

## Susie King Taylor (First African American Female US Army Nurse and Teacher)

Born a slave in 1848, just 35 miles from Savannah, GA, Susie King Taylor, was educated in secret by freed slaves and white tutors alike. Taking refuge under the protection of the Union Army during the Civil War led to her position

as the first African American woman to teach African American children in a formal school. In 1862, she was enlisted as a “laundress” for an all African American Regiment. The job rarely entailed laundry, instead she became a nurse to the wounded and cook for the Officers.

Susie frequently visited the patients at Camp Shaw in Beaufort, SC, where Clara Barton oversaw the treatment of wounded with great care and devotion.

### Susan McKinney-Steward (First African American Female MD in NY)

graduated from the New York Medical College for Women in 1870, a homeopathic medical school. The school was founded in 1863 by Dr. Clemence Sophia Lozier, a wealthy abolitionist, who became a close friend and mentor to Susan. By studying at all hours Susan earned the honor of being class valedictorian. She worked undeterred by the taunting of the male medical students during clinic hours at Bellevue Hospital.

### Rebecca Lee Crumpler (First African American Female to Earn an MD)

In 1864, Rebecca became the first African American woman in the United States to



Sarah began to lose hair from a scalp ailment during the 1890s. Embarrassed by this condition, she experimented with a variety of home-made remedies and products. This led to the development of the first hair straightening comb and Madame Walker’s Wonderful Hair Grower, a scalp conditioning and healing formula. She also was one of the first women, white or black, to become a millionaire on her own.

**May Edward Chinn, (First African American Female Intern in Harlem Hospital, Cancer Research)** the daughter of a runaway slave, did not plan on becoming a doctor. She originally wanted to be a musician, but she changed to science after

# FAMOUS AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN IN STEM

earn a medical degree, and the only African American woman to graduate from the New England Female Medical College, which closed in 1873.

### Mary Eliza Mahoney (First African American Graduate Nurse)

In 1878 Mary became a student, at thirty-three years of age, in a nursing program established by Dr. Marie Zakrzewska. Sixteen months later, she was 1 of 4 out of 42 who completed the rigorous course. She worked mainly as a private duty nurse for the next 30 years.

### Sarah Boone (Patent Holder for Improved Ironing Board)

patented an improvement to the ironing board (U.S. Patent #473,653) on April 26, 1892. Because it was narrow, curved and reversible, this ironing board was more effective in ironing the sleeves and bodies of ladies’ garments.



### Lydia Newman, (Inventor Hairbrush with Detachable Brush and Bristles)

received a patent for a new and improved hair brush on November 15, 1898. The newly designed brush was easy to keep clean, durable, easy to make and included recessed air chambers that provided ventilation during brushing.

**Madame C.J. Walker (Born Sarah Breedlove Walker, Inventor Straightening Comb and Cosmetics)**

a professor at Columbia Teachers College encouraged her to do so. She graduated from Bellevue Medical School in 1926 and became the first African American female intern at Harlem Hospital.

### Ruth Ella Moore (First African American Female PhD in Bacteriology)

earned her doctorate in the field of bacteriology becoming the first African American woman in the United States to earn a PhD in the natural sciences. Ruth attended Ohio State University and earned a BS in 1926 and a MS in 1927.

### Roger Arliner Young (First African American Female Zoologist and Marine Biologist)

was the first African American woman to receive a PhD in zoology, which she did while juggling research, teaching and caring for her invalid mother.

In 1916, she entered Howard University and took her first science course in 1921. Ernest Everett Just, a prominent black biologist and head of the zoology department at Howard University, recognized her promise and became her mentor. Although she had poor grades, Roger graduated with a BS in 1923 and a PhD in 1927.

**Helen Octavia Dickens (First African American Female in the American College of Surgeons)** At twelve years old, encouraged by her family, her dentist and a secretary at the local YWCA, Helen decided to pursue a medical career. In 1934 she was the only African American woman in her graduating class at the University of Illinois School of Medicine. In 1943, she took a year's concentration in obstetrics and gynecology at Penn Graduate School of Medicine. She was the first African American female in the American College of Surgeons.

**Dorothy Lavinia Brown (First African American Female Surgeon in the South)** was the first African American female surgeon in the South. At only five-months old, her unmarried mother placed her in the Troy

**Jewel Plummer Cobb (PhD in Cell Physiology, Melanin Research, and Cancer Treatment)** a cell biologist and cell physiologist, known for her work with skin pigment, or melanin, has encouraged women and ethnic minorities to enter the sciences through-out her career. In 1950 she earned a PhD in cell physiology from New York University and her research, known for how drugs affect cancer cells, has contributed greatly to the field of chemotherapy.



study stroke, heart disease, and cancer, and she created another program to instruct doctors in chemotherapy.

**Alexa Canady (First African American in Neurosurgery)** became the first African American woman in 1976 to enter the field of neurosurgery as a physician in training. Since then, Canady has become one of the top specialists in the United States. From the Midwest, patients of all ages with particularly baffling neurological disorders or deeply entrenched brain tumors go to her for consultation.

**Mae Carol Jemison (First African American Admitted to the Astronaut Training Program)**, after 2 years as a Peace Corps Medical Officer, decided in 1985, to follow a dream that she had nurtured for a long time. She applied for admission to NASA's astronaut training program. That year's selection was cancelled due to the Challenger disaster, but when she reapplied a year later, Jemison was 1 of the 15 chosen and the first African American ever selected into the training. She has worked in the areas of computer programming, printed wiring board materials,

## FAMOUS AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN IN STEM

Orphanage. By 1948, Dorothy had attended Meharry Medical College in Nashville, TN graduating in the top third of her class.

**Dorothy McClendon (Microbiology Research, US Army)** received a BS in Biology in 1948 from Tennessee A&I State University. Microbiology is the study of microorganisms such as bacteria and fungi. Some of these microorganisms can be harmful to the body and may cause disease by destroying cells in the body.

**Mabel K. Staupers (Desegregation Nurse, US Army)** became known for her leading role in the drive to end segregation in the U.S. Armed Forces Nurse Corps during World War II. In 1948, as executive secretary of the National Association of Colored Graduate Nurses, she persuaded the American Nurses' Association to remove barriers to black membership. She went on to contribute to the establishment of the Booker T. Washington Sanitarium for tuberculosis, known for being one of the only places where black physicians were allowed to treat patients.

**Bessie Blount (Patent Holder for Handicapped Feeding Device)** has been called a "savior of the handicapped" for her invention that allowed disabled World War II veterans to feed themselves, which was awarded a patent on April 24, 1951 and for her unique method of teaching them to write again.

**Jocelyn Elders (US Surgeon General)** born Minnie Jones, her and her siblings spent their childhood laboring in the cotton fields. Jocelyn earned a scholarship to the all-black, liberal arts Philander Smith College. Her father did not see the value of an education and did not want her to go. Upon graduation she enlisted in the U.S. Army's Women's Medical Specialist Corps in 1956. She attended the Arkansas Medical School on the G.I. Bill and became US Surgeon General in 1986.

**Jane Cooke Wright (First African American Female to be Associate Dean of a Medical School and President of the NY Cancer Society)** implemented a new comprehensive program to

nuclear magnetic resonance spectroscopy, computer magnetic disc production, and reproductive biology.

**Patricia Bath, (Patent Holder for Laserphacoprobe for Cataracts)**, an ophthalmologist from New York, received her first patent on July 6, 1999, becoming the first African American female doctor to patent a medical invention. Patricia's patent (#4,744,360) transformed eye surgery by making the removal of cataract lenses more accurate by using a laser device.

**Dale Emeagwali (NTA's Scientist of the Year in Microbiology, Molecular Biology and Biochemistry)** excels in the fields of microbiology, molecular biology, fermentation, enzymology, virology, cell biology, and biochemistry. She earned a Scientist of the Year award for her work in cancer-research. As a minority in a primarily white field she has been commended for her contributions to and accomplishments in medical science and, she works to expose minority youth to the sciences.