

**Unsung Heroines:
Five African American Women Who Shaped Society**



Celebrating the contributions of women whose impact has often been overlooked.



Black History Month offers an opportunity to celebrate and reflect on the contributions of African American women who have not always received the recognition they deserve. Let's explore the lives and legacies of five incredible women whose work bettered society in profound ways.

Claudette Colvin

- **Background:** Born in 1939 in Montgomery, Alabama, Claudette Colvin was a teenage activist who sparked a moment of change months before Rosa Parks.
- **Contribution:** At just 15 years old, she refused to give up her seat on a segregated bus in Montgomery on March 2, 1955. She was arrested for her actions, which took place nine months before Rosa Parks' famous protest.
- **Impact:** Her bravery set the stage for the Montgomery Bus Boycott and the broader Civil Rights Movement. Though often overshadowed by Rosa Parks, Colvin's courage was pivotal in igniting resistance to segregation.



Alice Ball

- **Background:** Born in 1892 in Honolulu, Hawaii, Alice Ball was an African American chemist and the first woman and African American to earn a degree in chemistry from the University of Hawaii.
- **Contribution:** She developed the “Ball Method,” a groundbreaking treatment for leprosy. Her work with chaulmoogra oil led to a cure for the disease that was widely used for decades.
- **Impact:** Her discovery had a significant medical impact, saving countless lives before a more effective treatment was discovered. Unfortunately, she died young at 24, and her contributions were largely overshadowed until later recognition.



Mamie Till-Mobley

Famous Quote: *There is no time to waste. It is not that I dwell on the past. But the past shapes the way we are in the present and the way we will become what we are destined to become. It is only because I have finally understood the past, accepted it, embraced it, that I can fully live in the moment.*

- Background: Mamie Till-Mobley was a mother who became an activist after the brutal lynching of her 14-year-old son, Emmett Till, in 1955.
- Contribution: After Emmett was murdered, she courageously held an open-casket funeral to show the world the horrors of racial violence. Her decision to expose his mangled body to the public sparked nationwide outrage.



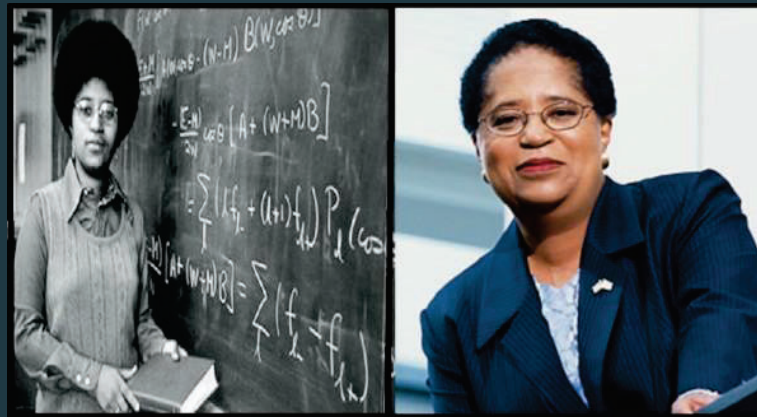
Dorothy Height

- **Background:** Born in 1912 in Richmond, Virginia, Dorothy Height was a leading figure in the civil rights and women's rights movements.
- **Contribution:** Height worked alongside prominent leaders like Martin Luther King Jr. and Eleanor Roosevelt. She was instrumental in the YWCA and led the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW) for over 40 years, advocating for racial and gender equality.
- **Impact:** She was a voice for African American women's rights, working to address issues such as poverty, housing, and employment discrimination. Her dedication earned her the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1994.



Dr. Shirley Ann Jackson

- **Background:** Dr. Shirley Ann Jackson, born in 1946, is a pioneering physicist and the first African American woman to earn a PhD from MIT in 1973.
- **Contribution:** Jackson's groundbreaking research led to developments in telecommunications, including the invention of the technology behind caller ID, call waiting, and the fax machine.
- **Impact:** Her innovations revolutionized the telecommunications industry, and her leadership continues to inspire the next generation of scientists, especially African American women in STEM fields.



Unsung Heroines - Their Legacy Lives On

These incredible women have shaped history in ways that often go unnoticed, but their contributions have had lasting impacts on society. As we celebrate Black History Month, let us honor their legacies and continue to support the trailblazing work of African American women today.

