

School-wide Activities using the African American Calendar

Every day or every week, focus on brief information about famous African Americans on the morning announcements or morning TVs show. Students can read this information from the calendar for this year and from past years. (It is best if they summarize the calendar information into only several sentences).

Are You Smarter Than...?

In school newsletters feature “Are you Smarter than...(whatever grade)” to ask questions about the honorees. These will hopefully be read by the parents and discussed with their child/ren. This could become a contest with a prize drawing for those who submit the correct answer. These would be typical questions for “Are you smarter than a fifth grader”:

- Who is the famous South Carolina songwriter and vocalist, author of “Stay” and “Little Darlin”? He influenced the direction and sound of early Rock n’ Roll and Rhythm ad Blues in the pop culture during the 1950’s and 60’s.
- Bertie Herbert Bowman was a tenant farmer’s son in Summerton, SC, during the Jim Crow South. He became one of the longest serving African Americans on the US Capitol staff. What are some obstacles he had to overcome because of the Jim Crow laws?
- Beatrice Taylor McKnight served as program director of the Columbia Urban League. What contributions has the Urban League made to the civil rights movement in South Carolina?
- Beatrice McKnight graduated from Booker T. Washington High School. Who was Booker T. Washington and what are some of his contributions that inspired naming a school in Columbia after him?

Wall of Fame

Donella Brown Wilson lived in Columbia during the years that many young families were moving into the new housing projects. When most of those projects were torn down in 2005-2006, a Wall of Fame was created to honor famous and successful people who grew up in the projects. You can see this Wall of Fame at www.chasc.org/cola/WOF.htm. At your school, design a Wall of Fame for the calendar honorees and add to it other famous African Americans and family members of students who had humble beginnings and have become successful adults. Students can create the displays and when the Wall is complete a scavenger hunt can be developed which requires students to use the Wall of Fame for finding pertinent Social Studies information for their scavenger hunt.

Honoree Recognition Day

Establish a recognition day for one or more of the honorees--like Martin Luther King Day. Have the students vote on which one of the honorees should have this special day. Each class or grade can do this separately or it can be done school wide. Use a bulletin board in a common area--cafeteria, media center, a main hallway, and an entrance way--display information about the honoree for each month. The display can be made by students (each month can be assigned to a different homeroom) or by parent volunteers or by designated teachers each month (include guidance, the arts teachers, pull out program teachers, etc.)