

FIFTY YEARS OF CHANGE FOR BLACK AMERICA

For fifty years the Johnson Publishing Company, publishers of Ebony magazine, has served the Black community of this country. Their Golden Anniversary edition was published in November 1992. The following calendar of events in Black history was taken from that edition. These dates represent milestones in the struggle for civil rights by Black Americans:

50 EVENTS THAT CHANGED BLACK AMERICA

1. **March 7, 1942** -- First Black cadets graduate from flying school at Tuskegee, Alabama. In June 1943, the first squadron of Black aviators, the 99th Pursuit Squadron, flew its first combat mission, strafing enemy positions on the Italian island of Pantelleria.
2. **November 1, 1942** -- John H. Johnson, editor of Supreme Life Insurance Company newsletter, organizes Johnson Publishing Company and publishes first issue of Negro Digest.
3. November 3, 1942 -- William L. Dawson is elected to Congress from Chicago. On August 1, 1944, Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. of Harlem became the first Black congressman from the East.
4. **April 3, 1944** -- The Supreme Court rules in Smith v. Allwright the "White primaries" could not exclude Black voters.
5. **April 24, 1944** -- The United Negro College Fund is incorporated.
6. **April 25, 1945** -- The United Nations is founded at San Francisco meeting attended by Black American consultants, including W.E.B. DuBois, Mary McLeod Bethune, Ralph J. Bunche and Walter white.
7. **May 8, 1945** -- Germany surrenders on V-E Day, Japan surrendered on September 2, V-J Day, ending World War II. A total of 1,154,720 Blacks were inducted into the armed services. Many returned to America and attended college with the GI Bill of Rights benefits.
8. **October 23, 1945** -- Brooklyn Dodgers sign Jackie Robinson and send him to their Montreal farm team. On April 15, 1947, Robinson made his debut at Ebbetts Fields and became the first Black in the Major Leagues in modern times.
9. **November 1, 1945** -- Founding of Ebony Magazine marks the beginning of a new era in Black-oriented journalism.
10. **March 21, 1946** -- Kenny Washington signs with the Los Angeles Rams and becomes the first Black player in professional football in 13 years. Three other Blacks—Woody Strode of the Rams and Ben Willis and Marion Motley of the Cleveland Browns—signed in the same year.
11. **June 3, 1946** -- U.S. Supreme Court (Irene Morgan v. Commonwealth of Virginia) bans segregation in America.
12. **December 5, 1946** -- President Harry S. Truman creates the landmark Committee on Civil Rights. In October 1947, the committee issued a formal report, "To Secure These Rights," which condemned racism in America.
13. **July 26, 1948** -- In response to widespread Black protest and a threat of civil disobedience, President Truman issues two executive orders ending racial discrimination in federal employment and requiring equal treatment in the armed services.
14. **September 18, 1948** -- Ralph J. Bunche is confirmed as acting United Nations mediator in Palestine. On September 22, 1950, Bunche was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his successful mediation of the Israeli-Palestine conflict. He was the first Black to win a Nobel Prize.
15. **November 1, 1951** -- Publication of the first issue of Jet Magazine by Johnson Publishing Company marks the beginning of a new era of weekly news coverage in Black America.

16. **May 17, 1954** -- In a unanimous decision, the Supreme Court outlaws segregation in the public school system. Landmark Brown v. Board of Education decision sounded death knell for legal segregation in the United States.
17. **May 10, 1955** -- Chuck Berry records "Maybelline," which played major role in development of rock 'n' roll. Berry and other Black stars, notably Muddy Waters and Little Richard, were the major musical influences on the Beatles and others white groups.
18. **December 5, 1955** -- Historic Bus Boycott begins in Montgomery, Ala. Rosa Parks sparked the boycott when she refused (December 1) to give her bus seat to a white man. The Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. was elected president of the boycott organization.
19. **March 6, 1957** -- Independence celebration of Ghana marks the beginning of the end for colonial rule in Africa.
20. **August 29, 1957** -- U.S. Congress passes Civil Rights Act of 1957, the first federal civil rights legislation since 1875.
21. **September 25, 1957** -- Nine Little Rock, Ark., schoolchildren are escorted to Central High School by federal troops, ending efforts to thwart court-ordered integration.
22. **December 17, 1959** -- The founding of Motown Records helps change the understanding, marketing and promotion of Black popular music.
23. **February 1, 1960** -- Four North Carolina A&T students begin the Sit-in Movement at the lunch counter of a Greensboro, N.C. five-and dime store.
24. **May 4, 1961** -- Thirteen "Freedom Riders" begin bus trip through the South to test compliance with laws banning segregation in interstate transportation. Black and White riders were bombed and savagely beaten, but their movement ended segregation interstate transportation facilities.
25. **October 1, 1962** -- Escorted by 12,000 federal troops, James Meredith enters the University of Mississippi, ending the state's defiance of federal law.
26. **June 12, 1963** -- Medgar Evers, NAACP field secretary in Mississippi, is assassinated in front of his home.
27. **August 28, 1963** -- 250,000 people participate in the March on Washington, the biggest civil rights demonstration ever.
28. **September 15, 1963** -- Four Black girls are killed in the bombing of Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham.
29. **July 2, 1964** -- Civil Rights Bill, with public accommodations and fair employment sections, is signed by President Lyndon B. Johnson.
30. **August 20, 1964** -- President Johnson signs Economic Opportunity Act, initiating the "war on poverty."
31. **February 21, 1965** -- Malcolm X, charismatic Black nationalist leader, is assassinated at the Audubon Ballroom in Harlem. Three Blacks were later convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment.
32. **March 21, 1965** -- Thousands of marchers, led by Martin Luther King, Jr. and protected by federal troops, complete the first leg of the Selma-to-Montgomery march.
33. **August 6, 1965** -- President John signs the Voting Rights Bill which authorized the suspension of literacy tests. Federal examiners were sent to the South under provisions of the bill.
34. **August 11, 1965** -- An insurrection starts in the Watts section of Los Angeles and rages for six days. The Watts insurrection was the first in a wave of major disturbances that forced a national reappraisal of racism in America.
35. **January 18, 1966** -- Robert Weaver is sworn in as secretary of housing and urban development and becomes the first Black member of a presidential cabinet.

36. **October 2, 1967** -- Thurgood Marshall becomes the first Black member of the U.S. Supreme Court.
37. **November 7, 1967** -- Carl Stokes of Cleveland and Richard Hatcher of Gary become the first Blacks elected mayor of major U.S. cities.
38. **February 29, 1968** -- The National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders (the Kerner Commission) says in formal report that White racism is the root cause of the riots in American cities.
39. April 4, 1968 -- Martin Luther King, Jr. is assassinated by White sniper in Memphis. The assassination triggered a national crisis with rioting in more than 100 cities and calls for racial renewal and repentance. President Johnson declared a day of mourning.
40. **April 20, 1968** -- U.S. Congress passes Civil rights Bill banning racial discrimination in the housing market and making it a crime to interfere with civil rights workers.
41. **January 23-30, 1977** -- The ABC-TV dramatization of Alex Haley's "Roots" becomes the highest-rated drama in TV history and sparks a national "roots" craze.
42. **November 2, 1983** -- President Ronald Reagan changes his mind and signs a bill designating the third Monday in January of each year as a federal holiday in honor of Martin Luther King, Jr. Millions celebrated the first holiday on January 20, 1986.
43. **November 3, 1983** -- The Rev. Jesse L. Jackson, president of Operation PUSH, announces that he will run for U.S. President. His campaign generated unprecedented fervor. In his second bid for the presidency in 1988, he captured four states primaries.
44. **September 20, 1984** -- The Cosby Show premieres on NBC-TV and changes the image of African-Americans and the viewing habits of White Americans.
45. **September 21, 1989** -- Gen. Colin L. Powell is confirmed by the Senate as the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.
46. **November 7, 1989** -- L. Douglas Wilder of Virginia becomes the first Black elected governor.
47. **January 24, 1991** -- The spreading AIDS epidemic is called a major health threat to African-Americans by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control. Officials said the disease, which forced a major re-evaluation of sexual relationship, was the leading cause of death among African-American women 15 to 44 years old in New York State and New Jersey. African-American leaders cited the danger to addicts using infected needles and called for safe sex practices.
48. **March 3, 1991** -- Videotaped beating of motorist Rodney G. King by White Los Angeles police officers sparks an international uproar. Four White officers were indicated on March 14.
49. **June 27, 1991** -- Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall announces his retirement and decries the increasingly direction of the Court. On July 1, President Bush nominated Clarence Thomas, a conservative Black on the U.S. District of Columbia Court of Appeals, to fill the vacant seat. Thomas, who was opposed by major civil rights groups, was confirmed by a narrow 52 to 48 margin after Attorney Anita Hill, a Black woman who had worked for him at the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, accused him of sexual harassment. Judge Thomas denied the charge but the Judiciary Committee bearing set the stage for the Year of the Woman political races in 1992.
50. **April 29, 1992** -- Acquittal of four White police officers in the Rodney case sparks biggest U.S. riot since the urban explosions during the Civil War. Federal troops were called out to quell rebellion. The LA Corner's Office said 58 person died during the disturbances.