

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
March 17, 2005

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Web Site: [www.usps.com](http://www.usps.com)  
Stamp News Release Number: 05-016

### **Postal Service's popular Black Heritage Stamp series here to stay**

WASHINGTON – To dispel recurring rumors that its long-standing Black Heritage stamp series will be discontinued, a senior postal official reiterated the Postal Service's continued commitment to honoring African Americans on stamps.

"Nothing could be further from the truth. These rumors continue to resurface around this time of year," explained David Failor, Executive Director of Stamp Services, U.S. Postal Service, referring to the deluge of inquiries the Postal Service receives shortly after a Black Heritage stamp issuance.

He said, "As a main component of our annual stamp program, the Black Heritage series is alive and well, and here to stay. We're already looking forward to announcing next year's honoree this fall."

The myth started several years ago through an anonymous email that alerted recipients to buy Black Heritage stamps before Post Offices take them off sale due to lack of demand.

"Black Heritage stamps, as with all commemorative stamps, generally remain on-sale for one year or as long as supplies last," Failor added. "If a local Post Office has sold out, and has yet to replenish its supply, Failor said customers can easily order all stamps online at *The Postal Store* ([www.usps.com/shop](http://www.usps.com/shop)) or by phone at 800-STAMP24."

#### **Black History Month**

To celebrate 2005's Black History Month, the Postal Service issued the Marian Anderson commemorative stamp as the 28th in this popular Black Heritage series (*see attached Backgrounder*). A gifted vocalist, Anderson was one of the greatest classically trained singers of the 20th century and an important figure in the struggle of black Americans for racial equality. Singing a varied repertoire in her rich contralto, Anderson opened doors for other black artists.

Two other African-American related stamp subjects to be issued this summer highlight tennis star and humanitarian Arthur Ashe, and the "To Form a More Perfect Union" commemorative stamp sheet that recognizes ten historic milestones of the civil rights movement.

#### **Arthur Ashe**

As the first African-American man to win Grand Slam tennis tournaments—Wimbledon and the United States and Australian Opens—Ashe became as renowned for his intellect, moral character and commitment to social causes as for his prowess on the tennis courts of the world. A month before Ashe died, *Sports Illustrated* named him "Sportsman of the Year" and ran a color photograph of him by Michael O'Neill on the cover of the Dec. 21, 1992, issue. The stamp image is the photograph used for the *Sports Illustrated* cover, a softly lit, photographic portrait showing Ashe in semi-profile against a black background holding a tennis racket. The image merges

Ashe's athletic and intellectual attributes and reveals his visionary quality.

**To Form a More Perfect Union**

Based on contemporary works of art, each of the 10 stamps on this commemorative stamp sheet pays tribute to the courage and sacrifice of the men and women who participated in the civil rights movement. These milestones in history include the:

- End of segregation in the military through Executive Order 9981;
- Supreme Court ruling on *Brown v. Board of Education*, which ended segregation in public schools;
- Montgomery Bus Boycott, following Rosa Park's refusal to give up her bus seat to accommodate a "whites only" rule;
- Little Rock Nine as the first blacks to attend a previously "whites only" high school;
- Lunch Counter sit-ins in which blacks sat at "whites only" lunch counters until the businesses integrated;
- Freedom Riders who tested a Supreme Court ruling that outlawed segregation at bus stations and terminals;
- March on Washington, where a quarter million Americans witnessed Martin Luther King's "I have a Dream" speech;
- Civil Rights Act of 1964 that prohibited discrimination in public accommodations such as hotels, restaurants and theaters;
- Historic 50 mile, five day march from Selma to Montgomery, AL where 25,000 people petitioned the governor to end discrimination; and,
- Voting Rights Act of 1965 that strengthened the federal government's ability to prevent local and state governments from denying citizens the right to vote because of their race.

Since 1775, the U.S. Postal Service has connected friends, families, neighbors and businesses by mail. An independent federal agency, the Postal Service makes deliveries to more than 142 million addresses every day and is the only service provider to deliver to every address in the nation. The Postal Service receives no taxpayer dollars for routine operations, but derives its operating revenues solely from the sale of postage, products and services. With annual revenues of \$69 billion, it is the world's leading provider of mail and delivery services, offering some of the most affordable postage rates in the world. Moreover, today's postage rates will remain stable until at least 2006. The U.S. Postal Service delivers more than 46 percent of the world's mail volume—some 206 billion letters, advertisements, periodicals and packages a year—and serves seven million customers each day at its 37,000 retail locations nationwide.

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### **Black Heritage Commemorative Stamp Series Backgrounder**

The Black Heritage stamp series is one of the most popular of the U.S. Postal Service's commemorative stamp series. The Marion Anderson Stamp represents the 28<sup>th</sup> in this popular series. Since 1978, the following Black Heritage stamps have been released.

- Harriet Tubman (1978)
- Martin Luther King (1979)
- Benjamin Banneker (1980)
- Whitney Moore Young (1981)
- Jackie Robinson (1982)
- Scott Joplin (1983)
- Carter G. Woodson (1984)
- Mary McLeod Bethune (1985)
- Sojourner Truth (1986)
- Jean Baptiste DuSable (1987)
- James Weldon Johnson (1988)
- A. Phillip Randolph (1989)
- Ida B. Wells (1990)
- Jan E. Matzeliger (1991)
- W.E.B. Du Bois (1992)
- Percy Lavon Julian (1993)
- Dr. Allison Davis (1994)
- Bessie Coleman (1995)
- Ernest E. Just (1996)
- Benjamin O. Davis, Sr. (1997)
- Madam C. J. Walker (1998)
- Malcolm X (El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz) (1999)
- Patricia Roberts Harris (2000)
- Roy Wilkins (2001)
- Langston Hughes (2002)
- Thurgood Marshall (2003)
- Paul Robeson (2004)
- Marian Anderson (2005)

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