

Aja Barber (she/her/they) –born 1982



Aja (pronounced Ah-ja) Barber is a writer, stylist and consultant focusing on the intersections of sustainability, fashion, and the textile industry. Her work explores the traditions of privilege, wealth inequality, racism, feminism, colonialism, and how these systems of power affect our buying habits. In addition to writing for various publications (e.g., Eco-Age, The Guardian, CNN, Selfridges), she wrote her debut book in 2021, *Consumed: The Need for Collective Change: Colonialism, Climate Change, and Consumerism*. This book examines the injustices within the history of consumer industries, including ties to slavery, racism, and wealth inequality while also helping readers unlearn their own patterns of consumerism. In addition to writing, Aja also provides consultancy and speaking services related to the intersections of sustainability, fatphobia, colonialism, and the fashion industry. She highlights inequality at all system levels and points out opportunities for change. Aja is originally from Reston, VA and currently lives in London with her husband, Stephen, and their two cats. For daily writings follow Aja on social media or on Patreon.

Mabel Fairbanks (November 14, 1915-September 29, 2001)



Mabel was an American figure skater and well-known coach who often told her skaters “suffer for your art.” She was of African American and Seminole descent and a pioneer in the skating world helping create a path for skaters of color. Her efforts were recognized in 1997 when she was inducted into the US Figure Skating Hall of Fame as the first person of African American and Native American descent. She was also inducted into the International Women’s Sports Hall of Fame (2001 shortly after passing away). While she faced overwhelming barriers that prevented her from competing, she pushed through the barriers by teaching herself to skate. Mabel’s practice and persistence paid off, and she was asked to be in ice shows and performed on the television show Frosty Frolics. She toured internationally with Ice Capades in Mexico and Ice Follies. However, she continued to face barriers with much of the world continued to say no to having her perform because of the color of her skin. She decided the best way to make a change was to start coaching and advocated for her students. She helped develop many skaters who went on to become national, world, and Olympic champions including Kristi Yamaguchi, Tiffany Chin, Debi Thomas ([see Daily doses from 2021](#)), Tai Babilonia, and Randy Garder. Her legacy lives on through the Mabel Fairbanks Skating Yours Fund which provides financial support for Black, Indigenous and People of Color figure skaters in US Figure Skating with the goal to help them achieve their goals.

Lewis Howard Latimer



Lewis Howard Latimer was an American inventor, patent expert, and draftsman. Born to escaped slaves on Sep 4, 1848, Lewis experienced many hardships during his early years, and had no access to formal education. He joined the Navy at age 16 and taught himself mechanical drawing. After his discharge, he was hired by a patent law firm where his skill for drafting patent sketches was noticed by his employer. Lewis was later promoted to head draftsman. In 1876, Lewis was hired by Alexander Graham Bell and helped with the invention of and patent for the telephone. In 1879, Lewis was hired as the assistant manager and draftsman at the U.S. Electric Lighting Company, which was owned by a rival of Thomas Edison. During his tenure, Lewis invented and patented a modification to the light bulb with carbon filaments. In 1884, Lewis was hired by Thomas Edison. Although Edison is famously credited as inventing the light bulb, his work was greatly influenced and improved by Lewis' contributions and knowledge. In 1918, Lewis was the first person of color to join the Edison Pioneers, which was a group of inventors who worked closely with Edison. Altogether, Lewis owns eight U.S. patents. He was also known for being a vocal advocate for civil rights and education. He taught English and mechanical drawing classes to immigrants in New York. He died in 1928 at the age of 80.

Jon Batiste (b. 1986-)



[*Enjoy some of his music while you read.*](#)

Jon Batiste is an exceptionally talented American singer, songwriter, multi-instrumentalist, and composer who was born into a highly musical family including Lionel Batiste (Treme Brass Band), Milton Batiste (Olympia Brass Band), and Russell Batiste Jr.

At age 8, Batiste began playing percussion and drums in his family band. He started classical piano lessons at age 11; and released his debut album *Times in New Orleans* at age 17. He earned a bachelor's and master's degree in jazz studies from the Julliard School in New York City.

Batiste made his international debut in Amsterdam at age 20. During his time in the Netherlands, he led music clinics, classes and workshops in inner-city schools and underprivileged neighborhoods. He has since released an array of critically-acclaimed musical projects including his album *Social Music* (2013). From 2015-2022, Batiste also appeared nightly as bandleader and musical director on *The Late Show* with Stephen Colbert.

*“Jazz has a tradition that has enriched the culture in America.
The intellectualism of it does nothing but make you think on a higher level
and make you a better person if you engage in the music and
let it do what it does when it is played at its highest level.”*

— **Jon Batiste**

Batiste co-composed the score of the 2020 Pixar animated film *Soul* (co-composers: Trent Reznor and Atticus Ross), which would go on to win an Academy Award, a Golden Globe Award, a Grammy Award, and a BAFTA Film Award. In addition, Batiste is a five-time Grammy Awards winner, including 2021 Album of the Year for *We Are*. He currently serves as the music director of *The Atlantic* and the Creative Director of the National Jazz Museum in Harlem.

In 2023, Batiste featured in the documentary film *American Symphony* (streaming on Netflix) which follows Batiste as he composes his first symphony while his wife Suleika Jaouad simultaneously experiences a recurrence of leukemia. The film is well-described as “a meditation on art, love and the creative process.”

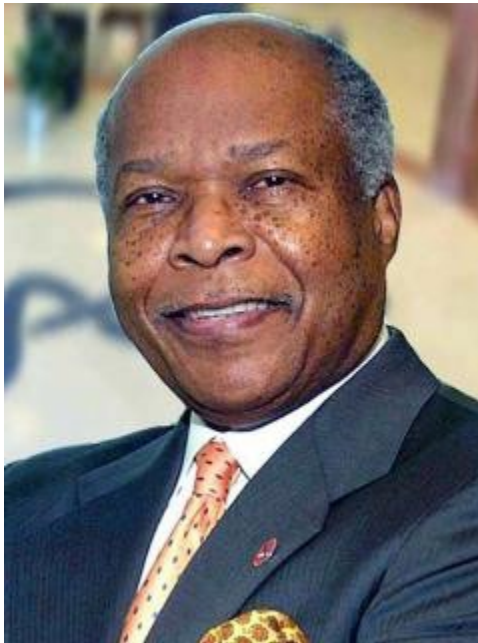
Mamie Elizabeth Till-Mobley



Portrait of Emmett Till and Mamie Till-Mobley, ca. 1954.
NAACP Records, Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress

Mamie Till-Mobley was born in Mississippi in 1921. As a child, she and her family relocated to Illinois as part of the great migration from the South due to long-standing racist violence and widespread economic, social, and political disparities faced in the South. As an adult, she had one child, Emmett Louis Till. In the summer of 1955, Ms. Till made the decision that would forever change the course of her life when she allowed her son, Emmett, to return to Mississippi to visit her aunt and uncle despite initial reservations and long discussions about behavioral expectations of African Americans in the south at the time. She let her 14 year old travel to spend time with family. In late August/early September, she was notified that Emmett had gone missing and then received the report that his body had been recovered. Emmett's story has appropriately received the attention of the nation and the world in part because of Mamie's actions following his death. When she heard the plan was to bury him quickly in Mississippi, she refused and had his body transferred back to Chicago where the funeral was held. She insisted on an open-casket funeral and allowed photos of Emmett's body to be published in *Jet*, an African American weekly magazine. This put the topic of racial inequality and racial violence in front of the nation in a way that had not been done prior. Despite threats to her own safety, she continued to use her voice to seek justice on behalf of her son and others for the rest of her life.

Dr. Louis Wade Sullivan



Dr. Louis Wade Sullivan is an Internal medicine and hematology physician. His medical career is notable for being an instructor of medicine at Harvard Medical School in the 1960s as well as the co-director of hematology at Boston University Medical Center and founding the Boston University Hematology Service at Boston City Hospital until 1975. At that time, he became the founding dean of the School of Medicine at Morehouse College. Morehouse School of Medicine in Atlanta, GA is the only Black medical school founded in the United States during the 20th century. Dr. Sullivan's efforts to improve the health of Americans as well as efforts in Diversity lead to the establishment of the Sullivan Commission on Diversity in the Healthcare Workforce in 2003. The Commission works to address the scarcity of minorities in the health professions.

Dr. Yvonne Thornton



YVONNE S. THORNTON, M.D.

Dr. Yvonne Thornton is the first Black woman in the US to become board-certified in maternal-fetal medicine. She is also the first American woman to be accepted into the OB/GYN residency program at the Roosevelt Hospital in New York City. She is also the subject of *The Ditchdigger's Daughter* about her father, who was a ditchdigger and WW II veteran, who dreamed of his 6 African-American daughters becoming doctors. She is one of the pioneers in chorionic villus sampling to help with prenatal diagnosis of chromosomal or genetic disorders in the fetus. Throughout her career, Dr. Thornton has received numerous awards for her commitment to maternal-fetal medicine and Women's Health Advocate.