

February is Black History Month and is a month-long celebration of history, contributions and achievements of African Americans. It began in 1926 as a week-long event known as Negro History Week to recognize the history, lives and contributions of Black Americans to American society. In 1976, fifty years after the first celebrations, Negro History Week became a month-long celebration under President Gerald Ford.

Black History month takes place in February because Carter Woodson, an African American historian who graduated from Harvard with a Ph.D., wanted to honor President Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass, who were both born in February. Douglass escaped from American Slavery in 1838 and became a speaker, writer, and renowned abolitionist and prominent leader in the abolitionist movement which fought to end slavery.

Black History month is given a theme each year by the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH). This year's theme, "Black Health and Wellness", honors medical scholars and health care providers, and is particularly appropriate as we continue to fight the COVID-19 pandemic.

As Black History Month comes to a close, here are some ways you can honor the contributions the Black community has made throughout U.S. history and celebrate Black history that is being made every day, this month and every month!

- Podcast: [Brene Brown with Ibram X. Kendi on How to Be an Antiracist](#), the two talk about racial disparities, policy, and equality, but really focus on *How to Be an Antiracist*, which is a groundbreaking approach to understanding uprooting racism and inequality in our society and in ourselves.
- Leader in Real Estate: [Leslie Hale, the only Black, female, head of a public real estate company](#), read more about how she became the first African-American woman to lead a public real estate investment trust.
- Book: [Warmth of Other Suns](#), Non-Fiction untold stories of American history: the decades-long migration of black citizens who fled the South for northern and western cities, in search of a better life.
- Children's Book: [The Other Side](#), children's picture book about a blossoming friendship between girls segregated by a fence and social circumstances.

Here in Kansas City, [Urban Café](#) restaurant is owned by husband-and-wife team, Justin and Rashaun Clark, and features organic, seasonal, and healthy cuisine. Visit [KC Black Owned](#) to find and support additional black-owned businesses near you.