



PORTAGE

A Natural Place to Move

FEBRUARY **BLACK** 2026

• HISTORY MONTH •

SUN 1	National Freedom Day: Commemorates the signing of the 13th Amendment, which abolished slavery in 1865.
MON 2	On this day in 1948, President Truman issued Executive Order 9981, which desegregated African Americans, and Executive Order 9808, which broadened civil rights protection.
TUES 3	On this day in 1956, Autherine J. Lucy became the first black student to attend the University of Alabama and was expelled three days later in response to threats from a mob. In 1992, Autherine graduated with her master's degree in education.
WED 4	Birthday of Civil Rights activist Rosa Parks, 1913. On this day in 1986, the US Postal Service issued a commemorative stamp honoring women's rights activist Sojourner Truth.
THUR 5	Birthday of baseball great Henry Louis "Hank" Aaron, 1934. On this day in 1990, Barack Obama became the first African American to be named president of the <i>Harvard Law Review</i> .
FRI 6	Birthday of Jamaican Reggae artist Bob Marley, 1945. "Don't worry about a thing, because everything is gonna be all right" is one of his famous quotes.
SAT 7	Birthday of comedian Chris Rock, 1965. On this day in 1926, Dr. Carter G. Woodson created Negro History Week. In 1976, Negro History Week became Black History Month.
SUN 8	Birthday of actor Gary Coleman, 1968. In 1978, at age 10, he became the star of the hit sitcom <i>Diff'rent Strokes</i> .
MON 9	Birthday of African American writer and poet Alice Walker, 1944. In 1982, she became the first African American woman to win the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction.
TUES 10	Birthday of African American soprano opera singer Leontyne Price, 1927.
WED 11	On this day in 1644, the first black legal protest in America was pressed by eleven black people who petitioned for freedom in New Netherland and New York.
THUR 12	Birthday of the first Black late-night talk show host Arsenio Hall, 1956.
FRI 13	On this day in 1892, the first African American performers, the World's Fair Colored Opera Company, appeared at Carnegie Hall.
SAT 14	Birthday of actor, dancer, singer, and choreographer Gregory Oliver Hines, 1946.
SUN 15	On this day in 1848, Benjamin Roberts filed the first school desegregation suit after his daughter, Sarah Roberts, was barred from a public school based on her race in Boston.
MON 16	On this day in 1904, James Baskett became the first African American man to win an Academy Award.
TUES 17	Birthday of Professional basketball player Michael Jordan, 1963. The basketball legend, also known as "The GOAT," led the Chicago Bulls to six NBA championships and won the MVP Award five times.
WED 18	Birthday of author Toni Morrison, 1931, and poet Audre Lorde, 1934.



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THUR 19	Birthday of singer/songwriter Smokey Robinson, 1940. W.E.B Du Bois organized the Pan-African Congress.
FRI 20	Birthday of Barbadian singer Rihanna, 1988. Actor Sir Sidney Poitier, who became the first Bahamian American to win the Academy Award for Best Actor in 1964.
SAT 21	Birthday of singer Nina Simone, 1933. On this day in 1965, Malcolm X was assassinated.
SUN 22	Birthday of professional basketball player Julius Erving, 1950. Also known as "Dr. J," upon retiring in 1987, played in more than 800 games, scoring an average of 22 points per game.
MON 23	Birthday of W.E.B DuBois, an American sociologist, historian, author/editor, and activist, 1868. He was the first African American to receive a P.H.D from Harvard University in 1895.
TUES 24	Birthday of Boxer Floyd Mayweather Jr., 1977. On this day in 2020, Katherine G. Johnson, the NASA mathematician who played a key role in helping America win the space war, died.
WED 25	Birthday of actor Rashida Jones, 1976. On this day in 1989, "Iron Mike" Tyson became the Heavyweight Champion of the World by defeating Frank Bruno.
THUR 26	Birthdays of neo-soul singer Erykah Badu, 1971 and Antoine Caliste "Fats" Domino Jr., 1928.
FRI 27	On this day in 1988, Debi Thomas became the first African American to win a bronze medal at the Winter Olympics.
SAT 28	On this day in 1932, Richard Spikes patented the automatic gear shift.



"This snapshot of the month of February will hopefully inspire curiosity to discover and acknowledge the many contributions of Black Americans throughout the entire calendar year."

Forward Together,
- Mayor Patricia M. Randall

To honor Black History Month, the City of Portage proudly presents the 2026 Commemorative Calendar, your invitation to journey through 28 days of remarkable accounts, achievements, and cultural milestones that comprise the evolving Black American experience. From the roaring voices of protest and poetry to the unforgettable visionaries of activism and the arts, each day highlights trailblazers whose impact continues to shape our city, the nation, and the world.

Make your Commemorative Calendar a living resource. Add personal notes or share its treasures with others. Let it inspire conversations and connections that extend beyond February so that, as we celebrate the rich heritage and continuing contributions of African Americans, we preserve and promote American history for generations to come. Enjoy!

**- Dr. Monifa A. Jumanne
Activist and Consultant**