

## **2026 BLACK HISTORY MONTH KICK-OFF ROUND-UP**

Mayor Daniel Lurie hosted the Society's 71<sup>st</sup> Annual Observance of Black History Month 2026 at City Hall with Society guests, city officials, electeds, other notables, Society members and the community, on Wednesday, February 4, 2026 at City Hall.



Mass demonstration at Civic Center, 1964, OpenSFHistory / wnp28.1421

Al Williams, Society Board President, presided over the kick-off. Rev. Ransom-Scott gave the invocation, inviting the audience to pray in their own tradition; Noah Griffin, Jr., led "Lift Every Voice and Sing," followed by Mayor Lurie who spoke to recommitment to address issues facing African Americans and others in the City. Supervisor Shamann Walton acknowledged city officials including fellow Supervisors, Electeds, Chief of Police and Fire Departments and other notable city officials. He reminded the crowd that history and education, once learned, can not be taken away despite the circumstance; channeling "Run DMC," he reminded us that he is Black! District Attorney Brooke Jenkins reminded us that we have to be united in our work; we need a new Black agenda; we need to keep our leaders accountable, speaking to the real needs of the community.

program photo (above,) "Mass demonstration at Civic Center." That 1964 demonstration and march to Civic Center was organized to protest the nomination of Barry Goldwater by the Republican Party at their Convention held at the Cow Palace. Goldwater's platform included overturning the Civil Rights bill signed into law by President Johnson. We have to be vigilant, organize, protest and propose our rights. [Read more about the mass demonstration.](#) Ginger Smyly gave further acknowledgements and

invited folks to the current Society exhibit and programs. Rev. Devon Crawford, pastor, Third Baptist Church, gave the benediction. A reception hosted by the Human Rights Commission followed.

[VIEW: 2026 BLACK HISTORY MONTH KICK-OFF](#)

## AFRICAN AMERICANS IN OCEANVIEW, MERCED HEIGHTS & INGLESIDE

Do you have stories to share about African American businesses on Ocean Avenue and Oceanview (OMI) neighborhoods? The San Francisco Planning Department is seeking community members who can share information about former and current African American businesses in these neighborhoods. Community input will help update the [African American Citywide Historic Context Statement](#) and inform newly identified historic places. To get involved in this research, please contact Maggie Smith, Senior Planner at: [maggie.smith@sfgov.org](mailto:maggie.smith@sfgov.org) or 628-652-7549.



### KEEP THE FAITH!

### REMARKS FROM WILLIAM HOSKINS, THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The recent devastating decisions pertaining to the Voting Rights Act by the Supreme Court have raised the challenges for African American communities to a new level. Much of the progress made in the last thirty years has been not only erased, but replaced by equally draconian hurdles. We here in San Francisco are faced with the additional challenge of a massive, decades long drop in the numbers of Black residents living in the city. The dramatic change from representing 13.5% of the population in 1970 to 4% in 2025 is impressive, representing tremendous cultural, social and economic losses catalyzed by the efforts of the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency.

Those of us left to ensure that the legacy and importance of an African American presence in the great city of San Francisco is not lost, have our marching orders. We must support our religious, social and business organizations and most importantly unique organizations like the Society, already committed and actually responding to this challenge. Looking beyond the city boundaries, we must all be reminded how important the Vote is and will continue to be. Taking every opportunity to vote and to ensure that we all have this right and are using it, is critical to African Americans and minorities here and across the country. **Vote by mail or in person on June 2, 2026.**

The Society's current exhibit, "Black Creativity," speaks to all of the issues mentioned above and we encourage you to visit the Society gallery and to encourage friends to do the same. We will also have a voting information corner available leading up to the June primaries and the November vote.

Should you have questions, special needs, interest in a group or docent tour, [please contact us.](#)

## DR. CARLTON B. GOODLETT STREET CITY HALL EXHIBIT

Did you know that the 1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place is the official address of San Francisco City Hall? Did you know that Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett is featured in a permanent exhibit found in the South Light Court of San Francisco's City Hall?

ITS TIME TO VISIT CITY HALL!

Also showing in City Hall is, "Moving San Francisco," an exhibit by the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency and the Art Commission. This exhibit is composed of photos from the SFTMA archive, including pics of Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett, civil rights leader, physician and publisher of the *Sun Reporter* Newspaper (July 23, 1914 – January 25, 1997.) "Moving San Francisco," is on view at the North Light Court, first floor, City Hall, until June 18, 2026, 8:30 am – 6:00 pm. Please make a point to view this exhibit.

[For more information.](#)

## SAN FRANCISCO BLACK POPULATION CENSUS

5 – 5.5% in 2024-2026 down from 13.4 % in 1970. That is 45,000 people.

## SOCIETY NEWS

The Society's Annual Membership meeting was held on Saturday April 26, 2026 at the Society offices and gallery at 762 Fulton St. While there was not a quorum, reports were given and discussion on the Society's status and future were held. Al Williams, president, talked about four goals for 2026: relocation by November 1, 2026, fund raising to support operations and programs, mounting a public information campaign and establishing board-Society committees. All agreed that we need new members of younger generations, both to take on the work, and, to fashion it to more contemporary modalities. A committee sign up list was distributed.

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## "POTPOURRI - SUBSTANCE AND TEXTURE" AND RECEPTION

On Thursday, February 19, 2026 at the Society gallery and offices, Ginger Smyly, Drew Howard and Shawna Sherman made a presentation on some of the treasures of the Society's archive and their value to interpreting history and culture. Featured were posters and programs from previous Society Black History Month observances; political lapel buttons, including those of the late Jesse Jackson's run for President; "Oral histories of Afro-Americans residing in San Francisco prior to WWII," with a sound clip of Elizabeth Fisher Gordon; and the Birdies "wedding" photo. Rev. Carolyn Ransom-Scott presented her project, "Black Excellence, Black Innovation," an exhibit and website on Black innovators and scientists. Bookmarks with images of the innovator, a brief bio, and description of inventions were distributed. [Learn more about this project.](#)

## SAN FRANCISCO CITY STREETS NAMED IN RECOGNITION OF AFRICAN AMERICANS, part one ELDORIS CAMERON

- **Leidesdorff Street**, 2-block alley between Montgomery & Sansome Streets; William Leidesdorff was a ship captain, San Francisco merchant and city official, 1830s - 1840s
- **Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place**, located between Grove & McAllister Streets; civil rights leader, physician, publisher of the *Sun Reporter*
- **Martin Luther King Drive**, Golden Gate Park; Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., leader and martyr of the modern Civil Rights movement
- **Rosa Parks Lane**, Valencia Gardens' public housing connecting Valencia & Guerrero Streets between 14<sup>th</sup> & 15<sup>th</sup> Streets; civil rights icon & instrumental role in Montgomery Bus Boycott
- **Earl Gage, Jr., Street**, Willow Street between Buchanan & Laguna Streets; 1<sup>st</sup> San Francisco Black firefighter after graduating from UC Berkeley
- **Rev. Cecil Williams Way**, 1 block of Ellis next to Glide Memorial Church between Taylor & Jones; civil rights leader and activist minister
- **Sam Jordan's Way**, block of Galvez Street between Phelps Avenue & 3<sup>rd</sup> Street; owner of Sam Jordan's Bar & Grill, the oldest Black-owned bar in San Francisco
- **Toni Stone Crossing**, Mission Bay, connecting 3<sup>rd</sup> Street & Terry A. Francois Boulevard, south of China Basin Park; Negro League baseball player
- **Willie Mays Plaza**, in front of Oracle Park; Mays, arguably the greatest San Francisco baseball player of the 50s and 60s
- **Willie B. Kennedy Drive**, Hunter's Point, south of Hudson Ave. on Hunter's Point Ridge; City San Francisco Supervisor from 1981-1996
- **Dr. Amos C. Brown Way**, Pierce Street between Fulton & Golden Gate Avenue, Pastor Emeritus, Third Baptist Church
- **Bernice Rodgers Way**, connects John F. Kennedy Dr. & Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive west of chain of Lakes Drive; named for Rec & Park employee who greatly expanded event permitting;
- **Dr. Howard Thurman Way**, "2020 block" of Stockton Street at Pfeiffer Street between Chestnut & Francisco; religious & civil rights leader
- **Vernon Alley**, private way off Delancey Street between Bryant & Brannan Streets; jazz bassist presided over San Francisco scene for more than 60 years; recruited by Lionel Hampton's band 1939 World's Fair on Treasure Island
- **Dr. Maya Angelou Lane**, Mission Bay south of Toni Stone Crossing between 3<sup>rd</sup> Street & Terry A. Francois Blvd.; former San Francisco streetcar conductor, dancer, writer
- **Terry A. Francois Blvd**, Mission Bay; attorney, civil rights activist, first African American San Francisco Supervisor
- **Whitney Young Circle**, Bayview-Hunters Point; civil rights activist, leader of the Urban League
- **Arelious Walker Drive**, formerly Fitch Street in India Basin at edge of Hunters Point Naval Shipyard, pastor & community activist

### References:

Dave Schweisguth, *SFGazetteer.com*; *thevoicesf.org*; *sfchronicle.com*; List of streets in San Francisco, *Wikipedia*; *sfgov.org*, Streets of San Francisco

Coming: **STREETS NAMED FOR AFRICAN AMERICANS IN THE BAYVIEW-HUNTER'S POINT DISTRICT**

RICHMOND MUSEUM HONORS "BLACK ROSIES" OF WORLD WAR II  
MAX MILLARD



*Rosie the Riveter poster, 1942*



*"Black Rosies" of WWII*

Twelve to 14 times each day, a ferry departs the Ferry Building in downtown San Francisco for the city of Richmond. The trip takes just 35 minutes, but a few steps from the terminal is a building that provides a walk back in time to the 1940s. It's the museum of the "Rosie the Riveter World War II Home Front National Historical Park," which honors the millions of women who served the war effort by taking over the industrial jobs formerly done by men only.

The park opened in 2000 and expanded in 2014 to include a large museum with permanent exhibits of artifacts, photos, recordings and documentary films. Among the war workers were over 600,000 "Black Rosies" - African American women who played a critical yet long-overlooked role in the war effort. They filled such jobs as welders, machinists, shipbuilders and aircraft assemblers to support what President Franklin D. Roosevelt called the "arsenal of democracy." The "Black Rosies" were often segregated and paid less than their white counterparts. The 2021 documentary "Invisible Warriors: African American Women in World War II" helps restore their historical importance.

The term "Rosie the Riveter" was the title of a popular song in 1943, inspired by Rosalind Walter, a young woman who worked as a riveter on fighter planes in Connecticut. The song became associated with an iconic 1942 poster of a white woman in work clothes flexing her arm, with the caption "We can do it!"

The museum is staffed mainly by women volunteers. But probably its most famous staffer was a park ranger named Betty Reid Soskin, an African American activist from Oakland who had worked in the all-Black auxiliary of the Boilermakers Union during the war.

When Soskin first visited the park, she was so disappointed by the lack of black representation that, at age 85, she applied for a job as a National Park Service ranger. She was hired, and worked at the park for the next 15 years, mainly as an educator. Thanks to her influence, the park now features permanent exhibits of photos and personal stories of "Black Rosies." Her memoir, "Sign My Name to Freedom," was published in 2018. She died in Richmond in 2025 at age 104.

Another "Black Rosie" was Lucy Cupp, the mother of Eldoris Cupp Cameron and Mae Cupp Threadgill, legacy Society members. She grew up in Oklahoma and was working there as a domestic

and field worker when she learned about the wartime jobs available in the Bay Area. She moved with her husband and family to San Francisco in 1942 and was hired at the Hunters' Point Naval Shipyard, while her husband, Eddie Allen Cupp, worked at Bethlehem Steel.

When the war ended in 1945, Lucy Cupp, A Society founder, stayed on the job, and kept taking classes to upgrade her skills. She eventually rose to payroll supervisor, where she earned numerous commendations for her work. When Hunters' Point closed as an active ship repair facility in 1974, she was transferred to the Mare Island Naval Shipyard, where she remained until her retirement in 1976. As with thousands of black families, the Cupps realized new opportunities while helping to win the war.

Located at 1414 Harbour Way South, the Rosie the Riveter Museum is free and open every day of the year except Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. The park has picnic tables and is an ideal spot for family outings.



Betty Reid Soskin



"Black Rosies" of WWII



. Katherine Newlin (left) and Ruth Spriggs center, Lucy Cupp Pickens, at Hunter's Point in 1943-44

## FROM THE ARCHIVES:

### THE MIGRATION WEST - AN "EXODUS," excerpts

An exhibit, "Black Reflections I," featuring the works of Sargent Johnson and Charles Dawkins, was held at the Society's Sanderson Museum at 680 McAllister, July 18 through September 30, 1976. A program booklet describing the exhibit, the artists and the period, included essays about Blacks in the West. This essay, "Exodus" reminds us of another exodus, closer to home – Blacks from the West moving to British Columbia in 1858 due to second-class citizenship. This essay was not attributed to any author and may have been written by Society members... Editor

By the late 1870s the reconstruction period had ended, the last federal troops were withdrawn and black rights had been returned to former slave masters for safekeeping. Throughout the south Black people had met and discussed what they might do, where they might go. The solution was slow in developing and passed through several preliminary stages.

A committee of 500 black men was formed in the south. They dispatched 100 or more investigators throughout the region to report on labor conditions. Investigators were instructed to work alongside

the people on whose conditions they were to report, and to use their own wages for expenses. Investigators reports painted a picture of unrelenting political, economic and social oppression. Free men and women were still being whipped, some of them by their old owners.

First the committee of 500 discussed an appeal to the President and the Senate "To help us out of our distress, or protect us in our rights and privileges." When this plea went unheated, the committee next asked for land in the west or "and appropriation of money to ship us all to Liberia..." When this request was ignored, the committee considered asking "other governments outside of the United States to help us get away ... and go there and live under their flag."

... Instead, Henry Adams and his committee organized what was later called the "Exodus of 1879," a huge black migration into Kansas and points West. In one year an estimated 20,000 to 40,000 penniless and ragged black men, women and children reached Kansas. They came up the Mississippi by river boats, or made the slow walk up the Chisholm Trail. They were spurred by the knowledge that it was there in Kansas that John Brown first struck a blow against slavery. And they hoped there to own land and homes....

But these early years on the Kansas plains were also filled with heartbreak. In Nicodemus, the only black settlement remaining in Kansas today, the settlers spent their first winter in dugouts and were unable to build their first homes until the following Spring. Shortly afterward they were struck by repeated crop failures, and finally had their crops blown away by searing wind that left the rest of Kansas untouched.

## EVENTS, ETC.

- Exhibit: "Black Creativity," showing now at the Society gallery, Tuesday – Saturday, noon – 4 pm, 762 Fulton St., 2<sup>nd</sup> fl., San Francisco
- Exhibit: "Emory Douglas: In Our Lifetime," part 1, and part 2, throughout the building, closing end of October, AAACC, 762 Fulton St.
- Exhibit: "Unbound: Art, Blackness & the Universe," October 1, 2025 - August 16, 2026, MoAD, 685 Mission St.
- Society Book Club: Tuesday, May 12<sup>th</sup>, June 14<sup>th</sup>, 6 pm, via ZOOM [REGISTER](#)
- Exhibit: "Hilda Robinson: Retrospective," St Mary's College Museum, February 11, 2026, St. Mary's College, Moraga
- "Exhibit: Moving San Francisco," on view at the North Light Court, City Hall, until June 18, 2026, 8:30 am – 6:00 pm

## MEMBERSHIP NEWS

### MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/RENEWAL

[CLICK HERE TO RENEW](#)

(Your annual membership term is January 1 through December 31.)

**LIFE** members, your donation is appreciated

### BREAKING NEWS:

The Society can now receive donations electronically. Please consider giving a year end gift and or sponsorship for the annual 2026 Black History Month programs and beyond. Go to our secure site [DONATE](#)

More news as Society goes "high tech!"

## THE SOCIETY NEEDS YOU!

Volunteers are essential to the Society; serve on the Board, join a committee, volunteer at the gallery or in relocation activities. Now receive a stipend for volunteering. Contact us for more information:

[info@sfaahcs.org](mailto:info@sfaahcs.org) or call 415-292-6172



## 2026 BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Browse photos from our 2026 Black History Month celebrations and see the people who made it meaningful.

BUTTON: VIEW THE FULL GALLERY- NOT AVAILABLE IN THIS VERSION

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### SAN FRANCISCO AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL SOCIETY

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Eldoris Cameron & Ginger Smyly, Co-editors. Al Williams, President. William Hoskins, Executive Director. Kyle Fobbs, Admin. Asst.

Photos: We acknowledge the unidentified photographers who documented the Society history, G. Smyly Eldoris Cameron



**PRAISESINGER NEWSLETTER**

MAY - JUNE 2026