

Pioneering African American Women in Federal Service

In the center



Michelle Robinson Obama, JD (01/1964-)

First Lady

First Lady Michelle Obama is the wife of the 44th President of the United States and is the first African-American First Lady of the U.S.A. Her

business experiences include: 1985-1988, Harvard Legal Aid Bureau, Cambridge, MA; 1988-1991, Associate Attorney, Sidley & Austin, Chicago, IL; 1991-1992, Assistant to the Mayor, City of Chicago.

Counter clockwise



Shirley A. Chisholm (11/1924-01/2005)

United States House of Representatives, 1969-1983, D. New York

Rep. Shirley Chisholm was the first African-American congresswoman elected to the United States House

of Representatives, November 1968, serving seven terms. She was elected the first Chair, National Congress of Black Women and served until she assumed the esteemed title of Chair Emeritus. Rep. Chisholm was the first woman to run for a major-party presidential nomination. Although unsuccessful, it made her well-known throughout the U.S.A. During her long political career, she fought for the rights of women and minorities. She authored two books: *Unbought and Unbossed* and *The Good Fight*.

Quote: "In the end anti-black, anti-female, and all forms of discrimination are equivalent to the same thing—anti-humanism."



Barbara Charline Jordan, JD (22/1936-01/1996)

United States House of Representatives, 1972-1979, D. Texas

Rep. Jordan was the first African-American person to represent Texas and the first African-American to represent a southern state in the U.S. House of

Representatives since 1898. She served on the Judiciary and Government Operations Committees. A lawyer, Rep. Jordan also served as a member of the Texas Senate, a delegate to two Texas State Democratic Conventions, and a delegate to the Democratic National Convention in 1968 and the 1976 keynote speaker at the National Convention.

During President Nixon's impeachment hearings, she emerged as an eloquent and powerful interpreter of the Watergate investigation when many Americans despaired about the Constitution and the country. After her service in Congress she taught public policy at the University of Texas at Austin and served on the Commission on Immigration Reform.

In 2011, the U.S. Postal Service honored Barbara Jordan, one of the most respected and influential politicians of the 20th century, as part of the *Black Heritage Series*; it is the 34th stamp in the series and the first African-American First-Class Mail[®] Forever Stamp.



Cardiss Hortense Robertson (09/1931 –)

House of Representatives, 1973-1997, D. Illinois

Rep. Cardiss Collins was elected to 12 consecutive terms in the House, as one of the longest serving minority women in the history of the Congress. She continued the legacy of her husband who died in 1972. She is one of

only a handful of women to serve in the Congress for more than 20 years, and the only Black woman in the chamber for six years. Rep. Collins evolved into a dedicated legislator who focused on the economic and social needs of her urban Illinois district.



Yvonne Brathwaite Burke (10/1932 -)

House of Representatives, 1973-1979

D. California

Rep. Yvonne Brathwaite Burke became the first African-American woman elected to the California assembly. At the

1972 Democratic National Convention she served as vice chair of the platform committee, gaining national television exposure.

That same year she became the first African American woman from California elected to the House. Her prime appointment was to the Appropriations Committee and also her election as the first woman chair of the Congressional Black Caucus. In 1973, Rep. Burke became the first Congresswoman to give birth and be granted maternity leave while serving in the Congress.



Katie Beatrice Hall (04/1938 –)

House of Representative, 1982-1985, D. Indiana

Rep. Katie B. Hall was the first African-American from Indiana to serve in the House. Among her chief

accomplishments was shepherding a bill through Congress establishing Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday a national holiday. Before coming to the House Rep. Hall served as a member of the Indiana Senate (1976-1982). In 1978, she was a delegate to the Democratic Mini Convention in Memphis, TN. In 1980, she chaired the Indiana State Democratic convention.



Carol Moseley-Braun, JD (08/1947 -)

U.S. Senate, 1993-1999, D. Illinois

Senator Carol Moseley-Braun is the only African-American woman to serve in the U.S. Senate and in 1993 - only the second Black Senator since the Reconstruction Era. She

served on several Senate Committees: Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs; Judiciary; Small Business; Finance; and Special Aging. Prior to becoming a U.S. Senator, she served in the Illinois House of Representatives and as prosecutor in the Office of the United States Attorney in Chicago. Moseley-Braun held Ambassadorships in New Zealand, Samoa, the Cook Islands, and Antarctica. In 2004, she was candidate for the Democratic nomination for President. She taught law and political science at Morris Brown College and DePaul University, along with a business law practice and business consultancy in Chicago.

**Lorraine C. Miller**

35th Clerk of the United States House of Representatives, 2007 – 2010
The Honorable Lorraine C. Miller was sworn in as 35th Clerk of the House in 2007 – the first African-

American and one of only three women to serve as a House official. Previously, she served as Senior Advisor and Director of Intergovernmental Relations to Speaker Nancy Pelosi and has nearly two decades of experience working for the House. In addition to working for Speaker Pelosi, Ms. Miller has worked for two other Speakers, Jim Wright and Tom Foley, as well as Congressman John Lewis of Georgia. During the Clinton Administration, she served as a Deputy Assistant to the President for Legislative Affairs. In the late 1990s, she worked as Bureau Chief, Consumer Information for the Federal Communications Commission and director of government relations for the Federal Trade Commission. Ms. Miller was elected president of the Washington, D.C. Branch NAACP in 2004 and elected to the NAACP National Board of Directors in February 2008.

**Condoleezza Rice, JD**

Secretary of State, 2005-2009

Secretary Condoleezza Rice was nominated the first African-American woman to serve as Secretary of State. Prior experiences include professor of political science at Stanford University. In 1987, she served as an advisor to the Joint Chiefs of Staff and in 1989 was appointed Director, Soviet and East European Affairs, National Security Council. Ms. Rice returned to Stanford in 1991 and from 1993 until 1999, served as Stanford's Provost. In 2001, appointed National Security Advisor by President George W. Bush, became Secretary of State in 2005. Ms. Rice served eight years in high level positions in Washington, D.C. She returned to Stanford and is professor of Political Economy in the Graduate School of Business; the Thomas and Barbara Stephenson Senior Fellow on Public Policy at the Hoover Institution. She is also a founding partner of The Rice Hadley Group.

Ms. Rice has authored and/or co-authored numerous books, including: two bestsellers, *No Higher Honor: A Memoir of My Years in Washington* (2011) and *Extraordinary, Ordinary People: A Memoir of Family* (2010); *Germany Unified and Europe Transformed: A Study in Statecraft* (1995) with Philip Zelikow; *The Gorbachev Era* (1986) with Alexander Dallin; *Uncertain Allegiance: The Soviet Union and the Czechoslovak Army* (1984).

**Susan E. Rice**

U.S.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations (UN), 2009—present

Ambassador Susan E. Rice serves as the U.S. Permanent Representative to the UN and is a member of President Obama's Cabinet, since her unanimous confirmation by the U.S. Senate on January 22, 2009. Prior work experiences include Senior Advisor for National Security Affairs - Obama for America Campaign; served on the Advisory Board of the Obama-Biden Transition and as co-chair of its policy working group on national security. From 2002-2009, Ms. Rice was a Senior Fellow, Brookings Institution. From 1997 to 2001, she was U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs.

From 1995-1997, Ambassador Rice served as Special Assistant to President William J. Clinton and Senior Director for African Affairs, National Security Council at the White House. Prior to this position, she served as the Director for International Organizations and Peacekeeping on the National Security Council staff from 1993 until 1995.

**Patricia Harris, JD** (05/1924-03/1985)

Ambassador to Luxembourg, 1965-1967

Dean, Howard University Law School, 1969

In 1960, President John F. Kennedy selected her to co-chair the National Women's Committee for Human Rights. In 1965, President Lyndon Johnson chose Harris to become the U.S. Ambassador to Luxembourg. She was the first African-American woman named as an American envoy. She also served as an alternate delegate to the 21st and 22nd General Assemblies of the United Nations. After her diplomatic career, she served as the first African American woman Dean, Howard Law School. In the 1970s, she worked as a corporate attorney until President Jimmy Carter selected her as Secretary, Department of Housing and Urban Development. With her confirmation, she became the first African-American woman to serve as a cabinet secretary. In 1980, President Carter named her the first secretary of the newly reorganized Department of Health and Human Services.

U.S. Postal Service's honored Patricia Roberts Harris as the 23rd American and seventh woman honored on a commemorative postage stamp in the USPS Black Heritage series.

**Alexis M. Herman** (07/ 1947 –)

23rd Secretary of Labor, 1997-2001

Secretary Herman joined the Carter Administration as Director, Women's Bureau. In 1980 she left the government to become an entrepreneur and labor relations expert. In 1989, Herman joined the Democratic National Committee as chief of staff; in 1992 was the CEO of the Democratic National Convention. After Clinton's election in 1992, Herman was appointed assistant to the president and director of the White House Public Liaison Office in 1993. When Clinton was reelected, he appointed her the twenty-third Secretary of Labor.

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