



Diversity Equity Inclusion
Forsyth County Schools

Caribbean American Heritage Month Resources and Social Media Highlights (June 1-30)

Since 2006, June has been designated as Caribbean American Heritage Month by Presidential Proclamation. The month-long observance promotes the rich culture and heritage of the Caribbean American people and their contribution to the United States of America.

The Caribbean comprises a group of diverse islands distributed between the south tip of Florida to a few miles north of Venezuela. To the northwest of these islands is the Atlantic Ocean, where the Bahamas and Bermuda are located, and to the south is the Caribbean Sea. The size of these islands ranges from Cuba, which is 42,827 square miles, to the small island of Saba, which is only 5 square miles. The islands have a combined population of almost 30 million inhabitants.

Resources*:

- National Archives: <https://www.archives.gov/news/topics/caribbean-american-heritage>
- National Women's History Museum: <https://www.womenshistory.org/articles/caribbean-american-heritage-month>
- Institute for Caribbean Studies <https://www.icsdc.org/home>
- Caribbean American Heritage Month: <http://www.cahmusa.com/> and <https://www.caribbeanamericanmonth.org/home?#>
- Caribbean Studies Association: <https://www.caribbeanstudiesassociation.org/>
- U.S. Census <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/stories/2019/caribbean-american-heritage.html>

The Georgia Standards of Excellence integrates the history and work of Caribbean Americans throughout the school year, K-12. However, we know that there is always room for improvement. As part of [FCS' Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan](#), we are collecting information on school diversity activities and plan to provide additional diversity resources for national commemorative months and all school days beyond the one month. Caribbean American history is American history. Acknowledging all our dimensions of diversity, even if it's a small gesture, gives us a chance to be intentional about learning that history. This list below highlights Caribbean Americans in a variety of areas and occupations. Some of the names will

be known to most who read this list; other names are less well known. Regardless of their fame, we celebrate the efforts of all and look forward to adding more in the future.



Social Media Highlights*:

Week 1 (6/1-5):

Intro to month.

Alexander Hamilton: Throughout our history Caribbean Americans have helped create and maintain the strength and independence of our Nation. Alexander Hamilton, who came from the Caribbean island of Nevis, was a key contributor to our Constitution, served as the first Secretary of the Treasury, created the United States Coast Guard, and founded the New York Post newspaper <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Alexander-Hamilton-United-States-statesman> #CaribbeanAmericanHeritageMonth #FCSDEI

Shirley Chisholm: Today for #CaribbeanAmericanHeritageMonth, we honor Shirley Chisholm, the first black congresswoman in U.S. History and first black candidate for a major party's nomination for President of the United States. The daughter of Caribbean immigrants, Ms. Chisholm had a decades-long career battling for gender and racial equality <https://www.biography.com/political-figure/shirley-chisholm> #FCSDEI

Roberto Clemente: Roberto Clemente, a native of Puerto Rico, not only had a stunning Hall of Fame baseball career, but he also served in the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve for 6 years. Renowned for his humanitarian work, he died in a plane crash in 1972, en route to bringing much-needed supplies to survivors of an earthquake in Nicaragua. <https://www.biography.com/athlete/roberto-clemente> #ForsythSalute #CaribbeanAmericanHeritageMonth #ForsythAthletics #FCSDEI

Celia Cruz: Celia Cruz, born Ursula Hilaria Celia Caridad Cruz Alfonso, was a Cuban American singer, who reigned for decades as the “Queen of Latin Music” and the “Queen of Salsa.” Her many honors included three [Grammy awards](https://www.britannica.com/biography/Celia-Cruz) and four Latin Grammy awards. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Celia-Cruz> #CaribbeanAmericanHeritageMonth #FCSDEI #ForsythFineArts

Week 2 (6/8-12):

Claude McKay: Jamaican born Claude McKay, author, poet and journalist, was a literary voice for social justice during the Harlem Renaissance <https://www.biography.com/writer/claude-mckay> #CaribbeanAmericanHeritageMonth #FCSDEI #ForsythELA #ForsythLiteracy

William Thornton: Dr. William Thornton, a native of the British Virgin Islands, designed the United States Capitol and is generally considered the first "Architect of the Capitol". He also first superintendent of the U.S. Patent Office https://www.capitol.gov/html/TOP_2010083029442.html #CaribbeanAmericanHeritageMonth #FCSDEI

Colin Powell: General Colin Powell, the first African American Secretary of State, is the son of Jamaican immigrants. A retired four-star general in the U.S. Army, General Powell held many military and political leadership roles serving our country. <https://www.biography.com/political-figure/colin-powell> #ForsythSalute #CaribbeanAmericanHeritageMonth #FCSDEI

Simone Edwards: Simone Edwards is an author and retired basketball player who played for the New York Liberty and the Seattle Storm. She was the first Caribbean and first Jamaican player in the Women's National Basketball Association. The 6'4" center was known to fans as the "Jamaican Hurricane." <https://www.basketball-reference.com/wnba/players/e/edwarsi01w.html> #CaribbeanAmericanHeritageMonth #ForsythAthletics #FCSDEI

Carmen Herrera: Carmen Herrera, the Cuban American abstract, minimalist painter who struggled for decades to break into the male-dominated art world, celebrated her 105th birthday recently. She held her first solo show at a major New York City gallery at age 100. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Carmen-Herrera> #CaribbeanAmericanHeritageMonth #ForsythFineArts #FCSDEI

Week 3 (6/16, 17 and 19):

Eric Holder: Eric Holder served for six years as the 82nd Attorney General of the United States. Holder, who is of Barbadian origin, was our country's first Black Attorney General. Learn more about his work at <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Eric-Holder> #CaribbeanAmericanHeritageMonth #FCSDEI

Cicely Tyson: Cicely Tyson, whose parents immigrated to the U.S. from Nevis, is an American actress and model. With a career spanning seven decades, Cicely is a Kennedy Center honoree and recipient of the Presidential Medal of Freedom. <http://www.mnialive.com/articles/caribbean-american-heritage-month-wall-of-fame-cicely-tyson-a-living-legend> #CaribbeanAmericanHeritageMonth #ForsythFineArts #FCSDEI

Juneteenth: Today is #Juneteenth, a day to celebrate the end of slavery in the U.S. and also to reflect on the history of slavery, its impact on our country, and how we can work towards racial equality for all Americans. Learn more at <http://ow.ly/BNlr50AcMfN> #FCSDEI

Week 4 (6/22, 24 and 26):

John Russwurm: John Russwurm was born in Jamaica and moved to the U.S., where he became one of the first Black university graduates in the country. John helped found the first newspaper owned and operated by Black Americans <https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/historians-and-chronicles/historians-miscellaneous-biographies/john-brown-russwurm>
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Sir Sidney Poitier: Sir Sidney Poitier, the first Black American actor to receive an Academy Award (1963) for best actor, was born in Miami while his parents visited from the Bahamas. He also directed, served as an Ambassador, was knighted, and was a recipient of the U.S. Presidential Medal of Freedom. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Sidney-Poitier>
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Audre Lorde: Audre Lorde was a native New Yorker and daughter of Caribbean immigrants. Both her activism and poetry speak to the importance of ending oppression and organizing in coalition across many differences <https://www.biography.com/scholar/audre-lorde>
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Week 5 (6/30):

Claire Nelson: To conclude #CaribbeanAmericanHeritageMonth, we recognize Dr. Claire Nelson, founder and past president of the Institute of Caribbean Studies, who spearheaded the establishment of this important heritage month.
<https://www.caribbeanstudiesassociation.org/dr-claire-nelson/>
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*Please note that this is a working list of resources and noteworthy Caribbean Americans. For additions, contact jcaracciolo@forsyth.k12.ga.us. Teachers must thoroughly investigate these resources and align them according to Georgia Standards.