

# UBUNTU

## SDU'S MULTICULTURALISM & SOCIAL JUSTICE NEWSLETTER

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### *FEBRUARY: Black History Month*

#### *Message from the Student Diversity Union (SDU)*

##### *Welcome:*

Rice students, families, faculty, and administration: welcome to the Student Diversity Union's first issue of our monthly newsletter supporting multiculturalism and promoting social justice! Ubuntu, a term regularly used by Archbishop Desmond Tutu, is the Zulu word for "humanity." Thus, SDU has named our newsletter Ubuntu in celebration of the diversity of humanity while also cherishing the value of our oneness—both within and beyond the Rice community.

##### *Monthly Message:*

Begun in 1916 by Carter G. Woodson as Negro History Week, Black History Month was not officially acknowledged until 1976 by President Gerald Ford. Now, in 2021, amidst the national resurgence of the fight for racial justice we must acknowledge two things about Black History Month:

- February, yes, is a time to celebrate Black historical figures and culture and remember Black lives as well as mourn Black deaths.

- However, Black History Month should be treated as a *continuation* of racial justice work within one's self and their community. The shortest month of the year is not enough to cover Black history.

SDU is committed to promoting cultural competency and racial equity in our curriculum, from our teachers and peers, outside our classrooms, on our teams, within our clubs, and among our families. We aspire to further incorporate Black history into the Rice curriculum so that all voices and stories are heard and learned. Let's open our eyes this month to Black stories.

Furthermore, SDU challenges the Rice community to continue this openness throughout March, April, and beyond. Remember: this is not a 28-day journey; this is lifelong learning and working *together*.

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[Here is a video](#) and [PBS NewsHour piece](#). Both examine why it matters *how* society treats Black History Month and why it should be "more than a month."

### ***Significant Dates***

- Feb 1: National Freedom Day (celebrates signing of [13th Amendment](#) – abolition of slavery in 1865)
- Feb 1: Langston Hughes' birthday – famous poet, a leader of Harlem Renaissance
- Feb 4: Rosa Parks' birthday (birth name: Rosa Louise McCauley)
- Feb 7: (1926) First official observance of Negro History Week

- Feb 8: (1986) Oprah Winfrey becomes the first African American woman to host nationally syndicated talk show
- Feb 10: (1964) U.S. House passes [Civil Rights Act of 1964](#)
- Feb 12: (1909) founding of National Association for the Advancement of Colored People ([NAACP](#))
- Feb 13: (1923) Organization of the first Black professional basketball team, The New York Renaissance ("New York Rens")
- Feb 14: (1817 or 1818) Celebration of Frederick Douglass' birthday (the actual date is unknown)
- Feb 17: (1963) Michael Jordan's birthday—famous basketball player (born in NY)
- Feb 20: (1895) Death of Frederick Douglass
- Feb 26: (2012) The day that Florida police officer George Zimmerman shot and killed [Trayvon Martin](#), an innocent teen buying Skittles and walking home

### *Resources*

**Book:** *So You Want To Talk About Race* by Ijeoma Oluo

**Films/Series/Documentaries:**

- [Ma Rainey's Black Bottom](#), [Hair Love](#), [13th](#), [When They See Us](#), [Black Panther](#), [Selma](#), [Soul](#)

**Poems:** "Their Names Are Mine" by Rajnii Eddins; "The Hill We Climb" by Amanda Gorman; "Caged Bird" by Maya Angelou; "I Look at the World" by Langston Hughes; "My Dream About Being White" by Lucille Clifton

**People of the Month:**

- [Kamala Harris](#) – first woman and person of color as Vice President of the U.S., former CA senator; [another source](#).
- [Amanda Gorman](#) – youngest ever inaugural poet; 22-year-old Black woman, Harvard graduate, founder of nonprofit One Pen One Page; [another source](#).

- [Xusana Davis](#) – Gov. Phil Scott's appointee to be Vermont's first executive director of racial equity.
- [Rosalind "Roz" Brewer](#) – only Black female CEO of a Fortune 500 company (Walgreens Boots Alliance), tasked with the distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine.

### *Places to Donate & Small Businesses to Support*

- Vermont Racial Justice Alliance
- Mawuhi African Market
- Harmony's Kitchen
- Kismayo Kitchen
- Jamaican Supreme Food Truck

### *Expanding Our Vocabulary and Perspective*

- [Harlem Renaissance](#)
- [White privilege](#) ([another source](#))
- [Cultural Appropriation vs Appreciation](#) ([another source](#))
- [Ubuntu](#) ([another source](#))