THE LINCOLN UNIVERSITY'S

HISTORY OF FIRSTS

& OTHER DISTINCTIONS
1854 — Established as THE nation’s FIRST-degree granting Historically Black College & University (HBCU).

1859 — THE FIRST graduate of The Lincoln University, then—the Ashmun Institute James Ralston Amos.


1874 — THE FIRST African American to graduate Yale School of Divinity James William Morris, an 1871 Lincoln graduate. Samuel (Solomon) Melvin Coles, another Lincoln graduate was actually THE FIRST African American to be enrolled at YDS, however. Morris, who enrolled at YDS after him, finished in only one year due to previously taken courses at Lincoln’s theological program.

1875 — THE FIRST African American Yale Divinity student and THE FIRST African American to receive the Bachelor of Divinity after completion of the full-three-year theological program at Yale Divinity School, Samuel (Solomon) Melvin Coles, an 1872 Lincoln graduate.

1882 – 1995 — THE FIRST Presidents, Rectors and/or College Founders of 10 U.S. & foreign universities. 1882 – Livingstone College (North Carolina) Dr. Joseph Charles Price, an 1879 Lincoln graduate; 1896 – South Carolina State University – Thomas Ezekiel Miller, an 1872 Lincoln graduate; 1903 – Albany State University (Georgia) – Joseph Winthrop Holley, a 1900 Lincoln graduate; 1927 – Texas Southern University (Alumni Founder unrecorded); 1939 – Fort Valley State University (Georgia) – Dr. Horace Mann Bond ’23; (Founding Date Unavailable) – Iheme Memorial College (Nigeria) (Alumni Founder Unrecorded); 1951 – Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (Ghana) (Alumni Founder Unrecorded); 1955 – University of Nigeria (Nigeria) (Alumni Founder Unrecorded); 1995 – The Polytechnic of Namibia – Dr. Tjama Tjivikua ’83.

1884 — THE FIRST alumni publication for a U.S. college, also including abolitionist, orator and educator Frederick Douglass as early writer.

1888 — THE FIRST African American to graduate from the University of Pennsylvania Law School, Aaron Albert Mossell, an 1855 Lincoln graduate.

1910 — THE FIRST African American elected to the Pennsylvania (PA) General Assembly Harry W. Bass, an 1886 Lincoln graduate.

1920 — THE FIRST African American to receive a Ph.D. in Psychology and the Father of Black Psychology Francis Cecil Sumner, a 1915 graduate.


1921 — THE FIRST African American NFL coach (Akron Pros), Fritz Pollard, former coach of The Lincoln University football team (1918-1920 seasons)

1932 — THE FIRST African American to earn both an M.D. (1929, Harvard University) and a Ph.D. (Columbia University) Dr. Hildrus A. Poindexter ’24, was also THE FIRST African American internationally-recognized authority on tropical diseases.

1945 — THE FIRST African American and eighth president of The Lincoln University, Horace Mann Bond ’23.

1950 – THE FIRST Black university affiliated with the College Entrance Examinations Board.

1953 – THE FIRST female graduate of The Lincoln University, Ruth Fales ’53.

1955 – THE FIRST African American female graduate of The Lincoln University, Mrs. Gladys W. Walls ’55.


1963 – THE FIRST group of Peace Corps trainees arrived on Lincoln’s campus for their training session. Ironically, the Peace Corps was modeled after Crossroads Africa, an organization founded by Rev. James Robinson ’35 in 1957.


1963 – THE FIRST African American faculty member at the University of Pennsylvania William Fontaine ’30.


1968 – THE FIRST tenured-African American faculty at Harvard University Dr. Martin L. Kilson, Jr. ’53.


1985 – THE FIRST African American to have a federal building, a courthouse, dedicated in his honor, Clarence Mitchell, Jr. ’32, a Civil Rights activist and longtime lobbyist for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). The Baltimore, Md. courthouse on the west side of Calvert Street bears his name.

1987 – THE FIRST Alumna elected to The Lincoln University Board of Trustees by the Alumni Association, Delores Kirby Coleman ’72.

1987 – THE FIRST female president of The Lincoln University, Niara Sudarkasa, Ph.D.


1999-03 – THE FIRST woman to chair The Lincoln University’s Board of Trustees Adrienne G. Rhone ’76.

Early 2000s – THE FIRST Black dean of the University of Pretoria after the dismantling of Apartheid Sibusiso Vil-Nkomo, Ph.D., ’81.

2003 – THE FIRST American university to have two alumni honored with commemorative, first-class U.S. postage stamps.
DISTINCTIONS

• Over the years, three U.S. Presidents have visited The Lincoln University, including: William H. Taft, on June 18, 1910 delivered the Commencement Address; Warren G. Harding, on June 6, 1921—a day prior to commencement exercises and the dedication of the Alumni Arch, a memorial to Lincoln men who served in World War; and Gerald Ford, who toured the campus in 1978.

• At least 10 Lincoln graduates have served as United States Ambassadors and mission chiefs.

• The coaching staff of The Lincoln University football team once included Fritz Pollard, the soon-to-be-FIRST African American NFL coach and the legendary athlete, actor, singer and activist Paul Robeson.

• The University has had a long relationship with the family of Paul Robeson. His father Reverend William Drew Robeson, who was an escaped slave, received a Sacred Theology degree from Lincoln University in 1876. In the 1870s, Maria Louisa Bustill, who was from a prominent Philadelphia Quaker family of political activists and abolitionists, had been permitted to attend Lincoln. Both she and her sister, Gertrude, married Lincoln men. Paul’s brother, Bill, who was refused entry to Princeton because of his race, attended Lincoln and two years later enrolled in the University of Pennsylvania Medical School, but later received his M.D. from Howard University College of Medicine. His rebellious older brother, Reed, dropped out from Lincoln at the start of his senior year. Paul, himself, always assumed he would attend Lincoln, but won a four year scholarship to Rutgers College as a prize for a competitive examination.

• Robert Walter “Whirlwind” Johnson graduated from the University in 1924 and later became a noted educator and tennis instructor, including for tennis greats Arthur Ashe and Althea Gibson.

• American painter Romare Bearden attended Lincoln for one year before transferring to Boston University in 1930.

• Oscar Brown, Jr. a 1940 Lincoln graduate, became a renowned singer, actor, playwright and director in the 1960s.

THE FIRST Minority president of the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy, Scott Johnson, Ph.D. ’73.

2007 – THE FIRST Minority president of the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy, Scott Johnson, Ph.D. ’73.


• Major League Baseball and Negro Baseball Leagues Hall of Famer Monford “Monte” Irvin, attended the University in the early 1940s. Irvin was a star outfielder with the New York Giants in the late 1940s and early 1950s.

• In 1967, former Lincoln University Professor Charles V. Hamilton and Civil Rights activist Stokely Carmichael collaborated to write and publish their groundbreaking book on black empowerment, Black Power.


• Distinguished individuals who have received The Lincoln University honorary degrees for their accomplishments, include world-famous physicist and Nobel Prize-winner Albert Einstein (1946); Civil Rights Leader Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. (1961); Civil Rights and Labor Union Leader A. Philip Randolph (1967); Supreme Court Justice Earl Warren and Civil Rights Leader Rev. Jesse Jackson (1969); Entertainer and Social Activist Richard “Dick” Gregory (1971); Internationally Renowned singer Marian Anderson (1975); U.S. Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm (1975); Archbishop Desmond Tutu of the Republic of South Africa (1990); Rosa Parks, affectionately hailed as the “Mother of the Civil Rights Movement” (1992); and Award-winning Playwright August Wilson (1996).

• Elected in 2002 as Speaker of the California State Assembly, the Honorable Herb J. Wesson Jr., Lincoln class of 1999.

• Then-the nation’s #1 television show, The Cosby Show, hails The Lincoln University as the college attended by Cosby’s television daughter, Vanessa Huxtable, portrayed by Tempestt Bledsoe during its seventh season.

• After the death of the original trustees of The Barnes Foundation—a more than $25 billion art collection, Lincoln was charged with its stewardship, having the right to nominate four of its then-five-member governing board until 2003 when its board was expanded to 15.

• Lincoln is ranked 21st in the nation among Historically Black Colleges & Universities (HBCUs), according to U.S. News & World Reports.