

# DIVERSITY in DUBUQUE

**FEBRUARY 2024**

A newsletter from the City of Dubuque's Office of Equity & Human Rights

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## Holidays & Celebrations

### February 10 – Lunar New Year

[Lunar New Year](#) is the most important holiday in China and is also celebrated throughout other Asian countries and communities. It is the celebration of the arrival of spring and a time to reconnect with family and friends. The 15-day celebration includes traditions such as parades, red paper lanterns, open-air markets, and a feast that includes a whole fish, and sweet rice balls. According to the Chinese zodiac, 2024 is the [year of the wood dragon](#) which forecasts a year of opportunities, changes, creativity, and personal development.

### February 14 – Lent begins (ends March 31)

[Lent](#) is celebrated by many Christian denominations around the world. It is a 40-day period that includes prayer, fasting, charity, and repentance. Lent is a time of reflection as Christians prepare for Easter which recalls the crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

### February 19 – President's Day

[President's Day](#) is a day to honor the birthday of two of America's greatest presidents: our first president, George Washington, and our 16<sup>th</sup> president, Abraham Lincoln. It is a day for patriotic celebrations and remembrance. It is a federal holiday, however it is **not** a City of Dubuque holiday. This means all City offices will be open for business.

### February 20 – World Day of Social Justice

[Social justice](#) is the equitable distribution of economic, political, and social rights and opportunities for all. It is about giving everyone a fighting chance to thrive in our society and world. Social justice differs slightly from human rights, but they often go hand-in-hand. Human rights require equal access to necessities like housing, food, and healthcare. Social justice takes that one step further and addresses economic and political rights. Some social justice issues currently being tackled include gender inequality, unfair impacts of climate change, threats to the LGBTQ+ community, systemic racial discrimination, and wealth inequality. Celebrate this day by [educating yourself on the issues](#) and [joining the fight](#) towards social justice for all.



(top): Patrick Kwan/Flickr; (bottom): Hillel Steinberg/Flickr

# February is Black History Month

*To celebrate Black Heritage Month, here are just a few of the notable African Americans whose innovations and contributions have substantially improved our country, our society, and our lives.*



George Washington Carver



Garrett Morgan



Dr. Charles Richard Drew



Frederick McKinley Jones



Lewis Howard Latimer

As Iowans, we should all proudly know of Iowa State graduate [George Washington Carver](#), the world-famous chemist who made groundbreaking agricultural discoveries. He developed hundreds of products using peanuts, sweet potatoes, and soybeans.

[Garrett Morgan](#) was unsuccessful trying to convince firefighters that his innovative breathing device would save lives. It wasn't until he hired a white actor to pose as the "inventor" that his device was quickly adopted, and thankfully it was! Morgan's device went on to save thousands of lives during the WWI poison gas attacks. Morgan also invented an early version of the traffic light, but it's not his fault if you get a ticket for running a red light. That's still on you.

[Dr. Charles Richard Drew](#) discovered a way to store blood for longer periods of time and is known as the "Father of the Blood Bank". His processes saved thousands of lives in WWII and millions of lives in the years since.

Drew's discovery wouldn't have been as useful if it weren't also for the work of [Frederick McKinley Jones](#). Jones designed portable air-cooling units for vehicles which meant they could transport blood safer amid the fighting of WWII. It also allows us to transport produce anywhere in the world, and in any season. Without him, you wouldn't have avocados for your toast, mangos for your smoothies, and peaches would only be found in cans. Jones also developed a portable x-ray machine, a device that synched up sound to film (goodbye silent films, hello Star Wars), and an early prototype of a snowmobile.

As you read this, you can thank [Lewis Howard Latimer](#) for the lights above your head. His design for carbon filaments used in incandescent light bulbs made the light bulb more efficient, longer lasting, and more affordable. A true renaissance man, Latimer also published a book of poetry.

Ever felt the sweet relief from pain after getting a cortisone injection? You can thank [Dr. Percy Lavon Julian](#) for that. Have you or a loved one ever had to face the nightmare of open-heart surgery? [Dr. Daniel Hale Williams](#) successfully performed the first operation. And what about cataracts? [Dr. Patricia Bath](#) invented the method of removing them that we use today which has saved the sight of thousands of people worldwide.

A personal hero of mine is [Madam C.J. Walker](#). As the first of her family to be born into freedom, she worked her way up from poverty to be the first self-made female millionaire in the country (Black or white). In the early 1900's, Walker almost single handedly created the beauty industry for Black women. Walker employed over 40,000 men and women who went door to door selling her beauty supply products.

[Charles Hamilton Houston](#) is known as "The man who killed Jim Crow." His mission to disprove the delusion of "separate but equal," was the catalyst for launching a campaign to show the world the audacious inequities that Black Americans were forced to endure. His skills in the courtroom won major civil rights cases around the country. His efforts laid the groundwork for the celebrated *Brown v. Board of Education* that outlawed the separation of children in public schools based on their race.

Photos have the power to change the world; they tell a story better than almost any string of words. [Gordon Parks](#) worked in the FSA's highly influential photography program during the Great Depression (his photo, lower right corner, is titled "American Gothic"). He later continued using his art to aid in the civil rights movement. Using his camera "as a weapon," Parks opened the eyes of the world to the daily hardships, joys, and resiliency of African Americans.



Dr. Percy Lavon Julian



Dr. Daniel Hale Williams



Dr. Patricia Bath



Madam C.J. Walker



Charles Hamilton Houston



Left column: (Carver): Library of Congress/LC-USW38-000165-D; (Morgan): Western Reserve Historical Society; (Drew): National Library of Medicine; (Jones): National Inventors Hall of Fame; (Latimer): Queens Borough Public Library. Right column: (Julian): Science History Institute; (Williams): National Library of Medicine; (Bath): National Library of Medicine; (Walker): National Museum of American History; (Houston): National Museum of American History; ("American Gothic" by Gordon Parks): Library of Congress/LC-DIG-fsa-8b14845



# Culture Creators

## White Privilege

### Cambridge Dictionary's definition of White Privilege:

The fact that people with white skin have advantages in society that other people without white skin do not have.

#### What White Privilege IS:

- Having greater access to power and resources than people of color do (in the same situation).
- Having unseen and unconscious advantages to being white.
- White Privilege exists because of historic, enduring racism and biases.



#### What White Privilege IS NOT:

- The suggestion that white people have never struggled.
- The implication that all white people are wealthy.
- The assumption that everything a white person has accomplished is unearned.
- Having white privilege, and recognizing it, is not racist.

#### For example

If white people are accused of a crime, they are less likely to be presumed guilty, less likely to be sentenced to death and more likely to be portrayed in a fair manner by the media without automatically implying guilt.



Products that white people need for their hair are labeled as "hair care". Products that African American's need for their hair are in a separate, much smaller section labeled "ethnic hair products".



#### What do we do with this knowledge?

- Feelings of guilt or defensiveness aren't useful and can prevent you from seeing the effects of White Privilege.
- Educate yourself and others about the truths of colonization, oppression, and discrimination.
- Recognize and address your biases.
- Push through discomfort

and demand courageous conversations in your circles.

- Do not let peers get away with problematic remarks without making a serious effort to engage them.
- Work towards systemic change.



Photo by Gayatri Malhotra on Unsplash

# News & Updates



The [African American Museum of Iowa](#), located in Cedar Rapids, is currently closed for renovations, but is planning on opening again in early April. The museum traces Iowa's African

American history from its origins in Western Africa through slavery, the Civil War, segregation, the Civil Rights Movement and into Iowa today. The museum is well worth a visit!



[Carnegie-Stout Public Library](#) art installation for February and March is titled **Black History is America History** featuring works by Gail Chavenelle. The opening reception will be held on February 2 from 5:30-7:30pm.

The 19<sup>th</sup> annual [Walk-Through Black History Program](#) will feature a play on the lives of actors Ruby Dee and Ossie Davis. The play will have two shows on February 25 at the First Baptist Church of Dubuque.



In honor of Black History month, Art4US and the Dubuque Area Arts Collective are holding an Art Exhibit and Spoken Word event titled [Black As You Are](#) on February 2, from 7-11pm at Smokestack. This exhibition pays tribute to local and regional black artists and allies, as they share their inspirations, perspectives, and narratives through the power of art.

## This month at the Multicultural Family Center:

In the middle of the civil rights movement students produced a play and pushed the boundaries to cross a divide.



Kaukauna & King 50Years Later

The [Multicultural Family Center](#) will host a free viewing of the documentary "The Exchange. In White America. Kaukauna & King 50 Years Later". It takes place February 22 at 6:30pm and will include a Q&A with the film maker.

*In 1966 A social studies teacher in all-white Kaukauna, Wisconsin wanted his students to perform the controversial play, "In White America". So, along with a Black English teacher in Milwaukee, he developed a two-month student exchange with a mostly Black high school. This is the story of an experience during the Civil Rights era brought into the time of Black Lives Matter.*



The Multicultural Family Center is also hosting a series of interactive sessions with a panel of accomplished Black leaders and role models. Their **Black Excellence: Inspiring People Series** will take place every Thursday during the month of February from 6-8pm. Each session will showcase the achievements, contributions, stories, and knowledge of individuals within our Black community. Registration is preferred but not required.