

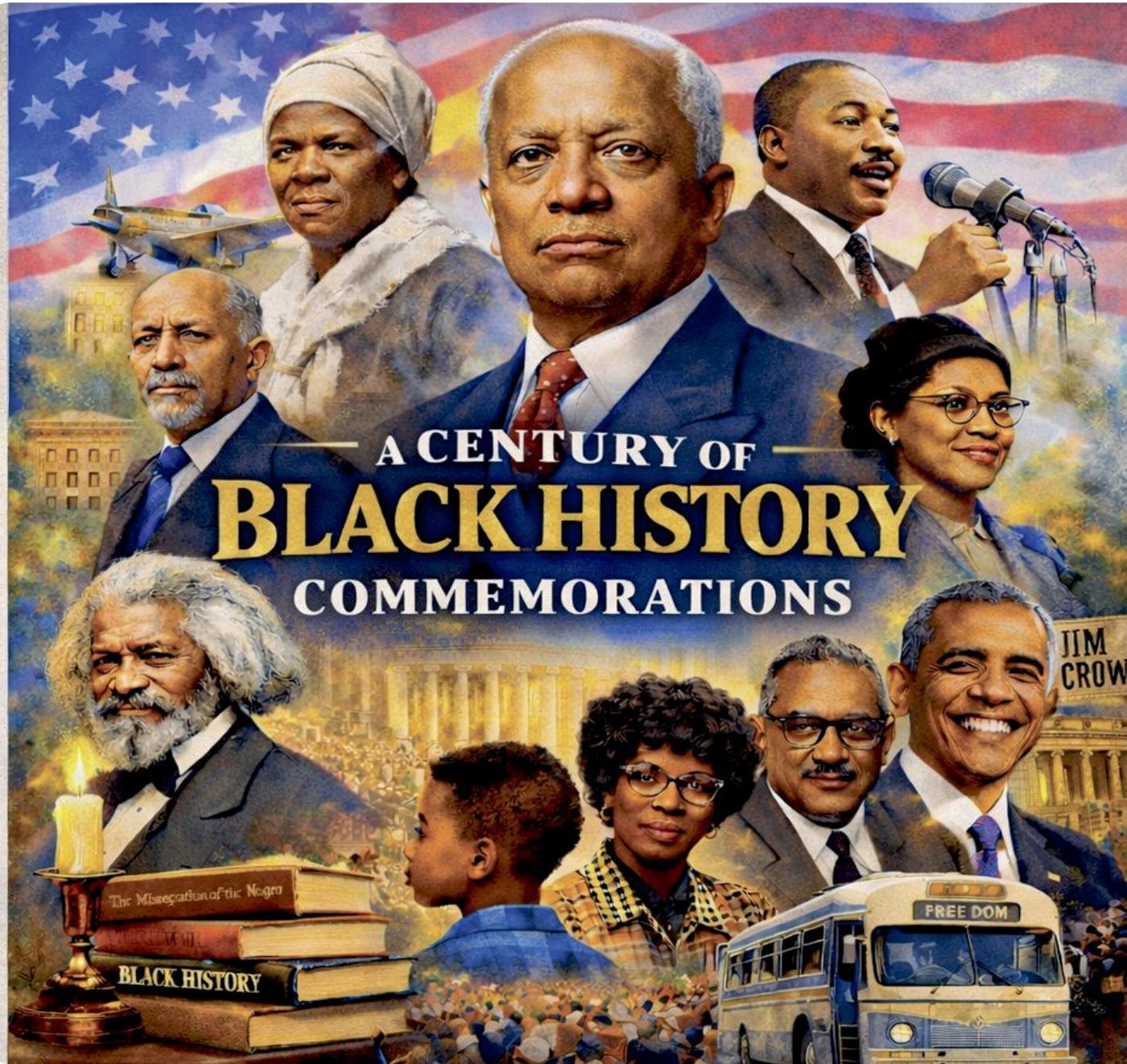


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Black History Month

The origin of Black History Month begins with scholar, journalist and American historian, Dr. Carter G. Woodson (December 19, 1875 - April 3, 1950). The "Father of Black History" introduced "Negro History Week" in 1926 after noticing lack of acknowledgement and education about the contributions of Black Americans.

Find us online!



Honor Dr. Carter G. Woodson: Keep Black History Alive

By Andrea Blackstone

The origin of Black History Month begins with scholar, journalist and American historian, Dr. Carter G. Woodson (December 19, 1875- April 3, 1950). The “Father of Black History” introduced “Negro History Week” in 1926 after noticing lack of acknowledgement and education about the contributions of Black Americans. Dr. Woodson, who was not permitted to attend the American Historical Association conferences, although he was a dues-paying member, felt compelled to cofound the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History (ASALH) in 1915. Woodson’s “Negro History Week” concept later developed into Black History Month.

Woodson, born to parents who had been enslaved, became only the second Black person to earn a Ph.D. from Harvard University when he graduated in 1912. Dr. Woodson began high school at 20, yet he excelled academically and historically.

“2026 marks a century of national



**Dr. Carter G. Woodson,
The “Father of Black History”**
Wiki Commons

commemorations of Black history. Dr. Carter Godwin Woodson, George Cleveland Hall, William B. Hartgrove, Jesse E. Moorland, Alexander L. Jackson, and James E. Stamps institutionalized the teaching, study, dissemination, and commemoration of

Black history when they founded the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History (ASALH) on September 9, 1915,” according to ASALH (<https://asalh.org>).

Dr. Carter G. Woodson, a young person who once worked in coal mines, designated Negro History Week in February of 1926 to honor the birthdays of Fredrick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln.

ASALH stated that Dr. Woodson set themes and provided materials to illustrate the contributions of people of African descent to the movement of history and modern culture.

“As his contemporary W. E. B. Du Bois put it, ‘He literally made this country ... recognize and celebrate each year a week in which it studied the effect which the American Negro has had upon the life, thought and action in the United States. I know of no other man who in a lifetime has unaided built up such a national celebration.’”

President Gerald R. Ford became the first president to issue a message recognizing Black History Month on

February 10, 1976. Public Law 99-244 was passed by Congress in 1986 to designate February as Black History Month.

“These efforts have made February the month when Black history finds its way not simply into the schools of the American nation, but also into cultural heritage sites (museums, archives, libraries, parks, etc.), public squares, workplaces, houses of worship, and homes across the land and across the oceans. These institutions offer sites to discover and learn more about African American history through programming, camps, book displays, and exhibitions,” ASALH noted.

Continue to Celebrate Black History

Dr. Woodson was inspired to bring more attention to Black history. Individuals who want to attend local Black History events and increase their knowledge about contributions made by Black people can continue to keep the tradition alive. Local events are listed below. Visit websites to confirm specific details.

Annapolis

The City Announces 2026 Black History Month

A series entitled “Rooted in Revolution: 250 Years of Black History in Annapolis” will be held in recognition of Black History Month 2026 and in preparation for the 250th anniversary of the United States. The four-part public history and cultural series will take place from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. each Tuesday in February (Feb. 3, 10, 17 and 24) at the Michael E. Busch Annapolis Library, 1410 West Street in Annapolis. The program is free and open to the public. According to a press release, the series will explore the enduring contributions, leadership, resistance, and cultural legacy of Black Annapolitans from the colonial era to the present day. For more information, see <https://www.annapolis.gov/m/newsflash/home/detail/2072>.

The Banneker-Douglass-Tubman Museum hosts various events throughout the year. Visit <https://bdmuseum.maryland.gov/events> to obtain more information.

Baltimore City Black History Month Parade

Stay up-to-date regarding Baltimore City’s Black History Month Parade that is scheduled to be held on Monday, February 16, 2026 via <https://baltimore.org/event/baltimore-black-history-month-parade>.

Pratt Library

Remember to search Pratt Library’s list of upcoming events throughout the month via https://calendar.prattlibrary.org/search/events?card_size=small&days=42&event_types%5B%5D=27239&experience=&order=date.

The Smithsonian

Explore the Smithsonian’s rare collections of our five Historically Black Colleges and Universities partners <https://www.si.edu/events/black-history-month>. Over 100 objects from the collections of five universities will be available on the Concourse Level ©, Bank of America Special Exhibitions Gallery from January 16, 2026 – July 19, 2026.

Learn more about the origins of Black History Month and Dr. Woodson. Visit <https://asalh.org/about-us/origins-of-black-history-month> and <https://asalh.org/about-us/carter-g-woodson-the-early-years-1875-1903/>.

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Heart Health: A Crisis in the African American Community

By Andrea Blackstone

During Heart Health Month, Dr. Lindsey Beauboeuf, a doctor who specializes in family medicine, reminds us that heart disease is progressive, which presents an opportunity for people to decrease or even resolve the damage done to our cardiovascular system, when it is caught early.

"There is however a point of no return where advanced medical and surgical interventions are necessary to treat or prevent heart attacks and strokes," said Dr. Beauboeuf.

A Snapshot of Heart Disease in the African American Community

Dr. Beauboeuf pointed out that because of the disproportionate prevalence of the heart disease risk factors among non-Hispanic Black adults such as hypertension, high cholesterol, obesity, diabetes, they are predominantly affected by heart disease.

"According to the American Heart Association, 'nearly 60% of Black adults have some type of cardiovascular disease (CVD), including coronary heart disease, heart failure, stroke and hypertension; that's compared to about 49% of all U.S. adults who have some type of CVD.' Furthermore, among the Black community, Black women have a higher prevalence of hypertension (58.4%) relative to Black men (57.5%), compared to 50.4% of all men and 43% of all women in the US. It's important to note that aside from genetic reasons, social determinants of health, such as lack of health insurance, economic instability, food deserts, lack of walkable green spaces, also play a huge role in this disparity."

Last year, the American Heart Association publicized these findings along with initiatives to close the health gap <https://newsroom.heart.org/news/>

cardiovascular-health-risks-continue-to-grow-within-black-communities-action-needed.

Heart Disease's Link to Health Conditions

Dr. Beauboeuf stated that high blood pressure impacts heart health by putting strain on the pumping mechanism of the heart. Additionally, cardiovascular health is impacted by many chronic conditions, but it is most helpful to focus on those we can control or treat independently, such as hypertension; diabetes; high cholesterol (hypercholesterolemia); poor diet; poor sleep; tobacco or alcohol abuse; drug abuse; stress; inactivity; and obesity. However, some non-controllable conditions also contribute to heart disease, such as family history, or race. It is interesting to note that in women, research has also linked heart disease to early-onset menopause or a history of preeclampsia or hypertension during pregnancy.

Heart Disease Symptoms

"The most commonly known symptoms of heart disease are chest pain, chest heaviness, shortness of breath, decreased tolerance of physical activities, or even the need to sleep with your head resting higher on more pillows, also known as orthopnea," Dr. Beauboeuf explained.

She further explained that sometimes people, especially women, complain of more subtle symptoms which can be easily overlooked.

"When we start to notice swelling of our legs, or the difficulty of breathing like a sensation of constantly drowning from the fluid backing up and building up in our tissues, there is likely a severe problem," Dr. Beauboeuf added.

Lifestyle Optimization

Dr. Beauboeuf tries to assess the most modifiable areas in her patients' personal routines, activities, and nutrition.

"Taking a comprehensive lifestyle optimization approach is what I've seen be most successful in improving cardiovascular health. That starts with knowing your baseline and your family history, because without data, we do not know what we're working with and what we need to improve. Taking a comprehensive lifestyle optimization approach to improve heart health," she stated.

Dr. Beauboeuf recommended making sure this particular goal is SMART— Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Time-Bound.

"This further emphasizes the need to have regular blood work and visits with a primary care physician. She added that the most successful patients have these goals in mind as they make their daily health decisions such as the decision to go on a daily walk, staying hydrated, eating to maintain a healthy weight, abstaining from alcohol or recreational drugs, reducing salt intake, choosing baked over fried foods, and decreasing red meat intake.

Heart Health in the African Community Remains a Serious Crisis

"We are seeing a critical prevalence of heart disease risk factors in



Dr. Lindsey Beauboeuf, a family medicine doctor, aims to inspire other physicians to pursue care models that prioritize connection, culture, and compassion.

Taty Streetman of Ploosh Photography

African-Americans relative to every other group in the United States, but also relative to the rest of the world. This is even more severe in Black women," said Dr. Beauboeuf.

Since heart health is influenced by a mix of systemic factors and personal circumstances, focus on the basics to make improving heart health less overwhelming. Make a SMART plan of action with specific, measurable, attainable and realistic goals, according to your circumstances.

"One small sustainable change is better than nothing at all," Dr. Beauboeuf advised.

Visit www.yourmozaik.care to learn more about Dr. Lindsey Beauboeuf.

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Community



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Red Cross: 20K Donations Uncollected Due to Winter Storms, Give Blood or Platelets Now

Washington, D.C. and Baltimore, MD, Feb. 3, 2026 — The American Red Cross urges people to take action now to help offset the severe impact of recent winter storms on efforts to rebuild the blood supply during an ongoing blood shortage. Donors of all blood types are asked to make a blood or platelet donation appointment as soon as possible.

Over 500 blood drives have been canceled since the beginning of the year, causing more than 20,000 blood and platelet donations to go uncollected. In the National Capital & Greater Chesapeake Region, 40 blood drives have been affected, with over 1,100 blood product donations going uncollected. In addition to the disruption of blood drives, dangerous weather conditions have also made it tougher to transport vital blood products, which could potentially affect deliveries to

hospitals in some locations.

Patient care is at risk — donors in unaffected areas are asked to book an appointment to give blood or platelets now by using the Blood Donor App, visiting RedCrossBlood.org or calling 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767). Those in areas facing extreme winter weather are asked to give when it's safe to do so. All who come to give Jan. 26-Feb. 28, 2026, will receive a \$20 e-gift card to a merchant of choice. See RedCrossBlood.org/Heart for details.

Hospital impact

Shortfalls in blood and platelet donations caused by recent winter storms are putting further strain on the national blood supply, forcing some hospitals to cancel elective procedures due to blood product shortages. When supplies are critically low, trauma surgeons and other

doctors face the real possibility that blood could run out when it's needed most. Now is the time to give blood or platelets before doctors have to face difficult decisions about which patients can safely move forward with treatment, and who will need to wait.

Upcoming blood donation opportunities can be found by entering your ZIP code at RedCrossBlood.org.

The Red Cross is the primary provider to 60 hospitals in the DMV region. In addition to providing lifesaving blood products, the Red Cross mobilizes relief to families affected by disasters, trains people in lifesaving skills and provides services to active and veteran U.S. military personnel and their families. Donors can feel good knowing that by supporting the Red Cross, they can help family and friends in their communities and across the country.

BET's Ms. Pat Coming to Baltimore Center Stage Feb. 13-14

By Ursula V. Battle

Displaying the side-splitting humor that has made her famous, comedienne and actress Patricia "Ms. Pat" Williams reflected on her journey from convicted felon to starring in her own Emmy-nominated BET+ series.

"I'm a convicted felon, and I could not find a job," she recalled. "I was talking to a case worker who thought I was funny. I was just telling her a bunch of lies. And she ended up telling me I needed to do comedy. I gave it a try and never thought it would get this big. I was just trying to make enough money so I could stop stealing. And other things popped off."

She added, "You know, I had a husband who was in my ear telling me to quit. But I know when I get myself into something, I can feel when it's something there for me. Everybody was just trying to make me work at Target and Walmart. And I was like, 'I'm too old to have that type of career.' And I just stuck with being a comedienne because I've always been a trash talker. I'm the person in the group who don't hold my peace with nobody, and people thought that was funny. But I was just being honest."

The Atlanta native will be bringing her signature, raw brand of comedy to Baltimore Center Stage for three shows February 13-14, 2026. The Baltimore performances are part of her national tour.

"I chose Baltimore because I've been coming to Baltimore for quite a few years now," said Ms. Pat. "And Baltimore has always turned out for me. I am excited. I just love coming to Baltimore."

Season 5 of her Emmy-nominated sitcom "The Ms. Pat Show!" premiered in January. The first four seasons of the R-rated sitcom unpacked everything from drug addiction and abortion to

sexual abuse and dysfunctional family cycles. Season 5 continues that trend as the multi-dimensional Carson family tackles topics including scars left by absent parents, scars created by present parents, and following your dreams through it all.

Ms. Pat said that while her journey to stardom was long and difficult, the timing was perfect.

"I'll tell everybody that I'm glad things popped off when they did," she said. "If this were

given to me when I was a little girl, I had the wrong man in my life, and I was making the wrong decisions in my life. So, I'm glad I was able to get it while I am in my grown woman state, so I know how to handle it."

Season 3 of Ms. Pat's judge show, *Ms. Pat Settles It*, premiered Nov. 4th on BET. In the tradition of Judge Judy, Judge Joe Brown, and Steve Harvey, Ms. Pat takes hold of the gavel to settle people's everyday disputes. Using her signature, hilarious sensibility, Ms. Pat and a jury of her comedy friends resolve high-stakes disputes on the weekly court show. Such disputes include who is financially responsible for dog poop on the rug, do food stamps count as

payment, and what is proper hair wig etiquette.

"The goal through my work is to let people know not to give up no matter what you've been through in life," said Ms. Pat. "Whatever your dream is, you got to believe in yourself. Because you know, people thought I was crazy. I remember telling one of the comedians I worked with I was going to get me a sitcom. He said 'Yeah, that's what everybody says.' And here I am. But one thing I truly believe about life is you have to speak life into whatever you believe in."

Ms. Pat recently co-starred in the remake of the 90s classic film "Don't Tell Mom the Babysitter's Dead." She

also has a YouTube cooking show, "Whisking It All with Miss Pat."

"I think my gift is bringing joy to people and making them laugh," she said. "I just want to see a person smile."

Ms. Pat discussed what people can expect at her performances at Baltimore Center Stage.

"For that hour and a half, or two hours, you're going to spend with me, I'm going to take all of your pain away," she said. "We're going to have a good time. When you are with me, whatever you are going through, I'm going to make sure it is not on your mind."

For tickets, performance times, and other information, visit www.centerstage.org.



Comedienne and actress Patricia "Ms. Pat" Williams comes to Baltimore Center Stage for three shows February 13-14, 2026. Courtesy Photo

Heart Awareness Month and the Fight for Equity in Cardiac Care

By Stacy M. Brown

As Heart Awareness Month begins in February, leaders within the Black medical community are urging renewed attention to a crisis that continues to claim Black lives at higher rates, even as overall cardiovascular deaths decline nationwide.

Dr. Anthony Fletcher, the 20th president of the Association of Black Cardiologists (ABC) and an interventional cardiologist at CHI St. Vincent Cardiology and Medicine Clinic in Little Rock, Arkansas, said the month provides a necessary moment to pause and confront persistent disparities that remain embedded in the health care system.

"Every month should be Heart Month, and every month should be Black History Month," Fletcher said in a telephone interview. "This is an opportunity to focus, to pause for a moment, and to think about the significance of both."

Fletcher was installed as president of the ABC during the organization's spring 2024 membership meeting in Atlanta. Founded in 1974, ABC has a global membership exceeding 2,000 health professionals and advocates committed to improving cardiovascular outcomes in minority communities.

While advances in cardiovascular care have driven down death rates over time, Fletcher said recent trends are concerning. He pointed to an upswing in cardiovascular deaths that many clinicians associate with rising diabetes and obesity rates.

"Despite the improvements, there is still a gap in deaths among people of African American descent in this country," Fletcher said. "The numbers are coming down, but Black people still die at higher percentages compared to our white counterparts."

Hypertension remains one of the

most pressing threats. A veteran doctor who has served patients across Central Arkansas for more than three decades, specializing in all aspects of clinical cardiology, with an emphasis on patient education and prevention, especially in minority and underserved populations, Fletcher said high blood pressure often develops earlier in Black Americans, sometimes beginning in the late teens, and tends to be more severe.

"It puts us at higher risk for congestive heart failure, kidney failure, and stroke," he said. "Heart failure overall is rampant in the African American community."

A graduate of Xavier University and the University of Cincinnati College of Medicine in Ohio, Fletcher also highlighted transthyretin amyloid cardiomyopathy, known as ATTR-CM, a genetic condition that disproportionately affects Black Americans and is frequently overlooked.

"It gets missed, even by doctors," Fletcher said. "But ATTR is just one of many cardiovascular illnesses that disproportionately affect African Americans."

Black Americans who have lived through delayed diagnoses and limited access to specialty care said they hope Heart Awareness Month reminds everyone of the importance of paying close attention to health matters.

"By the time I realized the shortness of breath

wasn't just stress, I had already been to urgent care twice and left feeling brushed off," said Audrey Wright, 38. "Chest pain is not the only warning sign. Fatigue, jaw pain, nausea, swelling in the legs, and getting winded doing ordinary things can

be the heart waving a red flag."

Maurice Boyd, 52, said geography nearly cost him his life. "I live in what they call a cardiology desert," Boyd said.

See **Heart Awareness** Page 9

ABC Association of Black Cardiologists, Inc.

What are CARDIOLOGY DESERTS?

Over 16 MILLION Black Americans live in areas with limited or NO access to cardiology care.

MORE THAN 2 MILLION RESIDE IN AREAS WITHOUT A SINGLE CARDIOLOGIST.

Primarily in the Southern US, driven by poverty, fewer resources, and health inequities.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

- Millions face long travel, limited appointments, or no heart screenings at all
- Limited information leaves many unaware of heart health risks.

WHAT CAN WE DO?

- Advocate for more cardiologists, clinics, and screenings locally.
- Support policies that ensure all communities have access to heart care.

Everyone deserves timely, quality cardiovascular care.

#EveryHeartCounts
cardiologydeserts.org

Every Heart Counts
Cardiology Deserts Campaign
Association of Black Cardiologists

What We'll Do for Love: Health, Motivation, and the Moment It Clicks

By Michelle Petties

Love has a way of moving people to do things they once believed were impossible — especially when it comes to their health.

I recently read a story on Facebook about a man who lost a significant amount of weight so he could qualify to donate a kidney to his wife. He didn't do it because his doctor scolded him. He didn't do it because the scale frightened him. He did it because love demanded something more of him — and he answered.

I've heard similar stories from expectant mothers who stop drinking or smoking the moment they learn they're pregnant. Longstanding habits fall away almost overnight, not because addiction suddenly disappears, but because protecting their unborn child becomes non-negotiable.

I once met a pastor who was morbidly obese, living with diabetes—or dangerously close to it. He told me he wanted to be around to watch his young children grow up. He wanted to attend graduations, walk his daughter down the aisle, and be present for the moments that mattered. That vision of the future became stronger than his desire for unhealthy foods.

Then there was the woman who lost weight simply because she wanted to ride a roller coaster with her son. She didn't talk about blood pressure, BMI, or cholesterol. She talked about joy. About not sitting on the sidelines while her child laughed and lived fully.

These stories linger with me because they raise a central question: *When it comes to their health, what are people willing to do for love?* And maybe more importantly, what are people willing to do for themselves?



Getty Images

Love, it turns out, is a powerful motivator. But it shows up in different forms — and not all of them are healthy.

My sweetie once said something to me that stayed with me. When he noticed I was losing weight, he told me I didn't have to do it for him. But if I wanted to do it for myself, he would support me fully. There was no pressure. No ultimatum. Just permission and partnership.

Contrast that with a neighbor I once had who lost weight after meeting a man she was interested in. He told her plainly that if they were going to have a relationship, she needed to lose weight. She did — but at what cost? Was it empowerment, or was it compliance? Was it self-care, or self-erasure?

These scenarios live at the intersection of love for others and love for self — and that intersection is complicated.

Some people are motivated by devotion. Others by fear of loss. Some by joy. Others by shame. And while motivation can ignite change, it's not always enough to sustain it.

Here's the truth we don't talk about enough: wanting to change and being able to change are not the same thing.

People struggling with weight, food addiction, smoking, or substance use are often labeled as lacking discipline or willpower. But addiction is not a character flaw — it's a condition shaped by trauma, stress, biology, culture, and environment. Many people desperately want to change. They just don't have the tools, support, or understanding to fight what they're up against.

Love might spark the decision. But tools make the difference.

Tools look like education, therapy, community, trauma-informed care, realistic strategies, and compassion — especially self-compassion. Tools help people move beyond short-term sacrifice toward sustainable change.

So, what makes it click?

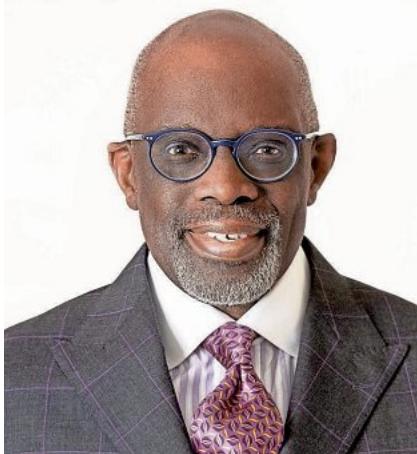
Sometimes it's love for a spouse. Sometimes it's love for a child. Sometimes it's the quiet, revolutionary moment when someone decides, *I matter too.*

The challenge — and the opportunity — is helping people shift from external motivation to internal ownership. From doing it *for someone* to doing it *with support, with dignity, and with the right tools.*

Real health transformation isn't about punishment or pleasing others. It's about connection — to purpose, to support, and ultimately, to oneself.

And maybe the deepest form of love is learning how to fight for your health, not because you're afraid of losing someone else, but because you believe you're worth staying for.

Michelle Petties is a TEDx speaker, Food Story coach, and the award-winning memoirist of *Leaving Large: The Stories of a Food Addict*. After gaining and losing 700 pounds, Michelle discovered the secret to overcoming stress and emotional overeating. Her free workbook, *Mind Over Meals*, reveals her core principles for losing weight and keeping it off.



**Dr. Anthony Fletcher, cardiologist,
20th president of the Association of
Black Cardiologists**

Photos courtesy of
Association of Black Cardiologists

Heart Awareness

Continued from Page 7

"I learned I couldn't afford to be passive. I walked into that office with

receipts, not vibes. Heart care has to be treated like a plan, not a wish."

Jeannette Coleman, 67, said family history should never close the conversation.

"My father died young, so I thought I was ready for this, but you're never ready," Coleman said. "Do not normalize high blood pressure, and do not accept 'It runs in your family' as the end of the conversation. Family history is information, not a sentence."

Beyond individual risk factors, Fletcher said geography plays a decisive role in who receives timely care. He described what clinicians call cardiology deserts, areas with limited or no access to cardiologists.

"There are at least three million African Americans who live in areas where they have access to no cardiologists whatsoever," Fletcher said. "Another 16 million live in places where access is limited."

To confront those barriers, the ABC launched its Cardiovascular Desert

Initiative, a campaign started about five months ago and sponsored in part by Amgen. The pilot focuses on Georgia, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Arkansas, with host cities including Atlanta, Jackson, New Orleans, and Little Rock.

The initiative takes a two-pronged approach. One arm focuses on communities, beginning with LDL-C cholesterol screenings and education around modifiable risk factors. The other arm centers on providers, offering education on national guidelines, consultation access, and direct relationships with cardiologists.

Fletcher said there's a clear call to action. "We want providers to be able to pick up the phone and call a cardiologist when a patient is not responding to treatment," he said.

Fletcher added that progress is visible, pointing to a growing number of Black cardiologists and improved enrollment of Black Americans in clinical trials. Still, he said more work remains. "We still have a gap," Fletcher demanded.

"We just need to work harder, enhance the workforce, and improve educational opportunities for early detection and early treatment."

The decorated physician noted the call to action must remain clear and sustained.

"The first step is awareness," Fletcher said. "We have risk factors that can be modified: hypertension, cholesterol, weight, activity levels, and smoking. People need screening programs, early physicals, and to know their numbers, blood pressure, weight, sugar, cholesterol." He said treatment must follow evidence-based goals.

"Too many people are seen by providers but are not treated to goal," Fletcher acknowledged. "Access matters. Education matters. Funding matters, so people can be screened and have access to the medications they need. Know your numbers," he said. "Know your blood pressure, your weight, your sugar, your cholesterol."

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A Target City

By Dr. S. Rasheem

By the late nineteen-sixties, Baltimore's Black neighborhoods were tense with frustration and expectancy, a feeling as ambient as the summer heat that clung to rowhouse stoops and corner carry-outs. It was in this unsettled space—between the promise of change and the familiarity of neglect Black Power came into focus. The movement gave language and posture to a sense of urgency that had been accumulating quietly for years.

National civil-rights organizations understood Baltimore as both promising and combustible. In 1966, the Congress of Racial Equality formally designated the city a "target," establishing an office on Gay Street and pledging, with characteristic bluntness, to "move to the ghetto." Local groups were already ahead of them. U-Join—the Union for Jobs and Income Now—organized poor and working-class residents around employment and housing, and was led by a twenty-three-year-old named Walter Lively, whose youth was less an anomaly than a sign of the moment. In January of 1967, U-Join sponsored a talk at Morgan State University by Stokely Carmichael, then at the height of his influence.

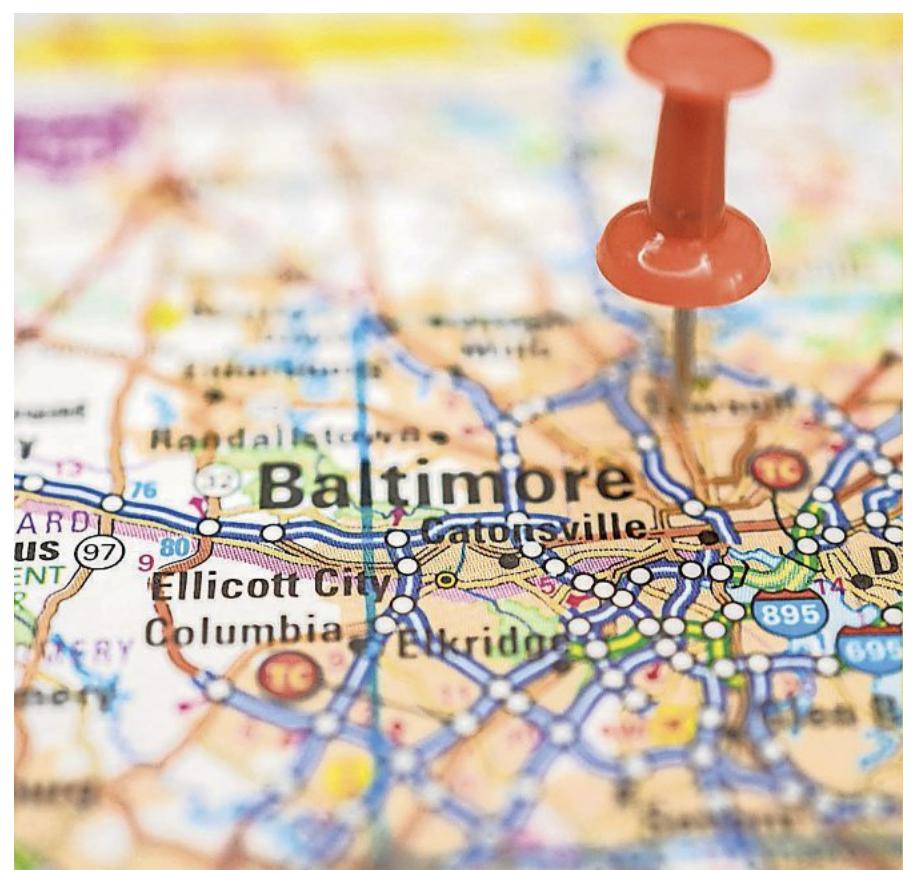
The spring of 1968 sharpened everything. In March, Martin Luther King, Jr., spoke at St. Augustine Lutheran Church in Baltimore, as part of his effort to build support for the Poor People's Campaign in Washington. A month later, he was assassinated. King's assassination tore through Black communities nationwide, but in Baltimore—already identified by federal officials as one of several industrial cities vulnerable to unrest—it landed with particular force. The shock confirmed what many residents had come to suspect: that moral suasion, on its own, would not secure

decent housing, steady work, or safety from the police. The older civil-rights leadership, hemmed in by white political elites and a commitment to gradualism, seemed increasingly disconnected from a younger, working-class population navigating overcrowded schools, unstable employment, and constant surveillance.

By 1970, nearly half of Baltimore's population was Black. Yet political power lagged conspicuously behind demographic reality. Chicago, Cleveland, Los Angeles, Oakland, and Philadelphia—all with smaller Black populations—had elected Black mayors before Baltimore would. The imbalance was not subtle; it was a daily reminder of how thoroughly representation could be deferred.

Between 1968 and 1971, federal and local law enforcement treated Black political organizing less as civic participation than as a security threat. Scrutiny intensified during moments of electoral consequence. In the 1971 mayoral race, Baltimore police monitored the campaigns of Black candidates challenging William Donald Schaefer, passing intelligence directly to his team. Among those watched were Parren Mitchell, later the city's first Black congressman; Milton Allen, who would become Maryland's first Black state's attorney; and Joseph Howard, eventually Baltimore's first Black criminal-court judge. The implication was unmistakable: Black political ambition would be permitted, but only within carefully policed limits. It would take another fifteen years for the city to elect its first Black mayor—long after the numbers suggested it should have happened.

Federal attention was no less intrusive. Most F.B.I. COINTELPRO operations targeted the Black Panther Party, and



Baltimore with Red Pin.
Canva

Baltimore was no exception. Rumors that police intended to assassinate local Panther leaders led to the formation of the Baltimore Committee for Political Freedom, a civilian watchdog group born as much from fear as from principle. Even institutions only adjacent to overt politics drew scrutiny. The Soul School, founded in West Baltimore by Olugbala—formerly Benjamin McMillan—to teach Swahili, African history, and self-determination to neighborhood children, was infiltrated and monitored. In Baltimore, the line between education and subversion, like so many others, proved perilously thin.

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Rambling Rose



By Rosa Pryor

My lands of Mercy! Honey Child, this weather is a mess I tell you. All last week, I was trapped in my house looking out the window at snow and ice. Terrible situation! But it is only going to get better from here. I am still a one-armed bandit with my arm still in a sling from my shoulder replacement. I was told it will be about another 6-8 weeks. Terrible situation! No problem, I am still able to come to your event and cover them for The Baltimore and The Annapolis Times. Believe it or not, snow or no snow, it is a lot going on in the next few weeks. I am going to tell you about a few right now.

Black History Month includes an event at the Museum of Historic Annapolis on February 7 from 11a.m. to 3 p.m. They will have special family activities to commemorate the rich cultural heritage of the African Americans who have helped shape our nation. You will have the opportunity to meet living historians portraying such people as Marita Carroll, a Black Civil Rights activist who took part in the Annapolis lunch counter sit-ins in the early 1960s. Others will portray Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr and so many others from our Black History events. For more information on this event, call 410-990-4754.

Oh! Check this out! On February 11, Emmy Award-winning writer and producer, Lena Waithe will present her playwright debut "Trinity," opening at Baltimore Center Stage, 700 N. Calvert Street. The story follows three women acting out the fantasies that they are too afraid to live out in reality, with their whimsical role-play transforming into an existential adventure. You just have to go

Let's Celebrate Black History Month with Lots of Entertainment

and check it out. Tell them "Rambling Rose" told you about it.

I would appreciate it if you would stop by Barnes & Noble or visit Amazon and pick-up or order my new book. I promise you that you will be so happy you did. I will surprise so many of you, when you turn the pages of this almost 700 pages of stories and photos, it will blow your mind, if I have to say so myself. Don't be surprised while turning the pages in my new book entitle: **"Maryland & Baltimore Black History Stories, Who, What, When, & Where-1950's-1980's"** that you will see a photo of your parents, family member, or you if you are over 60 years old; your old neighborhood, your friends, your neighborhood, your church, school, friends, social events, night clubs, social clubs, politicians, radio, television and newspapers folks that were memorable back in the day. There is a chapter of many of the Caribbean families living in Maryland, musicians and Baltimore's well-known couples, and a chapter of popular under-takers, and funeral homes and their stories. Honey Child! I promise you, it is one of a kind book. I enjoyed and had fun writing it for you and your legacy. A perfect gift for Black History Month.

Oh! Check this out! On February 13, Baltimore School of the Arts will showcase an Exhibition. Baltimore School for the Arts students of all disciplines will join forces in this powerful annual performance of dance, music, and other artistic expressions. It starts at 6 p.m. at Baltimore School for the Arts, 712 Cathedral Street.

There will be a Black History Day Party by the one and only DJ Mike Jones. It is Cabaret Style, it is BYOB and BYOF on Monday, February 16, 1-5 p.m. There will be free set-ups, and it will be held at Diamondz Events & Catering, 9980 Liberty Road in Randallstown, Md. For more information



"Shay," Baltimore's renowned vocalist and her band will be performing at Who Knowz Restaurant & Lounge, 2101 Maryland Avenue for a pre-Valentine's Day Show on Wednesday, February 11 8 p.m. It's FREE!

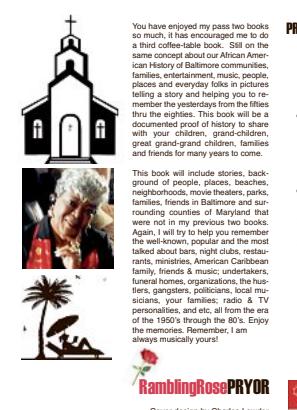


Theo Luv, another one of Baltimore's own doing a "Barry White Tribute" for a Valentine's Heart & Soul Jam with Jean Carn and the legendary Blue Notes on Sunday, February 15. Doors open at 5 p.m. at Celebrity Theater in the Claridge Hotel in Atlantic City, NJ. For room information call 609-487-4400 or 609-626-0043.

call 443-525-5016.

Well, my dear friends, I have to go now to take a pain pill, I had to take my arm out of my sling in order to write to you this week. You know, having a full shoulder replacement is not too bad if you follow the doctors/ surgeons orders. They tell me it will be about 6 to 8 more weeks with therapy before I can use my left hand or arm to slap the hell out somebody.

Hey! Look folks, keep in touch, send me your up-and-coming events, I am looking for places to do book-signings.



Baltimore & Maryland Black History



**Who, What, When & Where
1950s-1980s by Rosa
Rambling Rose PRYOR**

This is the perfect time to purchase "Rambling Rose's" new book, "Maryland & Baltimore Black History Stories, Who, What, When, & Where- 1950's-1980's" on Amazon. I promise you, you won't be able to put it down.

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