

FEBRUARY IS BLACK HISTORY MONTH

2020 Theme: African Americans and the Vote

The theme was selected by the [Association for the Study of African American Life and History \(ASALH\)](#)

Black History Month also known as African American History Month is observed in February to recognize the history and achievements of African Americans. In 1926, Dr. Carter G. Woodson known as the Father of Black History initiated the annual February observance of Negro History Week to coincide with the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglas. In 1976, the celebration was expanded to Black History Month by President Gerald Ford. Since then, Presidential Messages and Proclamations have been issued to recognize February as Black History Month.

IN THE SPOTLIGHT: JUNE BACON-BERCEY



June Bacon-Bercey. Credit: NOAA News 1977.

June Bacon-Bercey (October 23, 1928 – July 3, 2019) was an American international expert on weather and aviation. She was believed to be the first African-American woman to gain a degree in meteorology and was confirmed to be the first African-American woman to be a televised meteorologist. Bacon-Bercey was born and raised in Wichita in 1928. She earned her bachelor's degree in 1954 from the University of Kansas and her master's degree in 1955 from the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). She earned a Masters of Public Administration (MPA) from the University of Southern California in 1979. She began her career at Sperry Corporation as an engineer then worked for a variety of federal organizations including the Atomic Energy Commission, the National Weather Service Aviation Branch, and the National Meteorological Center. Beginning in 1979, Bacon-Bercey spent nearly ten years as the chief administrator for Television Weather Activities at NOAA and worked on a number of other projects.

Increasing the participation of African-American women in meteorology and geophysical science was a major focus for Bacon-Bercey. In 1978, she published an analysis of African-American meteorologists in the U.S. She won \$64,000 as a contestant on The \$128,000 Question game show in 1977, which she used to establish a scholarship fund for young women interested in atmospheric sciences, administered by the American Geophysical Union (AGU). Bacon-Bercey served on the AGU's Committee on Women and Minorities in Atmospheric Sciences, and helped found the American Meteorological Society's (AMS) Board on Women and Minorities. She was the first woman, as well as the first African-American, to be awarded the AMS Seal of Approval for excellence in television weathercasting when she was working at WGR TV in Buffalo, NY in the 1970s.

Read more: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/07/science/june-bacon-bercey-90-pathbreaking-meteorologist-is-dead.html>