

NOTABLE WOMEN HBCU GRADUATES



MAE JEMISON

NASA astronaut. In 1992, the Stanford graduate became the first Black woman in space on the Space Shuttle Endeavor. Since her time at NASA, she has taught at Dartmouth College and Cornell University, received several honorary doctorate degrees, and has been an active advocate for empowering the next generation of young women to pursue STEM careers.



DR. DOROTHY LAVINIA BROWN

Dorothy Lavinia Brown attended Bennett College, an HBCU in Greensboro, NC, and served as a doctor in World War II. In 1948-1949, she became the first Black female surgeon in the racially segregated South. She went on to become the first Black female elected to the Tennessee General Assembly, and later taught surgery at Meharry Medical College. Though she passed away in 2004, her legacy lives on.



ALICE BALL

Alice Ball was an African-American chemist who discovered and developed the first successful treatment for leprosy (also known as Hansen's disease). Sadly, Ball was only 24 years old when she died, but she made a profound impact on countless lives. Because of her work which became known as the "Ball Method," thousands of those affected were treated and allowed to return to their families after years of isolation.

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DR. PATRICIA BATH

Patricia Bath was a physician, inventor, and the first Black doctor to obtain a medical patent — in 1988 for the Laserphaco Probe to treat patients with cataracts. A Howard University graduate, Bath was also the first African-American to complete an ophthalmology residency.



REAR ADMIRAL LILLIAN E FISHBURNE

Lillian E. Fishburne, a graduate of Lincoln University and the first Black woman promoted to rear admiral in the U.S. Navy. And Tuskegee University alum Marilyn Mosby, the youngest chief prosecutor of any major U.S. city.



ATTORNEY MARILYN MOSBY

Tuskegee University alum Marilyn Mosby, the youngest chief prosecutor of any major U.S. city.

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JANICE BRYANT HOWROYD

Entrepreneur Janice Bryant Howroyd, the first Black woman to run a billion-dollar business, who earned her undergrad degree at North Carolina A&T State University, the largest HBCU.



STACEY ABRAMS

Abrams, 48, was the student body president at Spelman before she graduated in 1995 and attended Yale Law School. She served in the Georgia House of Representatives from 2006-2017, during which she became the first Black Georgian to lead in the House of Representatives.



DR. BERNICE KING

King is a graduate of Spelman College and holds divinity and law degrees from Emory University.

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THE HONORABLE KAMALA HARRIS, VICE PRESIDENT, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Somehow, her classmates and sisters of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc. at Howard University could see the future. It wasn't so much about prophesy, as it was about progeny.

Former U.S. Sen. Kamala

Devi Harris, Class of '86, steps into history on Wednesday as the first woman and woman of color elected vice president of the United States.

"My mother was very intentional about raising my sister, Maya, and me as strong, Black women," Harris noted on her [Instagram account](#). Her choice to go to Howard reflects those lessons. In choosing Howard, Harris was immersing herself in Black culture and Black life.

So, why Howard? "When it came to college, I wanted to get off on the right foot," she wrote in her book *The Truths We Hold: An American Journey*. "And what better place to do that, I thought, than at Thurgood Marshall's alma mater?"

Harris, 56, has said Howard is where she gained confidence and ran her first race for elected office, and it's also where she announced her run for president. As a student, she was involved in activism, student government and pledged AKA in the spring of 1986. The name given to her lineup of initiates was 38 Jewels of Iridescent Splendor. Harris is "No. 15 on our line of 38 and our line is very proud of her. We always knew she was destined for greatness," said attorney Jill Louis, one of those 38 women who are her "line sisters."