

Anthony D. Allen



Anthony D. Allen was born in 1772 in Schenectady, New York, where he learned medical skills tending to ill and injured sailors on the Eastern Coast. At the age of 24, Anthony fled from slavery, and, as a young adult, he traveled to China, the West Indies, and finally to Hawai'i, where he settled and purchased his freedom.

Anthony, known as "Alani" by the Native Hawaiians and locals, served as a steward to King Kamehameha the Great and acquired six acres of land in the now famous Waikiki area of Oahu. He would later become a successful businessperson and contributed to numerous unacknowledged accomplishments in the Hawaiian Islands. For example, Anthony founded the first bowling alley, built the first carriage road, and ran the first hospital focused on providing medical care to American sailors in Honolulu, Hawaii.

Willi Ninja



(HE/HIM)

Often referred to as the “Grandfather of Vogue,” Willi Ninja is credited with revolutionizing and popularizing the dance form called Vogue through the Harlem Drag Ball scene in the 1980s. Unlike its predecessors, the Harlem drag ball scene allowed LGBTQ+ Black, Latino, and multiracial youth a space to express gender-nonconforming presentations. As the “mother” of the House of Ninja, Willi created an environment that provided strong social networks and support to groups of runaway, disowned, and homeless LGBTQ+ youth of color.

Following his appearance in *Paris is Burning*, a documentary that chronicles ball culture in New York, Willi gained international fame as a choreographer, musician, runway model, and modeling coach. He would later go on to model in runway shows for Chanel and Jean Paul Gaultier and train supermodels like Naomi Campbell and Iman.

Haben Girma



(She/Her)

American lawyer and disability advocate – Haben Girma – became the first deaf and blind graduate of Harvard Law School in 2013. Growing up in California’s Bay Area, where disability rights and resources were more established than in other areas of the United States, Haben still encountered many early educational challenges, which caused her to do poorly in the classroom. These experiences motivated Haben to become a lawyer and advocate for disabled youth.

One year after receiving her law degree, Haben represented the National Federation of the Blind in suing an online publishing and book subscription service named Scribd. Even after passing the Americans with Disabilities Act, which protects against discrimination against individuals with disabilities, the company argued that due to its online operation, it was precluded from following ADA laws and, therefore, did not have to provide services to the deaf and blind. Ultimately, the U.S. district court ruled against the company’s claim, establishing that all online businesses must offer accessible services to all. In her book, *Haben: The Deafblind Woman Who Conquered Harvard Law*, Haben continues to challenge the notion that disabled people are inferior relative to more-abled individuals.

Garrett A. Morgan



(He/Him)

Born in 1877, Garrett Morgan was a Black and Native American inventor and engineer. Having only completed elementary school, he is best known for several life-saving inventions and subsequent patents, including a breathing device that filtered out smoke, gases, and other pollutants. Garrett's invention would later become the precursor of the gas mask that was developed during World War I, which protected hundreds of thousands of soldiers from chemical weapons such as "mustard gas."

Known as the first Black man to own a car in Cleveland, Ohio, Garrett later invented and patented the automatic three-way traffic signal system, which he later sold to General Electric. In his lifetime, he also supported the advancement of other Black Americans as a member of The National Association of the Advancement of Colored People and The Cleveland Association of Colored Men.