

EEI Celebrates

**BLACK HISTORY
MONTH**

EEI Celebrates Black History Month



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"Hard work beats talent when talent fails to work hard." – **Kevin Durant**

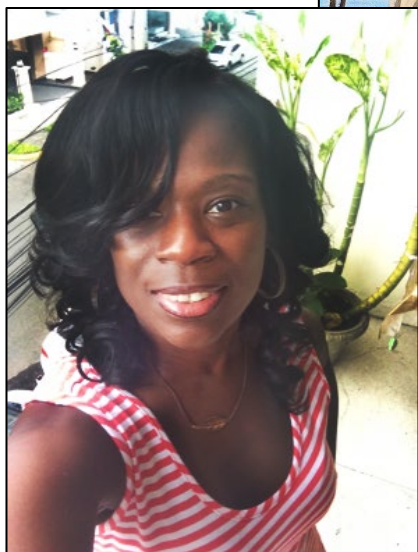
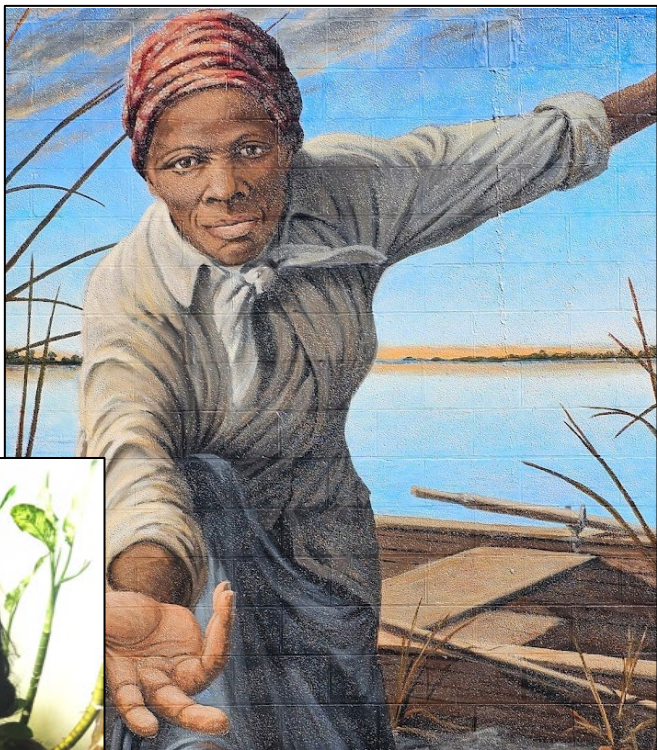
For me, this perspective is empowering because it shifts the focus from comparison to growth. It reminds me that no matter the situation, I have the ability to outwork challenges, stay consistent, and keep improving. This mindset keeps me grounded and motivated, knowing that my success is in my hands.

”

Tim Gerald

Co-Chair, Black EmPowered ERG
Assistant Director, Internal Services

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Harriet Tubman inspires me because she symbolizes community and support for the collective. She easily could have secured her own freedom, but at the risk of her own safety, she went back to free others time and time again. As a leader of EEI’s Black EmPowered ERG, it’s my goal to uplift the voices of ERG members. It would be easy only to focus on my career growth, but helping others is much more rewarding.

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Chastity M. Ryce
Co-Chair, Black EmPowered ERG
Senior Manager, Employee Engagement and Inclusion

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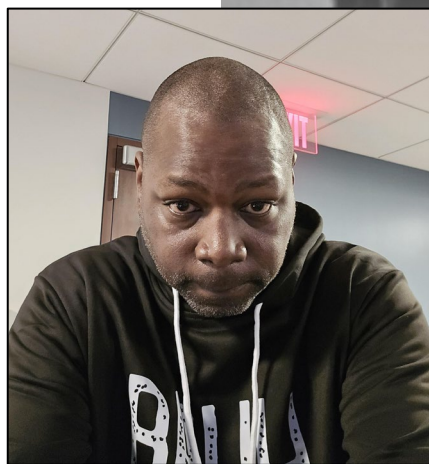
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Nelson Mandela inspires me because he was a leader with many outstanding qualities, including empathy, humility, and a commitment to justice. He also was a pragmatist who refused to give in to revenge and hatred.

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Wondwossen B. Tedla
Senior Programmer

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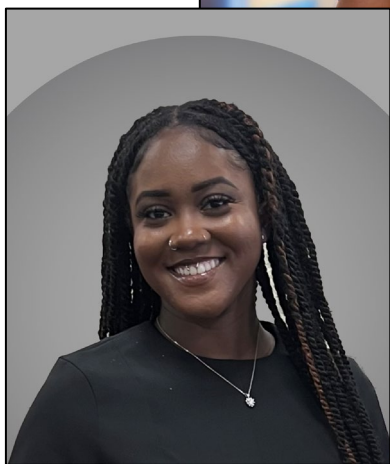
Bob Marley represents a symbol of strength and unity. To me, he’s more than just a musical icon. He’s a revolutionary spirit and a reminder of the power of culture, music, and love.

”

Joseph Thompson

Senior Office Services Representative

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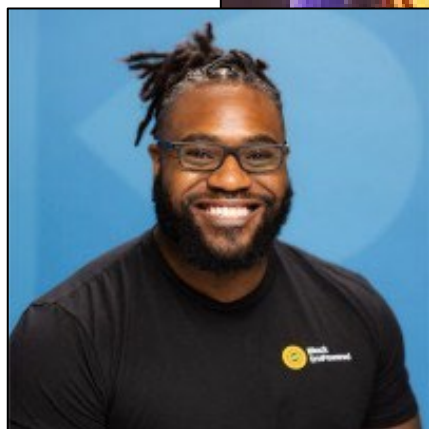
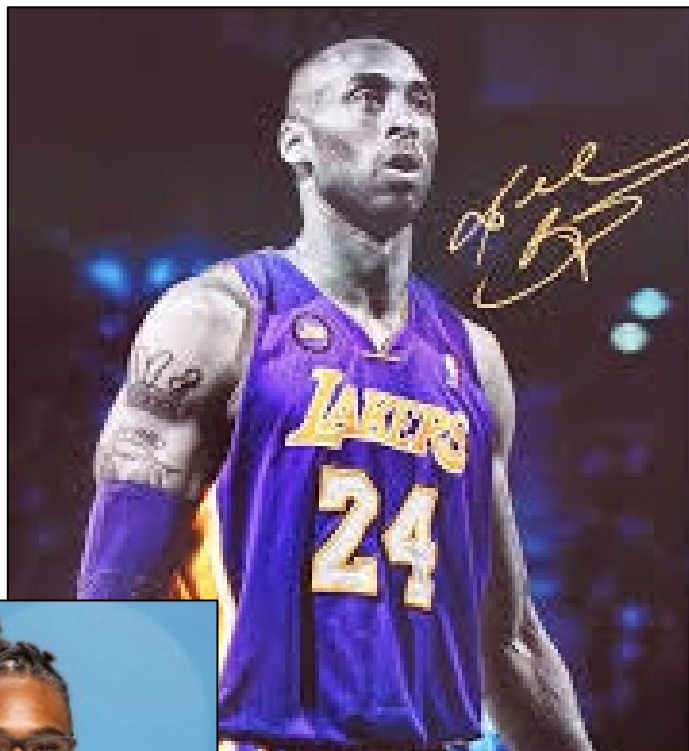
Dara Treseder inspires me because of her mold-breaking leadership in the marketing industry and her unwavering commitment to inclusivity and innovation. As a Black woman in marketing, she has shattered barriers in industries that often lack diversity at the executive level, paving the way for individuals like me to pursue growth and advancement throughout our careers. Her resilience, forward-thinking vision, and dedication to lifting others as she climbs make her a role model for aspiring leaders.

”

Mia Bennett

Marketing Specialist, International Programs

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Kobe Bryant, an iconic NBA player, embodied excellence on and off the court. Known for his “Mamba Mentality,” Kobe’s unmatched work ethic, willpower, and determination inspired generations. A five-time NBA champion with the Los Angeles Lakers, he exemplified dedication to his craft and family. For me, Kobe was more than a player—he was a role model whose perseverance and passion left an indelible impact.

”

Collin Wright
Cyber Security Engineer

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W.E.B. Du Bois inspires me because he overcame the challenges of growing up in a predominantly white town in Massachusetts before moving to the segregated South, where he began analyzing the deep-rooted issues of American racism. He broke barriers in academia and used his knowledge to challenge systemic inequality. As a co-founder of the NAACP, Du Bois tirelessly advocated for education and activism as essential tools for Black empowerment. His visionary ideas continue to shape and inspire my commitment to building a more just and inclusive society.

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Aryeh B. Fishman

Associate General Counsel, Regulatory Legal Affairs

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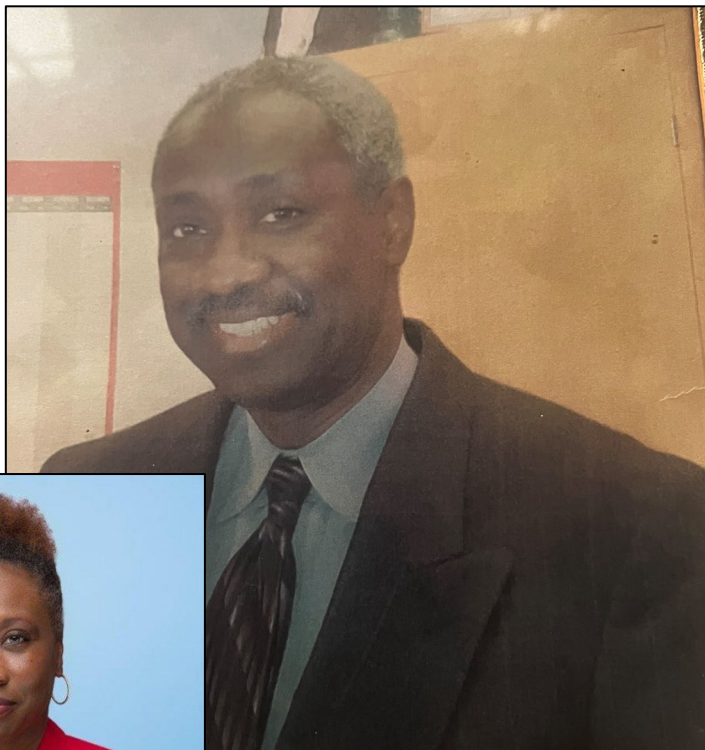
For Black History Month, I am highlighting **Marlon Riggs**. He was a filmmaker, activist, and educator whose work highlighted the Black LGBTQIA+ community in the United States. As an artist, I value his artistic contributions to documenting a part of our history that is seldom acknowledged.

”

John Todd

Senior Graphic Designer and Manager, Creative Services

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The person who inspires me the most is my father, **Haywood C. Cranford, Jr.** Born in 1941 in the deep south to Lillie and Haywood C. Cranford Sr., he was the oldest male out of five children. My father actively participated in marches and sit-ins during the Civil Rights Movement and ultimately earned his Bachelor’s degree from Tuskegee Institute in 1963. I am most inspired by his faith, hard work, and undeniable determination. His example has taught me to be resilient and to never give up.

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Jennifer C. McKinney
Senior Director, Internal Services

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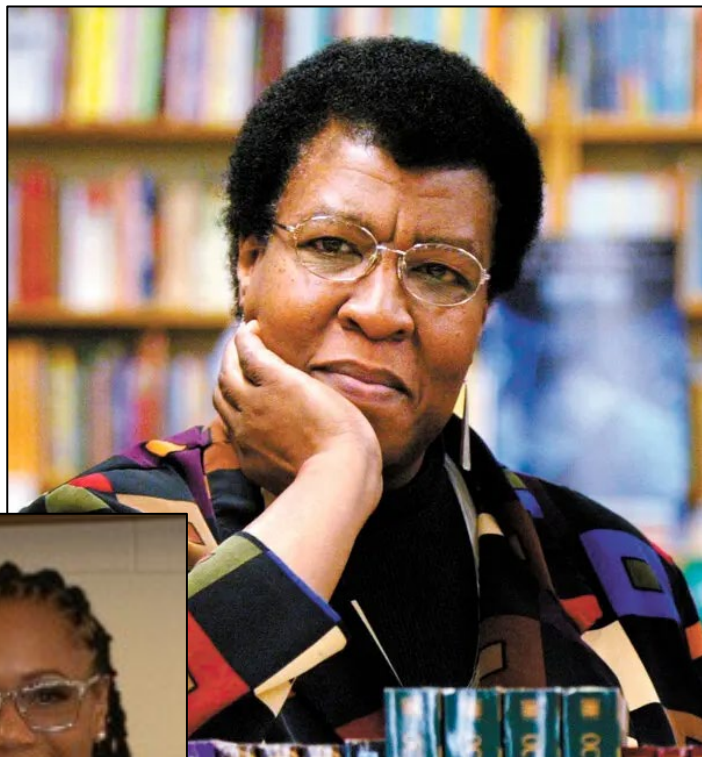
There is a lot to admire about **David Owens**. Whether it's embedding with FEMA during a natural disaster or walking off stage during a keynote presentation to answer difficult questions face to face with the audience members asking them, he embraces every challenge calmly and confidently. Few leaders could command his level of respect, while connecting so strongly with employees at all levels.

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Scott Traweek

Senior Manager, Corporate Customer Outreach

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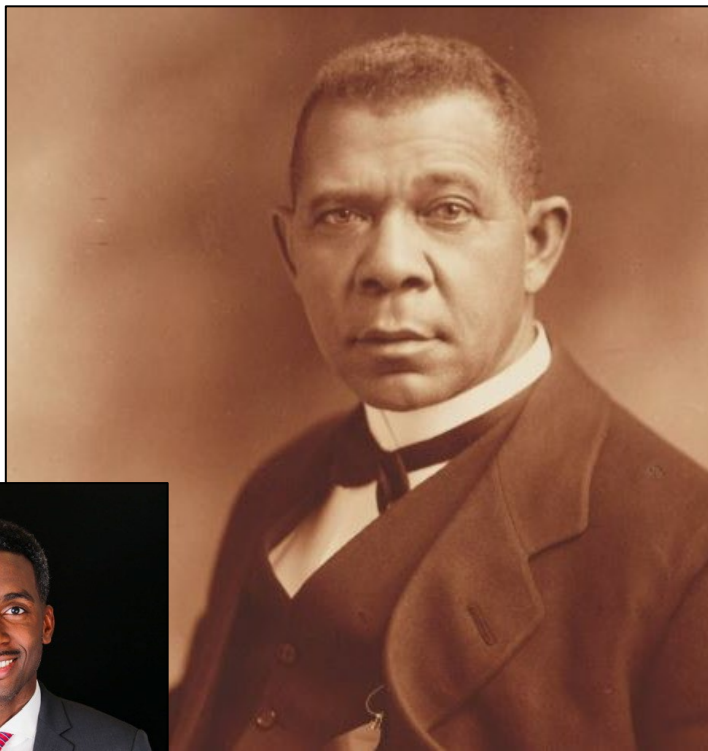
Octavia Butler – a trailblazing science fiction writer – inspires with her imaginative storytelling and ability to tackle complex themes of identity, race, and humanity in works such as *Kindred* and *Parable of the Sower*.

For me, there is nothing better than a story well told! As the first Black woman to gain widespread acclaim in her genre, she paved the way for diverse voices in literature.

”

Carren Spencer
Director, Safety & Health Policy

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An often-misunderstood American figure, **Booker T. Washington** made enduring contributions to U.S. education and society. His relentless advocacy and - at times - controversial opinions, challenged a generation of Americans to realize their personal agency even as they fought for communal acceptance. In the face of seemingly insurmountable odds, Washington remained focused on the importance of academic and economic achievement as the foundation of sustained progress.

”

Monty R. McGee

Director, Cyber Partnerships and Engagements

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Maya Angelou inspires me because of the powerful way she expressed her experiences and emotions through her poetry. She demonstrated that strength is not the absence of struggle, but finding the courage to rise above it, to **speak your truth**, and to find beauty even in the toughest of times.

”

Cynthia Owens
Administrative Manager

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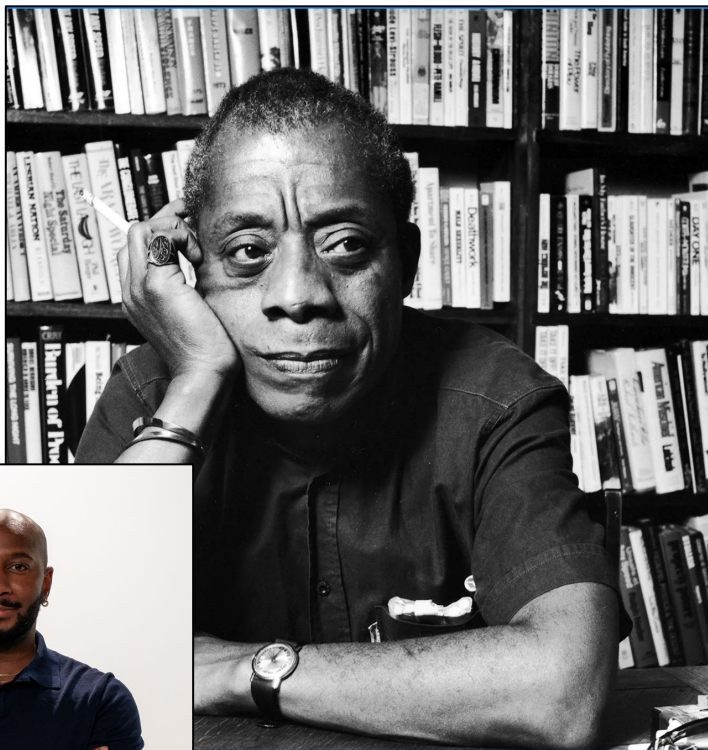
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Civil rights leader and American hero **John Lewis** is a true inspiration to me. Known for his courage, integrity, and lifelong fight for justice, he championed nonviolent protest, risking his life during the Selma marches. His call to make "good trouble" in the pursuit of equality has inspired generations. As a dedicated Congressman, Lewis left an enduring legacy of resilience, hope, and transformative change.

”

Amber Wihshi
Specialist, National Customers

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James Baldwin was an incredible writer who really knew how to get to the heart of things. He wrote about race in America with such honesty and power, it was impossible to ignore. His words, even though he's gone, still feel incredibly relevant today. I especially admire how he never shied away from challenging the status quo.

”

Kendall A. Hughes
Manager, Digital Content and Strategy

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"I wanted to open up possibilities for young people who might excel in places their parents and grandparents never got the chance to explore."

Sheila Johnson, America's First Black Female Billionaire

Sheila Johnson reminds me that being Black is not limited to the stereotypical norms the world places on you. You can play violin and field hockey, love classical music and polo, all while still being authentically Black!

”

Shantel M. Francis, Esq.

Attorney, Corporate & Regulatory Affairs

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Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc., founded November 17, 1911, at Howard University, reached Hampton Institute 35 years later through **Brother L. Julian Haywood** – a transfer student who was initiated at Howard’s Alpha Chapter in 1945.

Brother Haywood understood the need for undergraduate leadership, which fueled his quest to create a community of students who shared values of high attainment. He approached administration and seized an opportunity to make history.

Brother Haywood “looked for people who seemed to be serious, capable, and had character,” and chose the best and brightest 7 distinguished gentlemen on Hampton’s campus who exhibited the fraternity’s cardinal principles of Manhood, Scholarship, Perseverance, and Uplift.

”

Kwame Canty
Managing Director