

Council of the City of York, PA
Session 2022
Resolution No.

Introduced by: Sandie Walker

Date: February 15, 2022

A RESOLUTION

Recognizing Black History Month in the City of York, PA, and the 2022 theme of Black Health and Wellness by highlighting achievements and barriers broken by black physicians in America

WHEREAS, Black History Month, also known as African American History Month, is an annual celebration of achievements by African Americans and a time for recognizing their central role in U.S. history; and

WHEREAS, this event grew out of "Negro History Week," the brainchild of noted historian Carter G. Woodson - and other prominent African Americans - who believed that young African Americans in the early 20th century were not being taught enough of their own heritage, and the achievements of their ancestors; and

WHEREAS, since 1976, every U.S. president has officially designated the month of February as Black History Month, and other countries around the world, including Canada and the United Kingdom, also devote a month to celebrating Black history; and

WHEREAS, Black History Month affords special opportunity to become more knowledgeable about Black heritage, and to honor the many Black leaders who have contributed to the progress of our nation; and

WHEREAS, the theme of Black History Month for 2022 focuses on the importance of Black Health and Wellness and acknowledges the legacy of not only Black scholars and medical practitioners in Western medicine, but also other ways of knowing throughout the African Diaspora; and

WHEREAS, in keeping with this year's theme, and in the spirit of honoring African American culture and accomplishments, we look to highlight the countless achievements and barriers broken by black physicians in America and we celebrate the following ten (10) history-making Black physicians:

Dr. James Durham - First African American physician

Born in 1762 in Philadelphia, PA, James Durham is considered the first African American to work as a doctor in America. Although Durham did not have a formal medical degree, he had established many prominent connections due to his reputation as a reputable physician. He was particularly noted for his treatment of diphtheria cases, a serious infection within the membranes of the throat and nose. Durham would later go on to run a successful practice in New Orleans, where he helped victims of yellow fever. Durham eventually returned to Philadelphia. Despite proving himself to be an exceptional doctor, his practice would soon be restricted by Pennsylvania regulations established in 1801. Those regulations barred anyone from practicing medicine without a formal medical degree. Nonetheless, James Durham would continue to practice medicine until his mysterious disappearance in 1802.

Dr. James McCune Smith - First black doctor to practice with a medical degree in the U.S.

Born in New York on April 18, 1813, to a mother who purchased her own freedom and a father who may have been a freed slave or a white merchant, Smith attended the African Free School in

New York City, where at the age of eleven he was chosen to give an address to the Marquis de Lafayette (1824). Upon graduation from the African Free School, James McCune Smith sought but was denied admission to several American colleges. He then managed to raise money to attend the University of Glasgow in Scotland, where, after completing bachelor's and masters' degrees, he completed a medical degree in 1837. Thus, he became, as far as can be determined, the first African American to be awarded a degree in medicine. McCune Smith died at age 52 on November 17, 1865, in Long Island, New York.

Dr. Rebecca Crumpler - First black woman to earn a medical degree in the U.S.

Crumpler was born in 1831 in Delaware. She was raised by an aunt in Pennsylvania who spent much of her time caring for sick neighbors, which may have influenced her career choice. By 1852 she had moved to Charlestown, Massachusetts, where she worked as a nurse for the next eight years. In 1860, she was admitted to the New England Female Medical College. When she graduated in 1864, Crumpler was the first African American woman in the United States to earn an M.D. degree, and the only African American woman to graduate from the New England Female Medical College. Dr. Crumpler practiced in Boston for a short while before moving to Richmond, Virginia, after the Civil War ended in 1865. There, she worked for the Freedmen's Bureau, tending to the health of newly freed slaves. Crumpler died at age 64 on March 9, 1895, in Hyde Park, Boston, Massachusetts.

Dr. Daniel Williams - Performed first open-heart surgery and owned first interracial, black-owned hospital

Daniel Hale Williams, III, was born on January 18, 1856, in Hollidaysburg, Pennsylvania. He worked as an apprentice with Dr. Henry Palmer, a highly accomplished surgeon, and then completed further training at Chicago Medical College. Later, he set up his own practice in Chicago's South Side and taught anatomy at his alma mater. Due to the discrimination of the day, African American citizens were still barred from being admitted to hospitals and Black doctors were refused staff positions. Firmly believing this needed to change, in May 1891, Williams opened Provident Hospital and Training School for Nurses, the nation's first hospital with a nursing and intern program that had a racially integrated staff. In 1893, Williams continued to make history when he operated on James Cornish, a man with a severe stab wound to his chest who was brought to Provident. Without the benefits of a blood transfusion or modern surgical procedures, Williams successfully sutured Cornish's pericardium, the membranous sac enclosing the heart, thus becoming one of the first people to perform open-heart surgery. Williams experienced a debilitating stroke in 1926 and died five years later, on August 4, 1931, in Idlewild, Michigan.

Dr. Alexa Irene Canady - First female African American neurosurgeon

Alexa Canady was born on November 7, 1950, in Lansing, Michigan. She earned a B.S. degree in zoology from the University of Michigan in 1971 and graduated cum laude from the medical school there in 1975 and went on to become the first female African American neurosurgeon in the U.S. In her work as a neurosurgeon, she saw young patients facing life-threatening illnesses, gunshot wounds, head trauma, hydrocephaly, and other brain injuries or diseases. Throughout her twenty-year career in pediatric neurosurgery, Dr. Canady has helped thousands of patients, most of them age ten or younger. She received the Children's Hospital of Michigan's Teacher of the Year award in 1984 and was inducted into the Michigan Woman's Hall of Fame in 1989. In 1993, she received the American Medical Women's Association President's Award and in 1994 the Distinguished Service Award from Wayne State University Medical School. Dr. Canady was chief of neurosurgery at the Children's Hospital of Michigan from 1987 until her retirement in June 2001.

Dr. Alexander Augusta - First black physician appointed director of a U.S. hospital

Augusta was born in 1825 to free people of color in Norfolk, Virginia. As a young man, he began to learn to read while working as a barber, although it was illegal for free blacks to do so in Virginia at that time. Augusta applied to study medicine at the University of Pennsylvania but was refused admission. Although he faced institutionalized racism throughout his career, the university cited inadequate preparation in its rejection of him. Augusta persisted in his education and arranged for private instruction from a doctor on the faculty. Concerned that he would not be allowed to enroll in medical school in the U.S., in 1850 he enrolled at Trinity College of the University of Toronto. He also conducted business as a druggist and chemist. Six years later he received a degree in medicine. When the Civil War broke out, Augusta wrote a letter to President Lincoln asking to be a doctor for the so-called "colored regiments." Lincoln approved and in doing so made Augusta the first African American commissioned medical officer in the Union Army. Later, Augusta would take charge of the Contraband Hospital in Washington, D.C., which treated free blacks and former slaves.

Dr. Patricia Bath - First black female physician to earn a medical invention patent

Bath was born November 4, 1942, in Harlem, New York. Her mother, encouraging her dreams and love of science, had bought Bath her first chemistry set. By the time she had reached high school, Bath was already a National Science Foundation scholar. Bath received her Bachelor of Arts in chemistry from Manhattan's Hunter College in 1964. She then relocated to Washington, D.C. to attend Howard University College of Medicine. Bath co-founded the Student National Medical Association and became its first woman president in 1965. A pioneer in the ophthalmology specialty, Bath is the inventor and patent holder of the laserphaco probe, a device and technique used in cataract surgery. Prior to her 1986 invention, Bath set another first. In 1974, she became the first female ophthalmologist to make the faculty of the University of California at Los Angeles School of Medicine Jules Stein Eye Institute. Later, in 1983, Bath would make history again by becoming the first woman to chair an ophthalmology residency program in the U.S. Bath died at the age of 76 on May 30, 2019, in San Francisco, CA.

Dr. Charles Drew - Blood transfusion pioneer

Drew was born June 3, 1904, in Washington, DC. Drew won an athletics scholarship to Amherst College in Massachusetts, and later graduated in 1926. After college, Drew spent two years as a professor of chemistry and biology at the historically black private Morgan College in Baltimore, MD, to earn money to pay for medical school. Drew attend medical school at McGill University in Montreal, Quebec, Canada. It was during this stage in his medical journey that Drew worked with John Beattie, who was conducting research regarding the potential correlations between transfusions of blood and shock therapy. Drew pioneered the use and preservation of blood plasma during World War II, saving the lives of thousands of U.S. troops. His discoveries translated to the civilian sector, giving rise to the modern blood banking system. Drew's work led to his appointment as director of the first American Red Cross Blood Bank in February 1941. The blood bank supplied blood to the U.S. Army and Navy, who ruled that the blood of African Americans would be accepted but would have to be stored separately from that of whites. Drew objected to the exclusion of African-Americans' blood from plasma-supply networks, and in 1942 he resigned in protest. Drew died at the age of 45 in Burlington, NC, on April 1, 1950.

Dr. Myra Adele Logan - First open-heart surgery performed by a woman

Logan was born in Tuskegee, Alabama, in 1908. Logan's primary school education was conducted at Tuskegee's Laboratory, the Children's house. After graduating with honors from Tuskegee High School, she attended a historically black college, Atlanta University, and graduated as valedictorian of her class in 1927. Logan was the first person to receive a four-year \$10,000 Walter Gray Crump Scholarship that was exclusively for aiding African American medical students to attend New York

Medical College where she graduated 1933. She was the second female African American intern at Harlem Hospital in New York and did her surgery residency there. She then moved to New York and attended Columbia University, where she earned her M.S. degree in psychology. Logan became the first woman to perform open-heart surgery in 1943. In another first, she was the first African American woman to become a fellow of the American College of Medical Surgeons. Logan's achievements are not confined to surgery; she developed new antibiotics, worked on breast cancer detection and treatment, and was a part of efforts to refine the X-ray process to see tissue density differences. On a sidenote, she somehow found time to become a classically trained pianist. Logan died at age 69 on January 13, 1977, in New York City.

Dr. Robert Boyd - Co-founder and president of first professional organization for black doctors

Boyd was born in Giles County, TN on July 8, 1858, as the son of two slave parents. In 1872 Boyd worked half of the day for a real estate agent and was paid in meal. The other half of the day was dedicated to his schooling. In 1876 while attending college, Boyd began involving himself in teaching activities, and then became principal of the "Public School for Negroes" in Pulaski. After his experiences in teaching, in 1880 Boyd entered the medical department of Central Tennessee College and graduated there with honors in 1882. In the summer of 1890, Boyd attended The University of Chicago as a scholar of the Postgraduate School of Medicine and in 1891 he received the Master of Arts degree from Central Tennessee College. Then in 1892 he returned to the University of Chicago to specialize in diseases of women and children. In 1895, Boyd co-founded the National Medical Association (NMA), which represents U.S. African American doctors and medical professionals. Jim Crow laws were a major obstacle for black physicians at the time. Even the American Medical Association barred black doctors from becoming members. Boyd, who served as the first NMA president, co-founded the NMA to make sure that black physicians had a voice in shaping medical policy and developing clinical expertise. Boyd died a sudden death on July 20, 1912, at the age of 54, after an "attack of acute indigestion." At the time of his death, he was considered the leading African American physician in the United States, and supposedly the wealthiest.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Council of the City of York, Pennsylvania, that as we celebrate Black History Month, City Council wishes to applaud and commemorate the tremendous contributions of these amazing individuals; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we encourage the celebration of Black History Month to provide a continuing opportunity for all people to learn from the past and understand the experiences that have helped to shape our country.

PASSED FINALLY:

BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

YEAS: _____, _____, _____, _____, _____

NAYS: _____, _____, _____, _____, _____

Sandie Walker, President of Council

ATTEST:

Dianna L. Thompson, City Clerk