

BHMVA

Black History Museum

& Cultural Center of Virginia

Black History @ Home

Dr. Dorothy I. Height

Voting is a right we have as United States citizens, and it allows us to have a voice in how we are governed. Dr. Dorothy I. Height was an advocate for voting rights, and she was a key figure in the Civil Rights movement. For this **Black History @ Home** activity, we invite you to learn more about Dr. Dorothy I. Height, then complete the activity below.



In August of 1963, when Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. gave his famous "I Have A Dream" speech on the steps of the Washington Memorial, there were only two women standing with him. One was Mahalia Jackson, the famous Gospel singer who told him to tell the people about his dream. The other woman was Richmond, VA native, Dr. Dorothy Irene Height. President Barak Obama called her the "Godmother" of the Civil Rights Movement. Dr. Height was the only woman who spoke that day as the fourth president of the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW). She served as president of the organization for 40 years. She was also the National President of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated from 1947 to 1956.

Under her leadership, she focused on ending lynching of African Americans, restructuring the criminal justice system, and she worked to improve unemployment and illiteracy. She was a staunch supporter of voter registration, and an advocate and voice for African American women. She gave advice to Eleanor Roosevelt and most Presidents of the United States throughout her lifetime. She received the Congressional Gold Medal from President George W. Bush in 2004. Dr. Dorothy I. Height was the 40th African American to have their image on a United States postage stamp in their Black Heritage series.

She was a member of "The Big Six". They were the leaders of the six organizations that were leading the fight for Civil Rights including: Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., John Lewis, James Farmer, A. Phillip Randolph, Whitney Young, and Dr. Height. But because she was a woman, she was often ignored, overlooked, and not allowed to speak.

Activities:

#1 Make a postage stamp of a person who inspires you or who you think should be on a stamp. Write a sentence explaining why you chose that person.

#2 Though she was not often heard on a national level, she had many famous quotes. Quotes are words of wisdom that have been repeated and passed down to inspire. Below are several quotes by Dr. Height, Dr. King, Maya Angelou, and Malcom X. Can you match the quote to the leader? Hint, the answers are below but see how many you can get right first.

Directions: Put a letter on the line in front of the quote of the person who said it.

- A. Dr. Dorothy Height
- B. Maya Angelou
- C. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
- D. Malcom X

1. _____ "Greatness is not measured by what a man or woman accomplishes, but by the opposition he or she has overcome to reach his goals."
2. _____ "Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that."
3. _____ "When someone shows you who they are, believe them the first time."
4. _____ "The future belongs to those who prepare for it today."
5. _____ "Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better."
6. _____ "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."
7. _____ "I look to a day when people will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character."
8. _____ "We have to realize we are building a movement."
9. _____ "No one will do for you what you need to do for yourself. We cannot afford to be separate. We have to see that all of us are in the same boat."
10. _____ "I believe in human beings, and all human beings should be respected as such, regardless of their color."

Answer Key:

1. A
2. C
3. B
4. D
5. B
6. C
7. C
8. A
9. A
10. D