

## FORGOTTEN BLACK HEROES

By Gabrielle Stager

February is Black History Month. Often, the month is bombarded by stories of Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King Jr. Black civil rights history would be different without them, but we forget who aided them in their journey. These civil rights activists played critical roles in ending segregation and discrimination.

### CARTER G WOODSEN

Carter G Woodsen is the father of Black History month. He was the second African American to be awarded a doctorate from Harvard University. His career was dedicated to African American studies and wrote more than a dozen books. He lobbied for schools and organizations to recognize and encourage the study of African American history. In February of 1926, Negro History Month was created and later renamed Black History Month.



### CLAUDETTE COLVIN



Months before Rosa Park's famous bus protest, 15-year-old Claudette Colvin did the same thing. She refused to give up her bus seat to a white passenger. She was arrested and became one of the four plaintiffs in *Browder v. Gayle*. The case ruled that "Montgomery's segregated bus system was unconstitutional." Colvin was quoted saying "It's my constitutional right to sit here as much as that lady. I paid my fare, it's my constitutional right." Her forerunning to Park's bus protest led the way for several others in the fight to end segregation.

## MARSHA P JOHNSON

Marsha P Johnson was a black, transgender, civil rights activist. She is accredited with instigating the Stonewall riots of the 1960's. She was outspoken in LGBTQ+ rights, as well as transgender people of color. She established STAR (Street Transvestite (now Transgender) Action Revolutionaries) which aimed to help homeless transgender youth in New York. Stonewall was a mass riot organized by LGBTQ+ peoples to spread awareness for the injustice they had regularly faced. Tragically, she was murdered at the age of 46. She is often celebrated as the vanguard for the gay liberation movement.



## STOKELY CARMICHAEL



Stokely Carmichael was a civil rights activist known for leading the SNCC and the Black Panther Party of the 60's. He worked with Martin Luther King Jr. to end voter discrimination, segregation, and more. He promoted Black Power, and joined the militant group, the Black Panthers. As a young adult, he joined CORE (Congress of Racial Equality) and joined in sit ins and freedom rides. In 1961, Carmichael went on his first Freedom Ride—"an integrated bus tour through the South to challenge the segregation of interstate travel." He was arrested for stopping at a whites only bus stop, in Jackson, MI. Stokely coined the phrase "Black Power", after seeing that yelling for freedom no longer worked.

## MARTIN DELANY

Martin Delany was arguably the father of black nationalism. He spent his life working to end slavery. He was also a physician and newspaper editor. Delany was the second African American to attend Harvard Medical School and he later served in the Civil War. He was born free, but his grandparents were enslaved. Martin was an important member of the abolitionist movement and even reportedly met with President Lincoln to discuss the possibility of African American men leading African American troops. Delany later died of tuberculosis but he is remembered as a philanthropist, gifted doctor, dedicated abolitionist, and the first Black man to visit Africa as an entrepreneur.

