

The Graces

The Official Newsletter of the Malik Melodies Sisterhood, Inc.



Sisterhood, Inc.

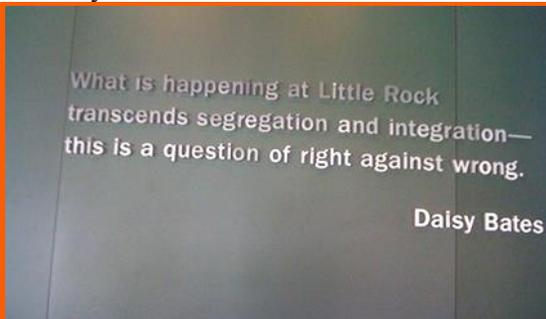
National Women's History Month 2016

*“Working to Form a More Perfect Union:
Honoring Women in Public Service and Government” **

The National Women's History Project www.nwhp.org selects the theme for Woman's History Month each year. This year's theme "honors women who have shaped America's history and its future through their public service and government leadership. Although often overlooked and undervalued, collectively they have dramatically influenced our public policy and the building of viable institutions and organizations. From championing basic human rights to ensuring access and equal opportunity for all Americans, they have led the way in establishing a stronger and more democratic country."



Daisy Bates



Among this year's sixteen Honorees is Civil Rights activist, **Daisy Bates**. Gracious Melody Sharon La Cruise produced and directed the feature length documentary *Daisy Bates: First Lady of Little Rock* which premiered at the University of Arkansas, Little Rock on December 1, 2011 and aired on PBS' *Independent Lens* in February 2012. Sharon was on the founding scale at Adelphi.

According to NWHP, "Each of these public leaders succeeded against great odds. The diversity of their experiences demonstrates both the challenges and the opportunities women in public service have faced. Their ability to use the art of collaboration to create inclusive solutions and non-partisan policies, as well as their skill and determination, serve to inspire future generations. The tenacity of each Honoree underlines the fact that women from all cultural backgrounds in all levels of public service and government are essential in the continuing work of forming a more perfect union."

To read more about the sixteen Honorees, go to <http://www.nwhp.org/>

March /April 2016



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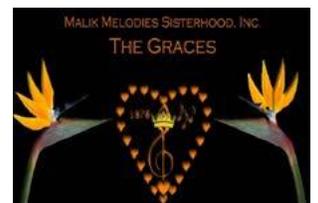
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“Working to Form a More Perfect Union: Honoring Women in Public Service and Government”

2016 National Women's History Month Honorees



Did You Know?

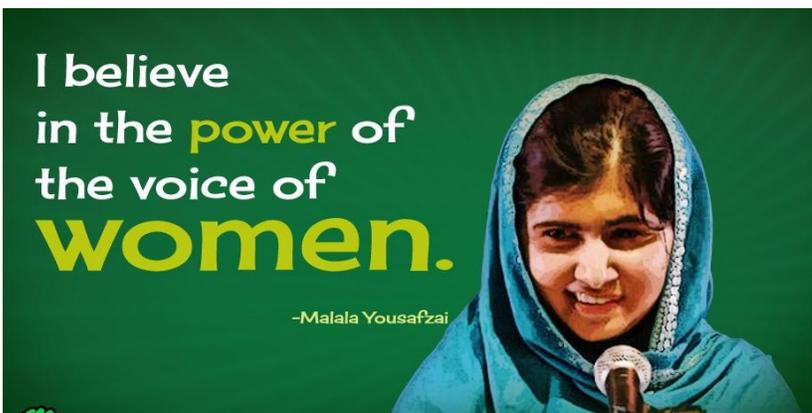
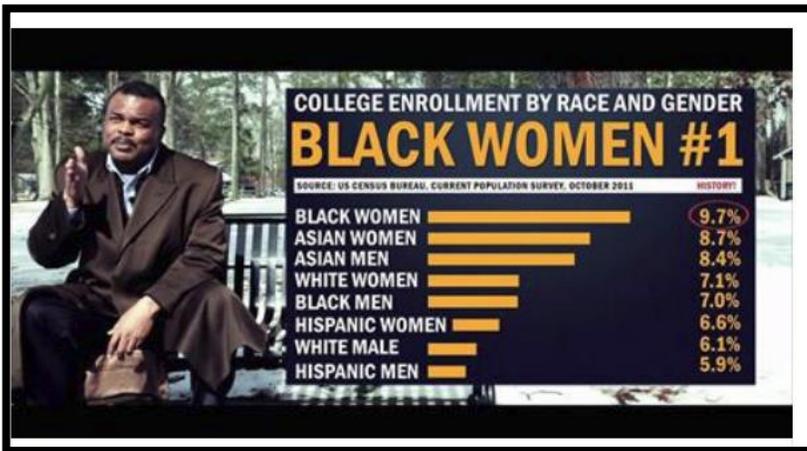
9.7%

African American Women are the MOST EDUCATED Group in the United States!

Truths You Won't Believe...

"For the first time in the history of data collection by the National Center of Education Statistics as reported by the US Census, Black women have surpassed every other group in this country based upon race and gender. What does that mean? For the first time in our history, African-American women have surpassed all groups in college entrance based upon race and gender. That's right. African American women enroll in college more than Asian men, white women - you name the group, either race or gender, African American women are number one." Janks Morton

Click below to watch Janks Morton explain this fact!



22 FACT

As of January 22, 2015, we are currently living under a record-high number of simultaneous female world leaders.

There are 22.

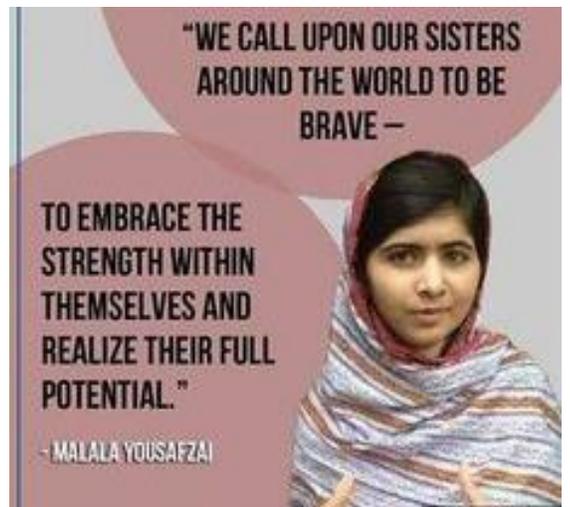
FACT: It represents only 6.9% of the total number of political leaders in the world.

There are 315.

At 17,

MALALA YOUSAFZAI

became the youngest person to receive the Nobel Peace Prize in October 2014 for "for her struggle against the suppression of children and young people and for the right of all children to education".





MEET DR. SHIRLEY JACKSON

A theoretical physicist and famous black inventor, Dr. Jackson conducted breakthrough scientific research that led to the invention of portable fax, touch tone telephone, solar cells, fiber optic cables, and the technology behind caller ID and call waiting.

DR. JACKSON IS THE FIRST AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMAN:

- to get a PH.D from MIT
- to receive a Ph.D. in theoretical solid state physics
- to be elected president and then chairman of the board of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS)
- to be president of a major research university, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, NY
- to be elected to the National Academy of Engineering
- to chair the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission

Source: <http://www.blackpast.org/aah/jackson-shirley-ann-1946>



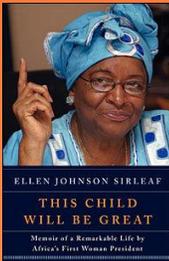
← Click here to see [African American Women's Firsts.](#)

Click on President Sirleaf's picture below to listen to "Strength Through Adversity".

MEET PRESIDENT ELLEN JOHNSON SIRLEAF

"Let the children grow up knowing that there's nothing that can stop them from what they want to be."

- Elected in 2005 as the president of Liberia
- the world's first elected black female president and
- Africa's first elected female head of state
- one of the three female co-winners of the 2011 Nobel Peace Prize "for their non-violent struggle for the safety of women and for women's rights to full participation in peace-building work"
 - served as minister of finance in Liberia until 1980
 - served in senior positions with the World Bank and Citibank
 - published her memoir, "This Child Will Be Great" in 2008
 - holds a BA in Accounting from the Madison Business College in Wisconsin, a degree in economics from the University of Colorado at Boulder and a Master of Public Administration degree from Harvard University



Sources: http://www.freedomcollection.org/interviews/ellen_johnson_sirleaf/?vidid=204
www.biography.com/people/ellen-johnson-sirleaf-201269

CONGRATULATIONS ARE IN ORDER FOR

BROOKHAVEN COUNCILWOMAN **VALERIE CARTRIGHT!**

- She was recognized as "One of Suffolk County's Most Prominent African American Leaders" by the Suffolk County Office of Minority Affairs & the Suffolk County African American Advisory Board.
- She was re-elected in November 2015.
- She got married!

CONGRATULATIONS TO VALERIE & DONALD BERNARDIN





Melodies on the Move

Gracious Melody Candace Jones



Meet Gracious Melody Candace Jones! She is a second grade teacher at a Fairfax County elementary school located in Alexandria, Virginia. Candace currently resides in Fairfax, Virginia with her husband of 26 years, Samuel; her three daughters, Kaylah, Kayana, Katiana; and her grandson, Kamari. The “K” Crew is a salute to her sister, whose middle name is Kay.

GM Candace was born and raised in Queens, New York. She earned her Bachelor’s degree from Hofstra University where she majored in Elementary Education and Psychology. She received her Masters of Arts in Special Education from Touro College. She has worked with students from nursery school through sixth grade. Candace has been an educator for 25 years and worked with a Christian school for the first ten years of her career, instructing kindergarten students. During that time, the experience was one of spiritual enhancement. Candace recalls that the learning was intense, but rewarding due to the demanding nature of the parents because they paid for the education of their children. The remainder of her career has been with the public education school system. In public education, she worked in an elementary school with 220 diverse cultures. Working with students from different backgrounds and culture has helped her to realize that education is a treasure and it must be used wisely. That experience was one that truly has impacted her career.



“I am passionate about helping students strive to be the best that they can be. I want students to know that they can be successful in whatever they pursue. I want them to have a passion for learning and to be lifelong learners.”

Her strength is making students love reading and to make sure they feel that they can achieve. She strives to make sure students know that, as an educator, she’s just like they are. She believes, *“I’m just here to facilitate their learning. They are the individuals who will be part of society, taking care of me and I want them to be successful.”* GM Candace is a dedicated educator who feels it is her duty to teach the students.

GM Candace aspires to open her own school! Last August, she is completed an Administrator/Educational Specialist (ED.S) at Liberty University. Candace looks forward to helping students succeed through small group work and providing professional development for teachers in strategies that support struggling learners. Candace had enjoyed working with sixth graders as well as kindergarteners. Kindergarten was a rewarding experience for her because, *“they are like sponges soaking up information and they strive to be the best. Whatever they did was a learning experience!”* On the other side, she enjoyed the sixth grade because she can relate to the students and their experiences. She explains that sixth graders are in a time of their life where they need many positive role models and encouragement. She enjoyed hearing their stories and their life issues. In return, she gave them her positive energy. The true reward was seeing how they responded with the same caring. Students can be reprimanded one day, but they know that they will have a clean slate the next day and a new chance to make better choices. As such, she is an asset to their lives.

“As a Christian I want to transform students into lifelong learners who will be an asset to society.”

Her four key assets as a Christian leader are patience, sacrifice, dependability, and getting along with others. These assets have helped her to be successful in her career. She explains it this way:

- ✓ **Patience**- because you don't know the issues you will face when working with children of different backgrounds. Having patience will help with this process.
- ✓ **Sacrifice**- when one has to go above and beyond at times and just make things just work.
- ✓ **Dependability**- because if one has this quality, you can be called upon to make sure plans are followed through. With so many new trends in education, there needs to be educators who can implement and sustain them.
- ✓ **Getting along with others** is the main one for Candace. In professional learning communities, there is diversity among the teachers and there must be cohesive teamwork to make the students successful.

Candace's personal philosophy is summed up with these quotes from children's author, Patricia Polacco:

"You were born with the power to change others. You change people by the way you treat them. That is what changes the human heart."

"Everyone in this room is gifted. None of us open our gifts at the same time. And if someone has opened theirs before you, think nothing of it. You will open yours in time." _ Patricia Polacco

But perhaps the African name, bestowed on her by her Melody sisters captures her essence the best:

Nayo Munirah - one who brings joy and enlightenment.



STACEY LEVEILLE
Ecommerce Merchandise Coordinator
Aeropostale, Inc.

LORIANNE RIVAS
Junior Portfolio Administrator
William Jones Investment Management

THERE IS
NO FORCE
EQUAL
TO A
WOMAN
DETERMINED
TO RISE.



JHENNA ZEPEDA
Account Executive
DataSphere Technologies Inc. Tempe, AZ

KRYSTAL HOOPER, ESQ.
Senior Project Manager, Quality Assurance
Garden City Group, LLC



**WHO
RUNS
THE
WORLD?**



STACEY LEVEILLE



LORIANNE RIVAS



JHENNA ZEPEDA

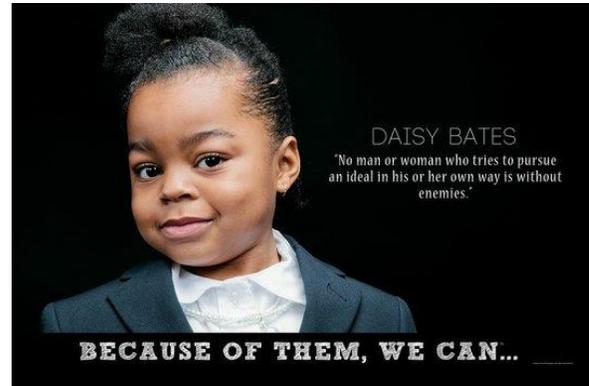


KRYSTAL HOOPER

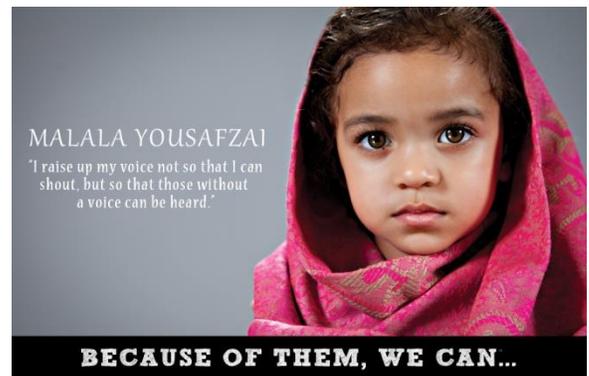
SANKOFA



KEEP CALM AND READ ME



BECAUSE OF THEM, WE CAN...



BECAUSE OF THEM, WE CAN...



BECAUSE OF THEM, WE CAN...

One of my absolute favorite creative photography collections is **BECAUSE OF THEM WE CAN** by EUNIQUE JONES GIBSON. Eunique launched the campaign during Black History Month in 2013. Her mission: *"to empower the next generation to honor the legacy of their ancestors through their own individual pursuit of greatness."* Photographs of children channeling leaders, activists, and celebrities, past and present were featured. I was so excited, pre-ordered a few copies! It is a wonderful tribute to those that paved the way for us. Truly a treasure! To purchase products featuring this amazing collection, visit: <http://www.becauseofthemwecan.com/> <http://www.euniquejones.com/> Click on the image below to see Eunique Jones Gibson's special tribute to Maya Angelou. Powerful!
GM Nathalie C. Lilavois



BECAUSE OF THEM, WE CAN...



BECAUSE OF THEM, WE CAN...



In Honor of Women

Maria Hinojosa

by Julia Diaz VP, Professional Branch



Maria Hinojosa is an award winner news anchor and reporter who for over 25 years, has helped tell America's untold stories and highlighted critical issues in America and abroad. She has worked for CNN, PBS, WNBC, WGBH and NPR's Latino USA. Hinojosa has reported hundreds of important stories such as the restrictive immigration policies; stories of the poor; youth violence in urban communities; teen girl victims of sexual harassment on the job and numerous other serious topics that demand our attention.

Hinojosa has taken viewers into communities that had never been shown on television. Her stories continue to bring attention to communities on issues that are usually ignored or unspoken in America society today.

Hinojosa was born in Mexico, Distrito Federal "DF", raised in Chicago, and educated at Barnard College in New York. She was recently named one of the "25 Most Influential Working Mothers in America" by Working Mothers Magazine and she is listed in Hispanic Business as one of the "100 Most influential Latina Women in the United States". Throughout her career, Hinojosa has significantly contributed to the conversation about our times and our society with one of the most authentic voices in broadcast. She is the author of two successful books, a motherhood memoir called *Raising Raul: Adventures Raising Myself and My Son* and candid interviews with gang members called *Crews: Gang Members Talk to Maria Hinojosa*.



Hinojosa has won top honors in American journalism including 4 Emmys, the 2012 John Chancellor Award for Excellence in Journalism, the Robert F. Kennedy Award for Reporting on the Disadvantaged, the Studs Terkel Community Media Award, and the Edward R. Murrow Award from the Overseas Press Club for best documentary for her groundbreaking "Child Brides: Stolen Lives." In 2009, Hinojosa was honored with an AWRT Gracie Award for Individual Achievement as Best TV correspondent. In 2010 she was awarded an honorary degree, Doctor of Humane Letters, by DePaul University in Chicago, as well as the Sidney Hillman Prize honoring her social and economic justice reporting. That same year, Hinojosa founded The Futuro Media Group with the mission to produce multi-platform, community-based journalism that gives critical voice to the voiceless by harnessing the power of independent media to tell stories that are

overlooked or under reported by traditional media. In 2012, Hinojosa received an honorary degree from Simmons College; was named among the top 25 Latinos in Contemporary American Culture by the Huffington Post; and gave the prestigious Ware Lecture.

Growing up a Mexican Immigrant in Chicago, Hinojosa endured hardship of discrimination, which made her feel like an outsider and that her voice was never really important. Because of this experience, she grew up understanding the importance of media and journalism and freedom of the press. Her drive can be attributed to having overcome previous struggles. She always heard the radio, but never heard her realities being told. She remarks, "...And because I was always a border crosser, from the U.S. to Mexico to Hyde Park to Pilsen, I had always seen multiple realities" Hinojosa always felt like there was a story that needed to be told.

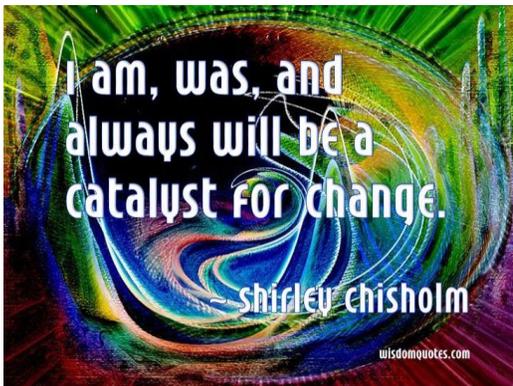


Hinojosa has discussed through interviews and essays how she as a journalist has traveled to 49 states and around the world listening to other people's stories. She says, "As a woman, an immigrant, as a Latina, these stories are all of our stories". Hinojosa has also shared her own personal story about important life lessons as Mexican-American career woman, wife and mother. Her story touches the lives of many of the working women in America especially the Latino women. She talks about our struggles today as career women, wives, mothers and also as American Feminist moms. Latino Women in American take Hinojosa's personal story to be our story, as we are also 100% American, trying to keep hold to our cultural roots, and raising our children in a country with many uncertainties for the classified "minorities" known as "Latinos/Hispanic". Hinojosa is not only a leader in journalism but a

leader among Latina women. Her advocacy and empowering stories inspire the Latino community to continue to strive to achieve the "American Dream".

Today, Hinojosa continues to bring her culture into the public eye through Latino USA and NOW. She has also become highly sought after as a lecturer on the issues of immigration and the empowerment of women and Latinos. In one especially rousing speech at Millersville University, she extended the message that her life's work has embodied since she was inspired to go on the air: "Find your voice and trust it—that's the first step of empowerment. Find a place where you can build those bridges...Don't limit yourselves to your ethnic background. We need commonality of experience, commonality of vision. One hand extended to one another will ultimately save this country." Maria Hinojosa currently lives in Harlem NY with her husband, artist Germán Perez and their children, Raul and Yurema.

Click below to see her Tedx Talk: *From Invisible to Visible*



MMSI is proud to announce that our own

Most Gracious Melody KIM BRIGHT

has been selected as an honoree by the Tri-County Women's

Club and will be recognized at the

11th Annual Scholarship Luncheon

on **Saturday, April 30, 2016**

at the **Davenport Country Club**

400 Davenport Road, New Rochelle, NY.

11:45 a.m. reception / seating 12:30 p.m.

Tickets: \$65

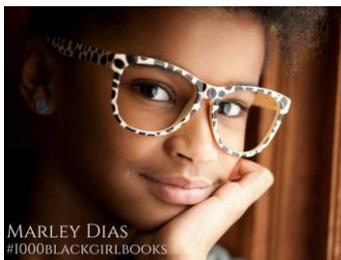
The luncheon theme is:

"Women of Excellence Redefining our Self-worth, while continuing the legacy of building community and family".

The Tri-County Women's Club is a service orientated club that helps the community and empowers youth to be the very best they can. The Tri-County Women's Club is an affiliate of the National Association of Colored Women's Club (the oldest black women's organization established in 1896)

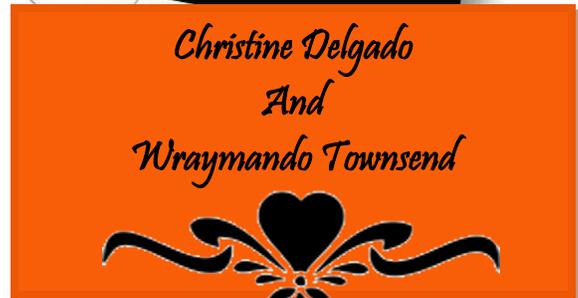
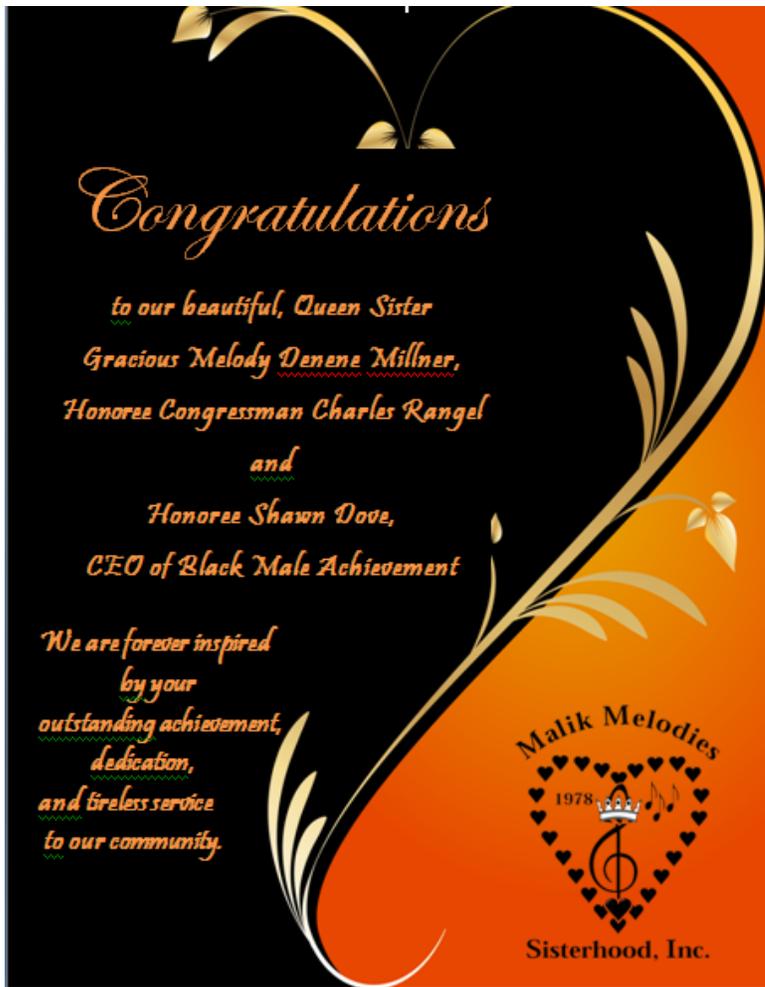
www.nacwc.org. Mrs. Mary Church Terrell, Mrs. Booker T. Washington and Mrs. Mary McLeod Bethune were some of their outstanding organizational leaders. If you would like to attend, please contact MGM Kim mskbright@gmail.com or Melody Brittany S. Johnson brittany.s.johnson3@gmail.com for tickets.

#1000BlackGirlBooks



On February 27, 2016 the 5th Annual International Pretty Brown Girl Day Celebration was held at Spelman College in Atlanta, Georgia. Among the 2016 Dream Big Award recipients was 11 year old activist, **MARLEY DIAS**. Frustrated with the lack of diversity in the books she was assigned at school, Marley launched a campaign to collect 1000 books where Black girls are the main characters.

MMSI salutes Marley for her courage and determination!



"This is a once in a life time opportunity! Do you have room for me?" Bree

Send Mays High Students to DC



Gracious Melody Dr. Lisa Whittington has started a campaign to take high school students from Benjamin E. Mays High School in southwest Atlanta to Washington, D.C. She explains, *"This is bigger than a field trip...this is an iconic event that will change their lives forever. This is the last year of the most famous and influential U.S. President of our generation."* Students approach Dr. Whittington daily eager to participate, willing to work extra hours after school to raise money to be able to go. Undaunted by this task, she has taken on the challenge of helping students raise the money necessary for the trip because as one student states so simply, yet passionately,

*"...I **have** to be on this trip."*

Support these students, read their story, and follow their progress at <https://www.gofundme.com/bvh3uuhg>

did you know?

Benjamin E Mays



- Educator and civil rights activist.
- President of Morehouse College.
- Strongly influenced Martin Luther King Jr.
- Promoted human dignity and its relationship to American ideals.
- Believed in non-violent protest as a means of change.

