

Learn about and celebrate Black History:

Dr. Mae Jemison



“**Black Health and Wellness**” – a fitting theme for this year’s Black History Month as the pandemic continues to expose inequities in our healthcare system – explores American healthcare and how it has often underserved the African American community. The theme also acknowledges and celebrates the legacy of Black scholars, doctors, nurses, midwives, and others in the medical field. ([Learn more about this year’s theme here.](#))

Engineer. Physician. Former NASA Astronaut.

“Never be limited by other people’s limited imaginations.”

Throughout her life, **Dr. Mae Jemison** has always been a strong advocate of science, technology, and improving the health of others. Born in 1956, Dr. Jemison grew up in Chicago, IL and in 1992 became the first woman of color to go to space. She earned a Bachelor in Science in Chemical Engineering and a Bachelor of Arts in African and African-American Studies from Stanford University. From there, she attended Cornell Medical School, earning her Doctorate in Medicine in 1981. After graduating, Dr. Jemison joined the Peace Corps and served as a medical officer in Africa for two years.



In 1987, Dr. Jemison applied to NASA’s astronaut program and was selected. On September 12, 1992, Dr. Jemison and six others went into space on the shuttle *Endeavor*.

Since leaving NASA in 1993, Dr. Jemison’s work has not slowed down. She continues working to advance science, technology, education, and healthcare.

- Along with her siblings, she founded the Dorothy Jemison Foundation of Excellence (DJF) in honor of their late mother who was an educator in Chicago Public Schools. DJF is an educational nonprofit that develops and implements teaching materials and programs.
- She launched The Earth We Share, an international space camp for middle and high school students that focuses on helping students understand the impact science, math, and technology have.
- Founded The Jemison Group which integrates “critical socio-cultural issues into the design of engineering and science projects, such as satellite technology for health care delivery.”
- Leads the 100 Year Starship Project
- Wrote a children’s book – Find Where the Wind Goes – based on her life.

To learn more about Dr. Jemison and the impact she has had throughout her life:

· <https://jemisonfoundation.org/>

· <https://www.womenshistory.org/education-resources/biographies/mae-jemison>

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Want to learn about more Black scholars and medical professionals who have made an impact throughout history?

- **Dr. Robert Tanner Freeman** – Born in 1846, Dr. Robert Tanner Freeman was the first African American to receive a degree in dentistry. He applied to Harvard Dental School and was selected as one of the first six people into the program. He graduated with his Doctor of Dental Medicine degree in 1869. In his honor, the Dental Trade Alliance and UNCF now offer the Dr. Robert Tanner Freeman Scholarship to provide scholarships to underrepresented minorities starting their dental education. ([Learn more here.](#))
- **Dr. David Jones Peck** – Born in 1826, Dr. David Jones Peck became the first African American to receive a Doctor of Medicine from an American medical school. He graduated from Rush Medical College in Chicago in 1846 and moved to Philadelphia to practice medicine. However, his medical practice was not successful because so many refused to recognize him or consult with him. In 1852, Dr. Peck emigrated to Nicaragua where he continued practicing medicine until he was killed in the Nicaraguan Civil War. ([Learn more here.](#))
- **Brittany “Tru” Kellman** – Local changemaker, Tru is the Founder, Executive Director, and Lead Midwife of Jamaa Birth Village. Jamaa is a maternal health organization in Ferguson, dedicated to lowering prematurity and infant & maternal mortality/morbidity rates that are significantly higher for Black women. ([Learn more here.](#))

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