



CELEBRATING Black History

NOVA SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY

Supported by **Multicultural Affairs, Office of Student Leadership and Civic Engagement, Division of Student Affairs**

Famous Firsts by African Americans

GOVERNMENT

- **U.S. Senator:**
 - Hiram Revels became Senator from Mississippi.
- **U.S. Secretary of State:**
 - Gen. Colin Powell, 2001–2004.
 - First black female Condoleezza Rice, 2005-.

LAW

- **President, Harvard Law Review:** Barack Obama .

DIPLOMACY

- **U.S. diplomat:** Ebenezer D. Bassett, 1869, became minister-resident to Haiti; Patricia Harris became the first black female ambassador (1965; Luxembourg).
- **Nobel Peace Prize winner:** Ralph J. Bunche received the prize in 1950 for mediating the Arab-Israeli truce. Martin Luther King, Jr., became the second African-American Peace Prize winner in 1964.

MILITARY

Combat pilot: Georgia-born Eugene Jacques Bullard

SCIENCE AND MEDICINE

- **Inventor of the blood bank:** Dr. Charles Drew, 1940.
- **Heart surgery pioneer:** Daniel Hale Williams, 1893.
- **First astronaut:** Robert H. Lawrence, Jr., 1967

FILM

- **First Oscar:**
 - Hattie McDaniel, 1940, supporting actress, *Gone with the Wind*.

LITERATURE

- **Novelist:** Harriet Wilson, *Our Nig* (1859).
- **Nobel Prize for Literature winner:** Toni Morrison, 1993.

TELEVISION

- **Network television show host:**
 - Nat King Cole, 1956, "The Nat King Cole Show"
 - Oprah Winfrey became the first black woman television host in 1986, "The Oprah Winfrey Show."
- **Star of a network television show:** Bill Cosby, 1965, "I Spy".

SPORTS

- **MLB player:** Jackie Robinson, 1947, Brooklyn Dodgers.
- **NFL football coach:** Fritz Pollard, 1922–1937.
- **Masters Golf champion:** Tiger Woods, 1997
- **NHL hockey player:** Willie O'Ree, 1958, Boston Bruins.
- **Heavyweight boxing champion:** Jack Johnson, 1908.
- **Olympic gold medalist** (Summer games; individual):
 - DeHart Hubbard, 1924, for the long jump;
 - Alice Coachman, 1948, first woman who won the high jump

OTHER FIRSTS

- **Billionaire:**
 - Robert Johnson, 2001, owner of BET
 - Oprah Winfrey, 2003.
- **Portrayal on a postage stamp:**
 - Booker T. Washington, 1940 (and also 1956).
- **Miss America:** Vanessa Williams, 1984, representing New York.