

The Path to Student Awareness

New York University

Mission Statement

Social justice is to continuously fight for a progressive society. Certainly, we will critique our individual actions as well as the worlds. Discussions, forums, and disagreements are welcome and healthy, but we also encourage members to listen and observe. Ultimately, this will lead us to move with social awareness and empathy, both critical goals for this club. We fight for those who do not have the privilege to speak up for themselves. We aim to highlight the importance of minority voices and preserve experiences. We are here to challenge NYU students to confront these traumas and change the narrative in the public eye in order to commit to an era of truth and justice. Our objective is to prioritize knowledge of the past and present, so that we may empower the future.

Civil Rights Movement

July 26, 1948: Truman signs the **Executive Order 9981** which ended segregation in the military. The first time a US commander in chief had used an executive order to implement a civil rights policy.

December 1, 1955: Rosa Parks was arrested after refusing to give up her seat to a white man. Her arrest ignited outrage and led the Montgomery Improvement Association to stage a boycott of the Montgomery bus system (first large scale US demonstration against segregation). It lasted 381 days.

September 7, 1957: Nine black students (**Little Rock Nine**) were prevented from entering Central High School due to an angry mob and the Arkansas National Guard (Order of the Governor). President Eisenhower intervened and ordered federal troops to escort Little Rock Nine to and from classes.

September 9, 1957: President Eisenhower signed the **Civil Rights Act of 1957** into law. With this law, there would be federal prosecution of anyone who tried to prevent someone from voting; it also created a commission to investigate voter fraud.

February 1, 1960: Four college students refused to leave a Woolworth's lunch counter without being served. Hundreds of people joined their cause in what became known as **Greensboro sit-ins**.

May 4, 1961: **Freedom Riders** organized by the Congress on Racial Equality. In the fall of 1961, the Interstate Commerce Commission issued regulations prohibiting segregation in interstate transit terminals.

Source: <https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/civil-rights-movement>

Civil Rights Movement

August 28, 1963: **March on Washington** was a massive protest that included approximately 250,000 people who gathered in front of the Lincoln Memorial In Washington. The event's goal was to draw attention to the continuing challenges and inequalities faced by African Americans.

- *“And when this happens, and when we allow freedom ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, Black men and white men, Jews and gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual, "Free at last! Free at last! Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!"*



Civil Rights Movement

July 2, 1964: President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the **Civil Rights Act of 1964** into law which guaranteed equal employment for all, limited the use of voter literacy tests and allowed federal authorities to ensure public facilities were integrated.

March 7, 1965: The civil rights movement in Alabama took an especially violent turn. Protesters were viciously beaten and tear gassed by the police, and some were even hospitalized. This one-sided violent event became known as "**Bloody Sunday**."

August 6, 1965: President Johnson signed the **Voting Rights Act of 1965** into law. This law banned all voter literacy tests and provided federal examiners in certain voting jurisdiction. It also allowed the attorney general to contest state and local poll taxes.

February 21, 1965: **Malcolm X**, former Nation of Islam Leader and Organization of Afro-American Unity Founder, was assassinated at a rally.

April 4, 1968: **Martin Luther King, Jr.** was assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee while trying to support a sanitation workers' strike. In his speech, King seemed to have foreshadow his own untimely passing.

- *"I've seen the promised land. I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight, that we, as a people, will get to the promised land. And I'm happy tonight. I'm not worried about anything. I'm not fearing any man. Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord."*

April 11, 1968: **Fair Housing Act** become into law. It prevented housing discrimination based on race, sex, national origin and region. It was also the last legislation enacted during the civil rights era.

Source:
<https://www.npr.org/2009/03/15/101719889/before-rosa-parks-there-was-claudette-colvin>

Claudette Colvin

(1939 – Present)



Girl, 15, Guilty In Bus Seat Case

MONTGOMERY, Ala. — A 15-year-old girl who refused to move to the rear of a city bus was found guilty in juvenile court here last Friday on charges of assault and battery, disorderly conduct and with violating a city ordinance which makes it "unlawful for any passenger to refuse or fail to take those seats assigned to the race which it belongs."

The girl, Claudette Colvin, was declared a ward of the state and placed on probation pending good behavior.

Robert W. Cleere, driver of the bus, told the court that the girl was seated near the front of his

bus with a Negro woman when a group of white persons boarded the bus. Cleere said he asked both the girl and the woman to move to the rear. He said the woman moved but that Miss Colvin remained in her seat. Cleere said he then called police.

- When she was 15, she refused to give up her seat to a white person - 9 months before Rosa Parks.
- On March 2, 1955, the bus driver ordered her to get up and she refused saying she'd paid her fare and it was her constitutional right. Two Police officers put her in handcuffs and arrested her.
- It was the same city and bus system as Rosa Parks, but hardly anyone knows her story.
- She challenged the law in court, one of four women plaintiffs in *Browder v Gayle*, the court case that successfully overturned bus segregation laws in Montgomery and Alabama.
- Colvin says she was not as well known as Rosa Parks due to her being a teenager and having lighter skin tone, whereas Parks was the secretary of the NAACP. She also got pregnant during the Civil Rights Movement, and they thought she was an inappropriate symbol for a test case.
- She is now living in the Bronx and has a book called "Twice Toward Justice".

Source:

<https://www.glsen.org/activity/glsen-lgbtq-history-cards-marsha-p-johnson>

Marsha P. Johnson

(1945 – 1992)



- Marsha P. Johnson was an activist, self-identified drag queen, performer, and activist.
- P stands for “Pay it No Mind”
- She was a Black transgender woman who was a force behind the Stonewall Riots.
 - a series of spontaneous demonstrations by members of the gay (LGBT) community in response to a police raid that began in the early morning hours of June 28, 1969, at the Stonewall Inn in the Greenwich Village neighborhood
- Along with Sylvia Rivera, she established the Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries (STAR) in 1970 -- a group committed to support transgender youth experiencing homelessness in New York City.
- She was murdered on July 6, 1992. Her death was originally ruled as a suicide by NYPD until activist Mariah Lopez fought for the case to be reopened.

The Marsha Johnson Institute:

<https://marshap.org/about-mpji/>

Source:
<https://nmaahc.si.edu/LGBTQ/bayard-rustin>

Bayard Rustin (1912 - 1987)



- American Civil Rights activist who was an advisor to Martin Luther King, Jr. and was the main organizer of the March on Washington in 1963.
- He was active in the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) and helped create the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC).
- Early in his career, he was arrested for “moral cause:” which led to his outing to the public.
- The discrimination he received led Rustin to have a greater background in the Civil Rights Movement.
- He did not want his sexuality to have a negative effect on the Movement, which is the reason why his efforts are not widely known.
- In the 1980s he became a part of the LGBTQ+ movement and an advocate for AIDS education.

Source:

<https://www.oprahmag.com/life/g25954127/african-american-historical-figures/?slide=2>

Jane Bolin (1908 – 2007)



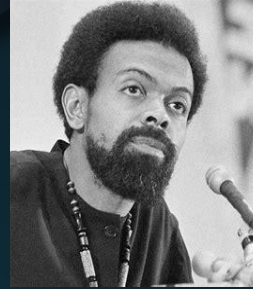
- Jane Bolin was the first Black Women to attend Yale Law School in 1931.
- In 1939, she became the first Black female judge in the United States, and served a total of 10 years.
- One of her most significant contributions has working with private employers to hire people based on skills, as opposed to discriminating against one's race.
- She also served on the boards of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Child Welfare League of America, and the Neighbourhood Children's Center.

The Black Arts Movement (1965-1975)

This movement rose Black poets, artists, musicians, and writers as activists in the wake of the Black Power Movement.

It started after the assassination of Malcolm X., which formed 2 groups: the Revolutionary Nationalists and the Cultural Nationalists. The Cultural Nationalists formed into the Black Arts Movement in 1965 when Amiri Baraka opened the Black Arts Repertory Theater in Harlem.

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Sources:

- [Next Next post: The Black Arts](#)

[Movement \(1965-1975\)](#)

- [An Introduction to the Black Arts](#)

[Movement](#)

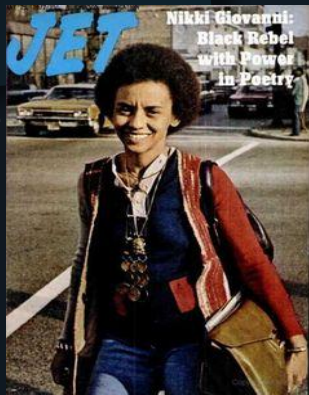
- [Amiri Baraka's Legacy Both](#)

[Controversial And Achingly Beautiful](#)

- Baraka is an African American poet whose involvement in the rise of Black artists paved the way for generations of art and history.
- His opening of the Black Arts Repertory Theater in 1965 was the official establishment of the Black Arts Movement. This theatre served as an outlet for Black people to express their social and political issues.
- Baraka described its goal as "to create an art, a literature that would fight for black people's liberation with as much intensity as Malcolm X our 'Fire Prophet' and the rest of the enraged masses who took to the streets."
- Soon, he turned to Marxism and converted to Islam when the movement became something he wasn't proud of- homophobic and mysonygetic.

Sources:
The Black Arts Movement and Nikki Giovanni
- Poem For A Lady Whose Voice I Like by Nikki

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- Giovanni became involved in the Black Arts Movement through her editing of *Conversation* and helping to organize Cincinnati's first Black Arts Festival.
- Her poetry is her activism, and she has won numerous awards, even named Woman of the Year in three different magazines.
- She also has a very progressive mindset, as she expressed in a recent interview with James Baldwin - another prominent figure in the Black Arts Movement - sharing thoughts on justice, capitalism, morality, and racism.

Poem For A Lady Whose Voice I Like

so he said: you ain't got no talent
if you didn't have a face
you wouldn't be nobody

and she said: god created heaven and earth
and all that's Black within them

so he said: you ain't really no hot shit
they tell me plenty sisters
take care better business than you

and she said: on the third day he made chitterlings
and all good things to eat
and said: "that's good"

so he said: if the white folks hadn't been under
yo skirt and been giving you the big play
you'd a had to come on uptown like everybody else

and she replied: then he took a big Black greasy rib
from adam and said we will call this woeman and her
name will be sapphire and she will divide into four parts
that simone may sing a song

and he said: you pretty full of yourself ain't chu

so she replied: show me someone not full of herself
and i'll show you a hungry person

Stereotypes and Microaggressions

The perpetrator and even the recipient of the microaggression may try to brush off these comments as if they're no big deal, but the cumulative effect of these interactions can be damaging to Black, Indigenous and people of color's mental and physical health. The stress of being exposed to these incidents over time is linked to depression, psychological trauma, anxiety and high blood pressure, among other negative health outcomes. (Huff post)

Some include:

- When someone tells you you're so pretty that they 'don't even think of you as Black.'
- When an airport gate agent questions why you're in line for business class.
- When a retail employee follows you around the store because they assume you're going to shoplift.
- When people ask to touch your hair – or just do it without your permission
- When people marvel at how 'well-spoken' you are

Black Mental Health

Mental illness has been in existence as long as humans have inhabited the earth, but for people of African descent, little or no references are available about this condition before the 1700s.

- examples include those wrongfully convicted and put on death row.

The black population continues to decrease due to death

- Woman in health settings

Whenever I am teaching about trauma, I always remind people that trauma is cumulative. We as black people have been traumatized from slavery through Jim Crow, through the civil rights of the 50s and 60s. This is just one more trauma added to that trauma," Fort Worth (Psychologist)

Near NYU

- Urban Vegan Kitchen!
(41 Carmine St., New York, NY 10014)
- Mikey Likes It Ice Cream!
(199 Avenue A, New York, NY 10009)
- Peaches HotHouse!
(87 S. Elliott Pl., Brooklyn, NY 11217)
- Bluestockings Bookstore, Cafe & Activist Center!
(116 Suffolk St, New York, NY 10002)
- East Village Books!
(99 St Marks Pl, New York, NY 10009)
- Books Are Magic!
(225 Smith St, Brooklyn, NY 11231)

Black Owned Businesses

- Amy Ruth's: homestyle Southern cooking
(113 West 116th Street, Harlem)
- Teranga: traditional African food from farms in Africa
(1280 5th Avenue, Harlem)
- Melba's: Southern classics
(300 W. 114th St., New York, NY 10026)
- Seasoned Vegan: vegan dishes with global flavor
(55 St. Nicholas Ave, Harlem, NY 10026)
- Lee Lee's Baked Goods
(283 W 118th St, Harlem)



Sources:
[Local and Black Owned Businesses](#)
[NYC Black Owned Bookstores](#)
[Black Owned Businesses](#)