

Jack Johnson



Jack Johnson was born in Galveston, Texas in 1878 parents who were formerly enslaved. The area of Galveston Johnson grew up in was racially diverse which he admittedly stated shielded him initially from experiencing significant racism. In the late 1800s, Jack began boxing, utilizing his natural talents at 220 pounds and over 6 feet tall with quick reflexes making him ideal for the sport. Johnson was known for being one of the best defensive fighters of all time. He quickly gained notoriety in the world of boxing, winning the world colored heavyweight title in 1903, as white opponents consistently dismissed him. On December 26, 1908, Johnson defeated the reigning champ Tommy Burns in Sydney, Australia, becoming the first Black man to hold the Heavyweight Championship of the world.

In 1910, in response to public pressure, retired boxer Jim Jeffries agreed to fight Johnson, making it the “fight of the century” and a fight inflamed with racial tensions. A White boxer defeating a Black opponent reinforced ideas about white supremacy, but if the Black man won, it would challenge those ideas. For Johnson to have the championship crown amid imperialism, Jim Crow, and white supremacy, boxing fans found it unacceptable. In the 15th round, cinematographers captured the most intense moment of the match. Johnson knocked Jeffries to the ground several times. In the end, Jeffries’ group jumped into the ring and ended the match, making Johnson the victor.

Blk+Brwn Bookstore

104 1/2 W 39th St, Kansas City, MO 64111 <https://blkbrwn.com/> Instagram: BLK + BRWN., LLC. (@blkbrwnkc)



Cori Smith is the owner of BLK & BRWN. and through her shop, she has created a space for marginalized community members to feel seen and heard. In addition to book sales, the bookstore also hosts a variety of programming including Bookclubs, Movie Nights, Pages+Poses (a yoga class according to the website), Root+Wings (children’s storytime), Sonkofa Society (a monthly literary analysis), and Storyteller’s Workshop.

It can’t be summarized better than their own “about us” statement:

“BLK + BRWN. is an independently operated bookstore based in Kansas City, Missouri, founded by Cori Smith, The Local Book Pusher (TLBP). Our journey began with a profound love for reading, ignited during TLBP’s childhood visits to the West Wyandotte Public Library. This passion, particularly for literature celebrating Black history and culture, has been the driving force behind our mission.

We provide a safe space for our community while fostering a deep appreciation for Black and Brown literature. Recognizing the scarcity of platforms where our voices could thrive and our experiences could be honored, we transformed this vision into reality. BLK + BRWN. serves as a haven where our stories are amplified, and our narratives are unapologetically celebrated.

In 2021, we proudly opened our brick + mortar storefront in Midtown Kansas City, Missouri, on Juneteenth (June 19th). Our journey has been marked by challenges that have only reinforced our commitment. Despite adversity, we persist in our mission to dismantle structures that perpetuate the marginalization of non-white lives. BLK + BRWN. stands as a testament to the resilience of our community and the enduring power of storytelling to drive change. “

They have upcoming author talk:

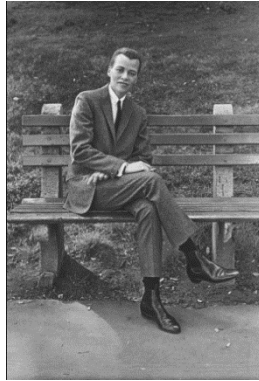
Trauma, Tresses, and Truth with Lyzette Wanzer on 2/7/2024 from 7-8 pm at the shop.

Herman George Canady, PhD



Dr. Herman George Canady (1901-1970) was a pioneer in the field psychology. Curious about the relationship between the examiner and test taker, he studied whether race of the examiner had an influence on IQ test taker's scores. During his graduate work at Northwestern University, he produced the article "The Effect of rapport on the I.Q.: A new approach to the problem of racial psychology." This work was the first to take on this issue and led to meaningful change and understanding of how bias factors into aspects of psychological work, including I.Q. testing. Beyond this, Dr. Canady was an advocate and leader towards the organization of black psychologists. At the time, much of our understanding of psychological theory was through the perspective of white individuals. His efforts to organize black psychologists led to the formation organizations and professional groups, addressing the need for black voices to be a greater part of psychology. His legacy persists through a number of seminal publications, various fellowships named after him, and in areas of research such as stereotype threat.

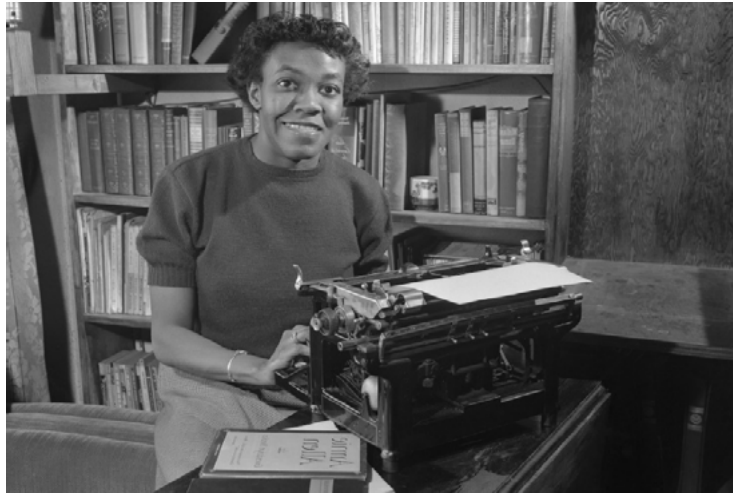
Stormé DeLarverie (she/her, he/him, and they/them)
December 24, 1920? – May 24, 2014



Stormé DeLarverie was born to a Black mother who worked as a servant in the house of her father, a white man, in New Orleans. Given the laws banning interracial marriage at the time, she did not have a birth certificate and her birthday is technically unknown. While growing up, DeLarverie faced significant violence due to being biracial and moved to Chicago after high school and became a singer. Her jobs include riding horses in a circus, performing as a “drag king” entertainer, and working as a bouncer for mobsters and lesbian bars. For 15 years before the Stonewall Rebellion, DeLarverie was the only “male impersonator” (as it was called then) in the Jewel Box Revue, the first racially integrated drag show in North America. The Jewel Box Revue featured plays on gender that could only happen theatrically, since the laws of the time still criminalized “cross-dressing.” While the history of what specifically happened at the Stonewall Riots on June 28, 1969 can be unclear, Stormé was there that night, and is rumored to have thrown the first punch that started the riots. Around the same time, Stormé’s partner of 25 years, Diana, died. Stormé was known to be a fierce protector of the LGBTQ+ community. In 1990, she became a security guard at the Henrietta Hudson, a lesbian bar in Manhattan. She worked there until 2005, when she was 85. According to the bar’s owner and Deliverie’s longtime friend, “she literally walked the streets of downtown Manhattan like a gay superhero.” She also served on the Stonewall Veterans’ Association, became a fixture at New York’s gay pride parade, and continued to give charity concerts until her death in 2014.

Note: Most historical articles refer to Stormé with she/her pronouns, and Stormé reportedly told people to use whatever pronouns “makes you most comfortable” and referred to herself as a woman in various interviews. When asked about labels, close friend reported that Stormé “didn’t identify as anything but close to live her life as a Black man.” Those close to Stormé varied in the pronouns they used to refer to Stormé, including she/her, he/him, and they/them.

Gwendolyn Brooks (1917-2000)



Gwendolyn Brooks is one of the most celebrated American poets of the 20th century. Born in Topeka, Kansas and raised in Chicago, Illinois, Brooks' father worked as a janitor, though he dreamed of becoming a doctor; and her mother was both a schoolteacher and a classically trained pianist.

"Poetry is life distilled."

— Gwendolyn Brooks

Brooks' passion for reading and writing was sparked at an early age and nurtured by her parents. At age 13, she published her first poem, "Eventide," in *American Childhood*; and by age 17, she was publishing poems frequently in the *Chicago Defender*. She further developed her craft in poetry workshops and published her first collection of poems, *A Street in Bronzeville*, in 1945.

In 1950, she became the first Black poet to win the Pulitzer Prize for her work, *Annie Allen*, which tells a three-part story of a young African American woman emerging into adulthood during World War I. In a review of *Annie Allen*, the writer Langston Hughes remarked, "the people and poems in Gwendolyn Brooks' book are alive, reaching, and very much of today." In the 1960s around age 50, her writing began to feature more overtly political themes that demonstrated a deepening concern with social problems. Brooks' activism led her to leave major the publishing house of Harper & Row for up and coming Black-owned companies (e.g., Dudley Randall's Broadside Press; Detroit-area press; Chicago-based Third World Press.)

"What, what am I to do with all of this life?"

— Gwendolyn Brooks, [Maud Martha](#)

In recognition of her brilliance, Brooks became the first Black woman to hold the role of Consultant in Poetry to the Library of Congress, a position now referred to as the United States Poet Laureate. Brooks was honored in 1970 by the founding of Western Illinois University's Gwendolyn Brooks Cultural Center; and in her hometown of Chicago, "Brooks Day" is celebrated annually.

Mamie Phipps Clark, PhD



Dr. Mamie Phipps Clark (1917-1983) is a psychologist most well known in the field for conducting the “doll experiments,” which explored how segregation impacted African American children’s attitudes towards race and self-identification. She was inspired by their work in child development to dive deeper into the psychological impact of school segregation. Her works, which demonstrated there being a negative impact from segregation, contributed to her testifying as an expert witness in the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* case, finding racial segregation in schools as unconstitutional. Beyond her groundbreaking and socially influencing research, Dr. Phipps Clark is notable for other academic and civil rights accomplishments. She and her husband, Kenneth, were the first African-Americans to get their doctoral degrees in psychology from Columbia. They were community activists, starting The Northside Center for Child Development and Harlem Youth Opportunities Unlimited project (HARYOU), which directly care for children and youth in Harlem.

Dr. Joy Harden Bradford (she/her/hers) –born 1979



Dr. Joy Harden Bradford is a licensed psychologist, speaker, author, media personality, and podcast host. She is the founder of the mental health platform Therapy for Black Girls, which includes a podcast of the same name that she has been hosting since 2020. She received her Bachelor's degree in Psychology from Xavier University of Louisiana, her Master's degree in Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling from Arkansas State, and her PhD in Counseling Psychology from the University of Georgia. Dr. Harden Bradford's work specializes in mental health issues relevant to Black women, often using pop culture to increase accessibility and decrease stigma surrounding mental health issues. Therapy for Black Girls also includes an online community for Black women as well as a therapist finder tool to increase access to culturally responsive mental health providers. Dr. Joy Harden Bradford lives in Atlanta, GA with her husband and two sons.