced by her work at the law office and her work in an African American nursery school and explored the issues of racial identity and child development. In 1940 Mamie Clark began her Ph.D. at Columbia University, joining Kenneth Clark as the second African American in the department. In 1943 Mamie Clark became the first African American woman to earn a Doctor of Philosophy degree in Psychology from Columbia University. After graduation, Clark took on several jobs and, in 1946, with Kenneth Clark, became the co-founder of the Northside Center for Child Development, the first organization in New York City to serve the mental health needs of African American children. In the 1940s, based on her graduate work, Dr. Mamie Clark developed and implemented the "Doll Study" experiments that exposed internalized racism and the adverse effects of segregation for African American children. Her research was eventually used in the Brown vs. Board of Education case, which ended segregation in the United States. While Dr. Kenneth Clark has been credited with the research, the Doll Study test was primarily the work of Dr. Mamie Clark.

Kenneth Bancroft Clark (1914-2005) ^{10,11,12}



Kenneth Bancroft Clark was born in 1914 to Miriam Hanson Clark and Arthur Bancroft Clark in the Panama Canal Zone. Miriam Clark wanting to ensure her children received a good education, moved to Harlem, NYC, where Kenneth Clark spent his childhood. In 1935 and 1936, Kenneth Clark received both a bachelor's and master's degree from Howard University in Washington, D.C., respectively. While at Howard, Kenneth Clark was mentored by Francis Cecil Sumner, the first African American to receive a doctorate in psychology. In 1940 Kenneth Bancroft Clark became the first African American male to obtain a doctoral degree in Psychology from Columbia University. In 1942 he became the first African American tenured full professor at the City College of New York. Dr. Clark is best known for the "doll studies" research he conducted with his wife, Dr. Mamie Phipps Clark, that examined the racial identity of African American preschool children and the damage caused by segregation. Their work and others were used in the landmark Supreme Court decision in the case of *Brown v. Board of Education*, which ruled that segregation in public schools was unconstitutional. His research is a clear example of the use of psychological science to inform and shape policy. In 1966 Dr. Kenneth Clark became the first African American elected to the New York State Board of Regents and the first African American president of the American Psychological Association.

Robert L. Green (1933-present) ^{13,14}



Robert L. Green was born in 1933 in Detroit, Michigan. In 1954 Green was drafted into the army. While serving in the United States Army, he attended San Francisco State College and, in 1958, graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in general psychology. In 1960 he earned a master's degree in Educational Psychology from San Francisco State University, and in 1963 he earned his Ph.D. in Educational Psychology from Michigan State University. From 1965-1967, Dr. Green worked as the education director of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference under the direction of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

In 1968 -1969 Dr. Green served with Dr. Charles W. Thomas as the first co-presidents of the Association of Black Psychologists. The Association was founded in 1968 in San Francisco to create a psychology that focused on the experiences of Black people and addressed their needs. By 1974 the Association of Black Psychology fully separated from the American Psychological Association and began the journal of Black Psychology. Dr. Green also served as the president of the University of the District of Columbia and former dean of the College of Urban Development at MSU and is dean and professor emeritus of Urban Affairs Programs at MSU.

Charles W. Thomas II (1926-1990) ^{14,15,16}



Charles W. Thomas II was born in 1926 in Davidsonville, Maryland, and served in the United States military during World War II before attending college. In 1954 he received his bachelor of degree in Psychology from Morgan State University. In 1955 he completed his master's degree from John Carroll University, and in 1961 his doctoral degree in Developmental Psychology from Case Western Reserve. During his academic career, he served on the faculty at several colleges and universities. He taught at John Carroll University, was an Assistant Professor at the University of Oregon for three years and was an Associate Professor of Community Medicine at the University of Southern California, where he directed the Center for the Study of Racial and Social Issues. And finally, he became a professor of Urban and Rural Studies at the University of California, San Diego, where he worked until he died in 1990. Dr. Thomas was at the forefront of shaping the early history of Black psychology within American universities. Throughout his career, he advocated for African American professionals to assist African Americans living in underserved communities. In 1968 -1969 Dr. Charles W. Thomas with Dr. Robert L. Green served as the first Presidents of the Association of Black Psychologists (ABPsi). He would eventually be called the "Father of Black Psychology" by the Black Student Psychological Association.

Ruth Esther Graves King (1933- present)^{17,18}



Ruth G. King was born in 1933 and grew up in Morristown, New Jersey. She earned her Bachelor of Arts in health and physical education in 1956 from the College of New Jersey. In 1970 Ruth King received a master's degree in Educational Psychology and completed her doctoral degree in education in 1973, both from Temple University. She taught at Federal City College and Howard University after completing her graduate training. She also worked as the Director of the National Guard Bureau. In 1976 Dr. King was elected as the first woman president of the Association of Black Psychologists. Dr. King was also the first editor of the Association's news journal, *Psych Discourse*, and in 1979 launched the national office, which she initially directed. During her presidency, she worked with members of Congress to address bias in testing. In 2008 Dr. King was described as one of the 50 most outstanding Black psychologists.

Jessica Henderson Daniel ^{19,20,21}



Jessica Henderson Daniel was born in San Antonio, TX. In 1964 she received her bachelor's degree in History from Fayetteville State University (Fayetteville State College), a public Historically Black University in North Carolina. In 1967 and 1969, Jessica H. Daniel attended the

University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and completed a master's degree and her doctorate in Educational Psychology, respectively. In 1970 she joined Harvard Medical School and served as a faculty member in the department of Psychiatry and as Director of Training in Psychology at Boston Children's Hospital. Dr. Henderson Daniel is known for her work on mental health in Black communities, the effect of stress and violence on Black children and adolescents, and the relationship between racial trauma and health outcomes in the Black community.

In 2005 she became the first African American woman to serve as a member-at-large of the American Psychological Association board of directors. In this role, she introduced a motion to launch a Task Force on Resilience and Strength in Black Children and Adolescents, which led to a report that continues to be widely distributed. In 2018 she became the first African American woman to become president of the American Psychological Association.

Claude M. Steele (1946 -present) ²²



Claude Steele was born in 1946 in Chicago, Illinois. In 1967 he earned a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from Hiram College in Hiram, Ohio. In 1969 he earned a master's degree and, in 1971, a Ph.D. in social psychology with a minor in statistics from the Ohio State University. During his academic career, Dr. Steele's research fell into several domains: social psychology, stereotype threat, self-affirmation and addictive behavior. Dr. Steele is best known for his work on stereotype threat. During his career, he has been on the faculty of the University of Utah, the University of Washington, and Stanford University, where he was professor and chair of the psychology department, director of the Center for Comparative Studies in Race and Ethnicity, and director of the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences. In 2009 Dr. Steele became the 21st provost and chief academic officer at Columbia University and, in 2011, returned to Stanford as the James Quillen Dean for the Stanford Graduate School of Education. In 2014 he became the executive vice chancellor and provost of the University of California, Berkeley, where he served until 2016.

Jennifer Eberhardt (1965 – Present)^{23,24}



Jennifer Eberhardt was born in 1965 in Cleveland, Ohio, and was raised in Lee–Harvard, a predominantly African American middle-class neighborhood. At age twelve, she and her family moved to Beachwood, a primarily White community. In 1987 Jennifer Eberhardt received her Bachelor of Arts from the University of Cincinnati. In 1990 she received her master’s degree and her Ph.D. in 1993, both from Harvard University. From 1993 to 1994, she was a postdoctoral research associate in the Social and Personality Psychology Division at the University of Massachusetts, where she studied stereotype threat and intergroup relations. Dr. Eberhardt also held positions at Stanford University as a postdoctoral fellow and at Yale University as an Assistant Professor in Psychology and African and African American studies. She is currently a professor in the Department of Psychology at Stanford University. Through her research, Dr. Eberhardt has made significant contributions to understanding the relationship between race and crime using field and laboratory studies methods. She has also contributed to research on unconscious bias. In 2021 Dr. Eberhardt became the first African American President of the Association for Psychological Science.

Frank Worrell ^{25,26}



Frank C. Worrell was born in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad, and Tobago. He received a Bachelor of Arts, a master's in psychology at the University of Western Ontario, and a Ph.D. in School and Educational Psychology from the University of California, Berkeley. Today, Dr. Worrell is a Distinguished Professor at the University of California, Berkeley School of Education.

He currently serves as Faculty Director of the School Psychology program, the Academic Talent Development program, and the California College Preparatory Academy. Dr. Worrell has expertise in academic talent development, scale development and validation, teacher development, and translating psychological research findings into school-based practice.

He is the author of over 300 articles, book chapters, and books and was the co-editor/editor of the *Review of Educational Research* from 2012–2016. Dr. Worrell served as a member at large on the APA Board of Directors from 2016-2018. In 2022 he became the second African American male to become president of the American Psychological Association.

Carl Hart (1966-present)^{27,28}



Carl Hart was born in 1966. He grew up in Miami, and after high school, he served in the United States Air Force. Dr. Hart earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology from the University of Maryland, a Master of Science in 1994, and a Ph.D. in 1996, both in psychology/neuroscience from the University of Wyoming. Dr. Hart, after completing his Ph.D. completed postdoctoral research at the University of California, San Francisco, and Yale and an Intramural Training Award fellowship at the National Institutes of Health.

Dr. Hart is the Mamie Phipps Clark Professor of Psychology (in Psychiatry) and former chair of the psychology department at Columbia University and was one of Columbia University's first tenured African American sciences professors. Dr. Hart is known for his drug abuse and addiction research and is the Principal Investigator at Columbia University's Neuropsychopharmacology Lab.

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