

John B. & Marie M. Epps

Civil Rights and Community Leaders



John B. and Marie M. Epps, as civil rights and community leaders, made a positive impact on the lives of South Carolinians during the era of Jim Crow politics and racial discrimination.

As a textile worker at JP Stevens' mill during the early 1960s, John B. Epps sought to ease discriminatory practices that inhibited black employment and career advancement. His efforts led to a federal investigation that resulted in improved conditions and opportunities for black workers to advance in manufacturing positions.

Marie M. Epps, through her work with the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) under the leadership of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., educated elderly citizens to become eligible voters. She and her husband used their personal automobile to transport citizens to voting polls on Election Day.

They also provided housing for young white students who were active in the civil rights movement, as part of their work with the SCLC. They led demonstrations against segregated lunch counters, restaurants, and public swimming pools at great risk and were victims of threats or acts of violence from the Klu Klux Klan (KKK). During the summer of 1965, a student and civil rights worker from UCLA was beaten unconscious by members of the KKK before rescued by citizens of the Black community. After a threat of cross-burning on the front lawn of their home, John Epps once sat up all night at his front window with a loaded shotgun, promising "if they light the cross, they will not live to see it burn."

In later years as entrepreneurs, the Epps' opened the first upscale diner/restaurant in the black community that also provided an outlet for youth with a game room and live entertainment on weekends.

They overcame racial discrimination, lived during 15 U.S. presidential terms, but were overjoyed to vote for and witness the inauguration of Barack Obama as the 44th U.S. president. John Epps passed in August 2009, Marie is now 92, and together they raised eight children.



South Carolina
**AFRICAN
AMERICAN**

HISTORY CALENDAR

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March

Learn more about the people featured in this calendar at www.scafricanamerican.com

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 Writer Ralph Ellison was born in 1914	2 NBA star, Karl "The Mailman" Malone was born in 1954	3 AME Zion Church organized in S.C. in 1867
4 Poll Tax ruled unconstitutional in 1966	5 William H. Hastie confirmed as Federal District Judge of the Virgin Islands in 1937	6 Arthur Mitchell, dancer and choreographer, was born in 1934	7 Slavery abolished in New York in 1799	8 Pearl Bailey was born in 1918	9 Freedom's Journal founded in 1827	10 Jackie Robinson made his professional baseball debut with the Montreal Royals in 1946
11 DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME BEGINS Charlie Pride, country singer, was born in 1938	12 Nat King Cole was born in 1919	13 <i>Uncle Tom's Cabin</i> by Harriet Beecher Stowe was published in 1852	14 Selma march began in 1965	15 Marcus Garvey, Black nationalist, arrived in America from Jamaica, 1916	16 Clifton Wharton is sworn in as ambassador to Norway in 1961	17 ST. PATRICK'S DAY Harriet Tubman died in 1913
18 Lorraine Hansberry's play, <i>Raisin in the Sun</i> , opened on Broadway in 1959	19 James B. Parsons became the first Black chief judge of a federal court in 1975	20 FIRST DAY OF SPRING Fannie Lou Hamer, activist, dies, 1977	21 Quincy Jones, composer and musician, was born in 1933	22 Los Angeles Sentinel founded by Leon H. Washington in 1933	23 Dr. Jerome H. Holland elected to the board of directors of the New York Stock Exchange in 1972	24 Carole Gist was crowned first Black Miss USA in 1990
25 Garrett A. Morgan, scientist and inventor, was born in 1877	26 Blanche Kelso Bruce of Mississippi elected to full term in U.S. Senate in 1975	27 Dred Scott decision handed down by Supreme Court in 1857	28 First cadets graduate from flying school at Tuskegee Institute in 1942	29 Senate refuses to seat P.B.S. Pinchback of Louisiana in 1876	30 15th Amendment was enacted in 1870	31 Jack Johnson, first Black heavyweight champion, was born in 1878