



A message from **THE PRESIDENT**

2022 BLACK HISTORY MONTH

February is Black History Month, affording us all the opportunity to reflect on and to honor the many contributions made by African Americans over the course of our nation's history.

Those contributions cover every conceivable field, activity, and discipline. From science to government, from the arts to economics, from agriculture to astrophysics and beyond, Black Americans have distinguished themselves. Their ideas, inventions, and actions have enriched this country – and the world. Lamentably, their achievements have too often been written out of the history books or credit for them taken by others. To redress the historical record and make proper attribution of these accomplishments is one of Black History Month's goals.

It also offers us a time for somber reflection on the systemic racism which has marred – and continues to mar – so many lives, destroyed so much potential, hurt and enraged so many. We mourn the toll that prejudice and bigotry have taken over the centuries, just as we join in the celebration of Black America's determination to overcome hatred and oppression. It is a time to reaffirm our own commitment to making "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" something every citizen can pursue on an equal footing.

The mighty poet, memoirist, and civil rights activist Maya Angelou has written beautifully about the cost of the past and the promise of the future in her poem "A Pledge to Rescue our Youth."

*Young women, young men of color,
we add our voices to the voices of your ancestors
who speak to you over ancient seas
and across impossible mountain tops.*

*Come up from the gloom of national neglect,
you have already been paid for.*

*Come out of the shadow of irrational prejudice,
you owe no racial debt to history.*

*The blood of our bodies
and the prayers of our souls
have bought you a future free
from shame and bright beyond the telling of it.*

*We pledge ourselves and our resources
to seek for you clean and well-furnished schools,
safe and non-threatening streets,
employment which makes use of your talents, but does not degrade
your dignity.*

You are the best we have.

You are all we have.

You are what we have become.

We pledge you our whole hearts from this day forward.

As Black History Month gets underway, we must also pledge our whole hearts to ensuring the dignity of all.

Sincerely,

Daisy Cocco De Filippis, Ph.D.
President

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