

Legal Services NYC's People of African Descent Anti-Racist Affinity Group is helping LSNYC celebrate Black History Month 2024. The group recently shared a brief history of the month with staff:

"In 1926, Dr. Carter G. Woodson and the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History selected the second week in February for what was then called Negro History Week. Why the second week? Negro History Week was the second week of February based on two important milestones, the birthdays of Frederick Douglass (February 14th) and Abraham Lincoln (February 12th). This was a week of truth-telling about the history of Black people in the United States. The week was also to acknowledge and celebrate the many contributions and accomplishments of Black Americans to society. It was Dr. Woodson's earnest belief that the history and contributions of Black people in the United States and throughout the world were unknown, invisible, ignored, devalued, and suppressed "sometimes intentionally" by those in positions of power. Dr. Woodson knew that teaching Black history was a powerful way to dismantle white supremacy and challenge the status quo of racial discrimination. One main objective of Negro History Week was to encourage schools to celebrate and teach Black history.

Negro History week became an annual week of celebrations. Black people created Black history clubs to teach our history in the diaspora. During the 1960s, some secondary institutions expanded the week-long celebration to a month-long celebration. Finally, in February 1969; Negro History Week became Black History Month. President Gerald Ford declared February as Black History Month in 1972. The month-long celebration starts on February 1st, coinciding with National Freedom Day, which celebrates the signing of the Thirteenth Amendment and the abolition of slavery in the United States in 1865. Presently, Black History Month is celebrated throughout the world.

Black History Month provides a unique moment to learn more about an inclusive American history by focusing on the contributions, trials and success of Black people in the United States and in the world. Black History Month is a time to read about the historical strategies against racism for the liberation of the Black race while also celebrating the courageous history of a people still largely absent in many American history textbooks. Notwithstanding the ongoing system of racial injustice, we can recognize the sacrifices (of time, money and sometime lives) that Black ancestors made in the fight against racism and become part of that anti-racism legacy. Learn more about Black History Month at though the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH) [here](#)."

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