

Black History Daily Doses

FEBRUARY 24th

The First Black Woman Psychologist



Ruth Winifred Howard



Inez Beverly Prosser

Ruth Winifred Howard (1900-1997) was the youngest of eight children born in Washington D.C. She earned a degree in Social Work from Simmons College in Boston and later graduated in 1934 from the University of Minnesota with a PhD in Psychology. Her life-long goal was to increase cultural competency within the field. She is regarded as the first black female Psychologist. For the duration of her career, she worked at a shared private practice with her husband and volunteered for the Young Women's Christian Association. She organized the National Association of College Women and acted as a consultant for multiple centers.

Inez Beverly Prosser (1895-1934) was born in Texas and the youngest of two children. Her family highly regarded education and frequently moved cities throughout her childhood so she and her brother could attend school. This was because it was difficult for black individuals to receive education at the time and some cities did not have black schools. Prosser worked in education as an assistant principal and teacher before obtaining Bachelor's Degrees in English and Psychology in 1926. She completed a Master's Degree in Educational Psychology in 1927 and ultimately a PhD in Psychology from Tillotson College in 1933. She is the first Black woman to earn a PhD in Psychology; however, she was unable to pursue a career as a psychologist due to her untimely death in a car accident.

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FEBRUARY 25th



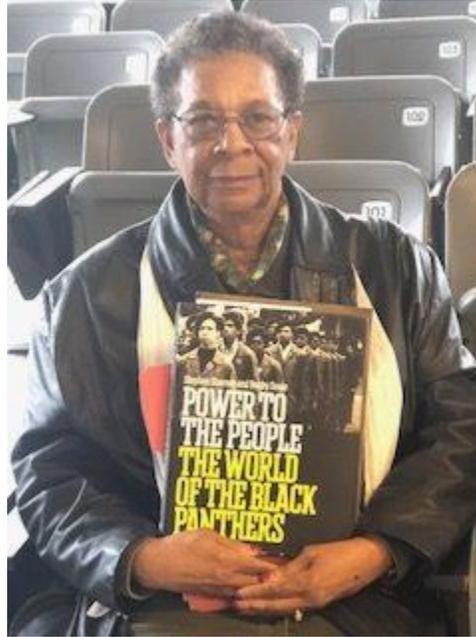
Miss Major Griffin Gracy: Black Trans activist & executive Director of House of GG

Miss Major was born in the South Side of Chicago in 1940 and came out as a transgender woman in the late 1950s. She took part in the infamous Stonewall Riots (alongside Marsha Johnson and Sylvia Rivera). She has also been incarcerated multiple times because of her involvement with the LGBT+ community and social justice. Her global legacy of activism is rooted in her own experiences, and she continues her work to uplift transgender women of color, particularly those who have survived incarceration and police brutality. She has been involved in the trans activism space, with particular focus on rights for Black women, for over 50 years.

Miss Major's commitment and intersectional approach to justice brought her to care directly for people with HIV/AIDS in New York in the early 1980s, and later to drive San Francisco's first mobile needle exchange. She served as the original Executive Director for the Transgender Gender Variant Intersex Project, which aims to assist transgender persons who are disproportionately incarcerated in the US. She now runs House of GG in Little Rock, Arkansas, a retreat center for trans and gender nonconforming leaders from the Southern US. She also recently produced a docu-series entitled *Trans in Trumpland* (which is available on Amazon Prime).

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FEBRUARY 26th



Ester Holzendorf: Founder of Consolidated Social Work Services

Ester Holzendorf was born in 1938 and raised in McAlester, Oklahoma. She graduated from the all-black L'Ouverture High School. She then went on to graduate from the Vocational School of Practical Nursing (1958), obtain a B.A. in Social Work at Penn Valley and Park University (1976), and complete a B.A. in Christian Education at Western Baptist Bible College (2001). Holzendorf had a long career as a social worker with the State of Missouri and the Oklahoma Department of Corrections, where she worked as a Civil Rights Administrator in the mid-90s. Holzendorf is an ordained minister and currently serves as Evangelist at Metropolitan Spiritual Church of Christ. Most notably, Holzendorf is the Founder and Executive President of Consolidated Social Work Services (2003-present), whose mission is to:

- Assist individual and communities to obtain social services
- Provide direct and referral services
- Network and collaborate with other individuals, groups, and organization
- Enhance safe communities

Holzendorf practices throughout Kansas City, and her primary office is located at the Chestnut Avenue Family Resource Center (38th and Chestnut). The Center's goal is to apply social work principles to address individual, family, and community needs. This involves assessing lack of resources and needs, acting as advocates for people, connecting people to the goods or services they require, and following up on outcomes to assure goals are met.

Special Thanks to Jessica Bergner for this entry!

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FEBRUARY 27th



Raoul Peck

Raoul Peck was born in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. However, 8-year-old Peck and his family fled the Duvalier dictatorship and joined his father in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, (DRC) where they remained for the next 24 years. Peck was educated in the DRC, U.S, and France, before studying industrial engineering and economics at Humboldt University in Berlin. Peck later worked as a journalist and photographer (1980-1985) before earning a film degree in 1988 from the German Film and Television Academy Berlin (DFFB) in West Berlin. Peck served as a Minister of Culture in the Haitian government from 1996-1997.

Peck has since had a successful career as a filmmaker, best known for creating both documentary and feature films that recount and challenge societal and historical events, particularly in the pursuit of racial justice for Black individuals and communities. His 2016 film, *I Am Not Your Negro*, which depicted James Baldwin's life and the issues of race relations in the United States, was nominated for an Oscar in January 2017 and won a César Award in France. Most recently, Peck directed a four-part docu-series, *Exterminate all the Brutes* (April 2021), highlighting the role that white supremacy and European colonialism has played in genocide and the "exterminations" of people around the world. Beyond filmmaking, Peck founded Velvet Film, a film production company in Paris, New York, and Port-au-Prince as well as El Dorado Forum, a center in Port-au-Prince that supports the creativity and enrichment of artists.

Peck sits down to discuss the creative intentions behind documentary series *Exterminate all the Brutes*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dQ4r3Qdrqmo>

Black History Daily Doses

FEBRUARY 28th



"Do not get lost in a sea of despair. Be hopeful, be optimistic. Our struggle is not the struggle of a day, a week, a month, or a year, it is the struggle of a lifetime. Never, ever be afraid to make some noise and get in good trouble, necessary trouble."
_Rep. John Lewis

John Lewis

On the last day of February, we would like to end the Black History Month Daily Doses with John Robert Lewis, American politician and civil rights activist. Lewis was born near Troy, Alabama on February 21, 1940. Lewis had very little interaction with White people as a child, growing up in a majority Black County in rural Alabama. He remembered experiencing racism and segregation as he grew older and visited more public spaces and taking trips into Troy with his family. At the age of 15-years-old, Lewis heard Martin Luther King, Jr. on the radio for the first time, leading to him closely following King's Montgomery bus boycott later that year. At the age of 17, Lewis met Rosa Parks and met King for the first time at age 18. When Lewis was denied admission to Troy University in AL, he considered suing the university for discrimination but was warned by King that doing so might bring harm to his family after writing to him about his situation. He was then invited to visit with King, when he decided to start his education at a small historically Black college in TN with his parents' support.

Lewis graduated from the American Baptist Theological Seminary in Nashville, TN and was ordained as Baptist minister before earning a bachelor's degree in religion and philosophy from Fisk University, also a historically Black college. As a student, Lewis became an activist in the civil rights movement. He organized sit-ins at segregated lunch counters in Nashville and took part in many other civil rights activities as part of the Nashville Student Movement. In 1961, Lewis became one of the 13 original Freedom Riders, a group of seven Black and six White individuals, who rode on interstate buses from Washington, D.C to New Orleans to challenge the policies of Southern states along the route that had imposed segregated seating on the buses, violating federal policy for interstate transportation. From 1963 to 1966, Lewis served as the chairman of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). At this time, Lewis has already been arrested 24 times for non-violent movements for racial

equality. In his role as chairman, he was one of the “Big Six” leaders who organized the March on Washington. Lewis was first elected to Congress in 1986 and was one of the leaders of the Democratic Party, serving from 1991 as a chief deputy whip and from 2003 as a senior chief deputy whip. He ultimately served 17 terms in the U.S House of Representatives for Georgia’s 5th congressional district from 1987 until his death in 2020.

