

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

at **The Children's Museum
of Indianapolis**

BLACK HISTORY IS AMERICAN HISTORY

The contributions of Black Americans surround us every day of the year in every aspect of life—in science, the arts, technology, sports, entertainment, and so much more! For Black History Month, the museum is celebrating all of the amazing contributions that Black Americans have made to our world.

This guide highlights some of the many Black Americans featured in the museum. As you explore the exhibits, be on the lookout for information about these individuals, and discuss the following questions with your group:

- **What did this Black American do?**
- **Why are their contributions important?**
- **What else would you like to know about this person or topic?**

CELEBRATING

BLACK

HISTORY

Did you ride an elevator during your visit today? If so, you may have noticed that the doors opened and closed automatically. Black American Alexander Miles invented automatic elevator doors, which made elevators much safer. Thanks, Alexander!

ARTISTS

LEVEL 1

Ess McKee, featured in the *Lechleiter Indiana Visiting Artist Exhibition*

Ess is one of the museum's 2023–24 Visiting Artists. Visit the display near the Concierge Desk to view one of her paintings and check the schedule of her upcoming workshops. Ess's artwork is also featured in *Stories from Our Community: The Art of Protest* on Level 2.



Ess McKee

LEVEL 2

The Eighteen Art Collective, featured in *Stories from Our Community: The Art of Protest*

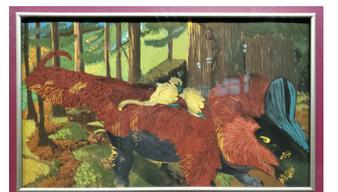
In 2020, 18 Black artists came together in Indianapolis to create a public mural in support of the Black Lives Matter movement. Visit this exhibit to explore their artwork and discover how art can communicate stories, messages, and emotions that words alone cannot always express.



The Eighteen Art Collective

Evan Cooper, featured in the *Dinosphere Art Lab*

Visit the Art Lab to discover how paleo artists like Evan combine scientific knowledge with their own artistic style. Use the green artwork labels to locate Evan's work throughout the gallery.



Evan Cooper, Family Walks

Ava DuVernay, featured in *American POP*

Check out the Barbie® doll inspired by Ava, the first Black woman to win Best Director at the Sundance Film Festival. Ava is also the first Black woman to be nominated for the Golden Globe for Best Director and the Academy Award for Best Picture.

Israel Solomon, featured in various exhibits

Israel's work is all over the museum! Look for this Indianapolis artist's paintings in the *Dinosphere Art Lab* and in multiple locations in *Stories from Our Community*.

INVENTORS

LOWER LEVEL

Visit the back wall of *All Aboard!* to discover how the following inventors revolutionized the railroad industry:

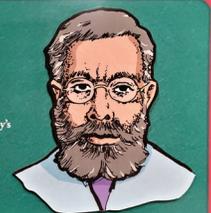
- **Andrew J. Beard**, inventor of the automatic car coupler
- **Elijah McCoy**, inventor of the automatic lubricator, known as "the real McCoy"
- **Granville T. Woods**, known as the "Black Edison" for his inventions in telecommunications

Elijah McCoy
"The Real McCoy"

Elijah McCoy invented the first automatic lubricator.

His "lubricator cup" allowed train engines to be oiled while still in motion. Before McCoy's invention, train engines had to be stopped and started every time they needed to be oiled.

Many who owned the self-lubricating machine bragged of having the "real McCoy," an expression that is still used today to signify genuine quality.



SCIENTISTS

LOWER LEVEL

Dr. Christine M. Darden, pictured in *Beyond Spaceship Earth*

Check out the Flight Adventures display to learn how engineers like Dr. Darden use models to test their designs. Dr. Darden was one of the amazing “human computers” featured in the book *Hidden Figures*.



Dr. Christine M. Darden

LEVEL 4

Dr. Percy Julian, featured in the STEMLab at on Feb. 1, 6, 16, 27, and 28 at 10:45 and 11:45 a.m. and 1:45, 3, and 3:45 p.m.* Visit the STEMLab to learn about the challenges and triumphs of soybean scientist Dr. Percy Julian. Experiment with soybeans in a hands-on activity, and discover how soybeans can be used to make a variety of products.

*Program times may vary. Check the sign near the STEMLab entrance for the most up-to-date schedule.

ATHLETES

LEVEL 1 in Riley Children's Health Sports Legends Experience® (RSLE)

Tamika Catchings

Check out the bobblehead autographed by Tamika, star basketball player who played on the Indiana Fever. During her 15-year career, Tamika won the WNBA title, numerous WNBA awards, and four Olympic gold medals. She is also featured in the Avenue of Champions in the outdoor portion of RSLE.



Tamika Catchings

Reggie Miller

Famous as a “clutch” shooter, Reggie was also one of the best all-around shooters in NBA history. He is featured in the Indiana Pacers display, as well as in the Avenue of Champions.

Willy T. Ribbs

Willy was the first Black American to qualify for the Indianapolis 500. Visit the back of the gallery to see a real car that Willy drove.

Wilma Rudolph

Track star Wilma was the first American woman to win three gold medals at a single Olympics. Check out the touchscreen interactive called A History of Women in Sports to learn more about Wilma’s amazing story. Wilma is also featured in the Avenue of Champions.



Reggie Wayne

Hank Aaron, DaMarcus Beasley, Mamie “Peanut” Johnson, Toni Stone, Oscar Robertson, and Reggie Wayne

All of these amazing athletes have ties to Indiana and are featured in the Avenue of Champions. Be sure to come back to the museum after the outdoor portion of RSLE opens for the season to learn about their stories.

To learn more about the athletes featured in the Avenue of Champions, visit childrensmuseum.org/exhibits/avenue-champions.

LEVEL 2 in American POP

Gabby Douglas

Find the Barbie® doll inspired by Gabby, the first U.S. gymnast to win gold in both the individual all-round and team competition at the same Olympics and the first Black American to win an Olympic gold medal in gymnastics.



Toni Stone, Hank Aaron, Mamie Johnson

PERFORMERS

Level 2 in American POP

Misty Copeland

Find the Barbie® doll inspired by Misty, the first Black female principal dancer with the American Ballet Theatre.



Aretha Franklin



Boyz II Men

Aretha Franklin

Known as the Queen of Soul, Aretha was the first woman inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame. Check out the display on music technology to find one of her records.

The Jackson 5 and Boyz II Men

Explore albums and merchandise to discover how these best-selling groups fit into the music industry's long tradition of boy bands.

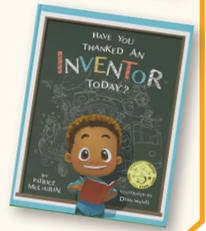
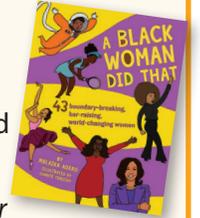
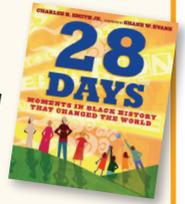
Run DMC

This groundbreaking band was the first rap group to earn a Gold album (500,000 copies sold). Find one of their albums, and consider how Run DMC influenced both music and fashion.

Learn More

Check out these books to more about famous Black Americans:

- *28 Days: Moments in Black History that Changed the World* by Charles R. Smith Jr. and Shane W. Evans
- *A Black Woman Did That: 43 Boundary-Breaking, Bar-Raising, World-Changing Women* by Malaika Adero and Chanté Timothy
- *Have You Thanked an Inventor Today?* by Patrice McLaurin and Dian Wang. This book highlights the many ways that Black inventors impact our daily lives.



CIVIL RIGHTS LEADERS

Level 2 in American POP

Rosa Parks

Find the Barbie® doll inspired by Rosa, whose refusal to give up her seat to White passengers on a bus sparked the Montgomery bus boycott of 1955.

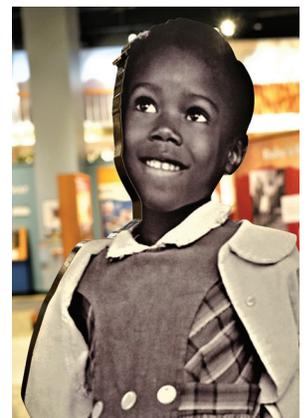
Level 3 in *The Power of Children: Making a Difference*®

Ruby Bridges

When she was only 6 years old, Ruby Bridges became the first Black student to integrate William Frantz Elementary, an all-White school in New Orleans, Louisiana. Explore this exhibit for an in-depth look at Ruby's story, and consider how you can make a difference in the world today.

The Little Rock Nine

In 1957, these nine teenagers became the first Black students to integrate Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas. Visit the "Footsoldiers for Freedom" display to learn about their courage and how they paved the way for Ruby Bridges.



Ruby Bridges