

CELEBRATING BLACK HISTORY MONTH

FEBRUARY



UAW-FORD DIVERSITY DIGEST
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Black History Month is a celebration of African American achievements and is an opportunity to promote the often-overlooked roles African Americans have played throughout U.S. history. The origins of Black History Month began in 1915, 52 years after the 13th Amendment abolished slavery, when Carter G. Woodson and others founded the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History in Chicago. It evolved from “Negro History Week,” a celebration Woodson created in 1926 to highlight black contributions to civilization. ¹ President Gerald Ford officially recognized Black History Month in 1976, asking us to honor the neglected accomplishments of African Americans throughout history. This tradition has been honored by every president since. ²



African American inventions have often gone unacknowledged and unappreciated. The following list of inventions and innovations by African-Americans may surprise you:

- Potato chips – Created by George Crum in 1853 while working in Saratoga Springs, New York.
- The gas mask – Invented by Garrett Morgan in 1912, the gas mask saved thousands of soldiers’ lives during World War I. Morgan also invented the modern traffic signal.
- The light bulb – Edison may have invented the concept, but Lewis Latimer added the carbon filament that made lightbulbs last longer and made them commercially viable.
- Open-heart surgery – Daniel Hale Williams established the Provident Hospital and Training School Association in Chicago. In 1893, he performed the first open-heart surgery.
- The blood bank – Dr. Charles Drew created a technique for the long-term preservation of blood plasma and discovered everyone has the same type of plasma, making plasma transfusions universal. ³

Please see the below message from Ford DEI with the FAAN ERG

People thrive when they work for companies where they feel like they belong – where they feel seen and valued, and where they can bring their best selves to work. It’s why moments such as Black History Month are an opportunity to lean into and celebrate the impact that the Black community has on our organization and our country. This year Ford’s theme for Black History Month is Black Resilience – celebrating the strides African Americans have made to thrive and move the needle forward for others. The Ford African-American Network (FAAN) partnered with Ford’s DEI Office to curate four weeks of programming, which all employees can register via SharePoint ⁴ or through the QR code below. This programming focuses on resilience through financial health, self-care, service, and security. Through a mixture of in-person and virtual events, sessions available throughout the month include conversations with local activists, guided meditation and yoga, learning the history of Juneteenth, defining emotional intelligence and resilience, and more.



1. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Carter-G-Woodson>
2. <https://www.santamonica.gov/blog/black-history-month-2023>
3. <https://lpatucson.org/lakeside/black-history-month-honoring-the-achievements-of-african-americans/>
4. <https://azureford.sharepoint.com/sites/fordfaan/SitePages/BMH.aspx>
Photos: themirror.com/ timeforkids.com/ britannica.com/biography.com/nationalwomen'shistorymuseum.com/NASA.gov