
'New North' Middle School Name Nomination Biographies

Alma Woodsey Thomas (1891 – 1978)



[Alma Thomas](#) was an African-American Expressionist painter and art educator. She attended school at Armstrong Technical High School in the District of Columbia. She then went onto study education at the historic Minor Normal School for young African-American women for her teacher training. She also attended Howard University. This Georgia native spent most of her life in Washington, D.C where [she taught at Shaw Junior High School for 35](#) years where she organized art clubs, lectures and student exhibitions for students. Thomas was actively involved in the local arts community. She started a community arts program that helped produce holiday cards for soldiers at the Tuskegee Veteran's Administration Medical Center. She was the [first African American woman](#) to have a solo exhibition at New York's Whitney Museum of American Art. She exhibited her

paintings at the White House three times.

América Libertad Calderón (Birth unknown – Deceased in 2014)

[América Libertad Calderón](#) was a senior parent organizer and lifelong fighter for justice. She helped lead an organizing of teachers and students to an [immigration reform rally in 2013](#). [She was awarded](#), in 2013, a dedication and service award from DC Mayor Vince Gray for her impact on DC's Latino community. In 2012, she acted to have DCPS remove the requirement for parents to bring in proof of US legal status when enrolling their child in after school programs. She led inclusive parent engagement sessions for DCPS staff and helped elevate the stories of Latino communities. She was selected as one of five national committee members for the America's Book Award for Literature. She designed and piloted the Latino Parent Leadership Program to empower and equip parents to advocate for families and act as liaisons in their school communities. In the 1980s and 90s, she worked on a weekly paper highlighting the human rights violations of the Guatemalan Civil War and worked as a paralegal with an immigration law firm.



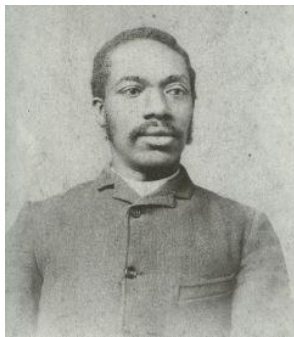
Ida B. Wells (1862 – 1931)



[Ida Bell Wells-Barnett](#) was an African-American investigative journalist, feminist, educator and early leader in the Civil Rights movement. She was one of the founders of the National Association of the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Born into slavery, she was later declared free about 6 months after her birth resulting from the Emancipation Proclamation and the end of the Civil War. She is famously

known for starting an anti-lynching campaign to expose the truth about lynching: An effort to intimidate, control and punish black people who competed with whites for opportunity and political power, rather than a just punishment for criminal acts. She put her life at risk documenting and traveling the south for information about other lynching incidents. She eventually brought her anti-lynching campaign to D.C. to call for reforms from President William McKinley. She also became a teacher in Memphis where she [became a vocal critic](#) of the condition of black only schools in the city. This caused her to be fired from her job. Working on behalf of all women, as part of her work with the National Equal Rights League, Ida B. Wells called for [President Woodrow Wilson](#) to put an end to discriminatory hiring practices for government jobs. She created the first African-American kindergarten in her community and fought for women's suffrage.

John Wesley Cromwell (1846 – 1927) and Otelia Cromwell (1874 – 1972)



[John Wesley Cromwell](#) was a civil rights activist in Washington, D.C. He was also a lawyer, teacher, civil servant, journalist and historian. Born enslaved in Virginia, he grew up in Philadelphia after his [family purchased their freedom](#). He moved back to D.C. in 1871 where he received a law degree from Howard University. He lived in the U Street neighborhood and worked as chief examiner for the U.S. Post Office, for the U.S. Treasury Department and co-founded the American Negro Academy with contemporaries of his time including Paul Laurence Dunbar and Kelly Miller. The goal of this organization was to advance African-American culture through scholarly publishing. .

Otelia Cromwell, John's daughter, was the first African-American to graduate from Smith College and the first African-American woman to receive a PhD from Yale. She also received a Master of Arts at Columbia University. She taught for D.C. Public Schools for several years including M Street High School which became Dunbar High School after it relocated onto a different site in 1916



James Baldwin (1924 – 1987)

[James Baldwin](#) was an American novelist, playwright and social critic. Born in Harlem to a single mother and the grandson of a slave, he was educated at public schools in the Bronx. His works are most famous for insights on race, spirituality, humanity and the black experience in America. He had to delay attending college to support his family but was fired from his job working on the railroad. He struggled to make ends meet working odd jobs. He eventually went to Paris on a fellowship to write more about his personal and racial background. Baldwin had his first novel, [Go Tell It on the Mountain](#), published in 1953. It



would become an [American classic](#). The loosely autobiographical tale focused on the life of a young man growing up in Harlem grappling with father issues and his religion. Over the next ten years, Baldwin moved from Paris to New York to Istanbul, writing two books of essays, *Notes of a Native Son* (1955) and *Nobody Knows My Name* (1961), as well as two novels, *Giovanni's Room* (1956) and *Another Country* (1962). The essays explored racial tension with eloquence and unprecedented honesty. His novels dealt with taboo themes of his time such as homosexuality and interracial relationships.

Josephine Dorothy Butler (1920 – 1997)

[Josephine Butler](#) was a community and political activist in Washington, D.C. She is known most for her activism regarding the welfare of children, parks in the district, world peace and the union movement. She is native to Brandywine, MD, attended Frederick Douglass HS in Upper Marlboro, MD and moved to Washington, D.C. in 1934. She held several community and government leadership positions including the D.C. health planning advisory committee, the D.C. human rights commission and the D.C. coordinating committee for the international woman. She was co-chairman of Friends of Meridian Hill which helped to revive the Northwest Washington park. She held the honor to introduce President Bill Clinton during a 1994 Early Day speech he gave at Meridian Hill Park. In his speech, she was honored by President Clinton as an example of what community activism can accomplish. She also led and organized a parade of 4,000 people to Capitol Hill to mark the anniversary of Earth Day. She fought to oppose union fee increases that did not come with better pay and benefits. She took the lead to merge Adams Elementary, a school for white children and Morgan Public Elementary, a school for black children.

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Lawrence Graves (1922 – 2011)



A native to the district, Dr. Lawrence Graves [graduated from Dunbar Senior High School](#) in 1940. He began his career in education as a teacher at Lincoln Junior High School in Rockville, MD. He taught for DC Public Schools for 8 years in addition to serving as a school counselor and assistant principal for another 17 years. He was principal of Rabault Junior High School and was a [volunteer at Dunbar High School](#). He worked to help students secure scholarships which led to the creation of a process that would be funded by each graduating class at Dunbar HS. In addition, Dr. Graves and his wife started another scholarship fund for Dunbar students and alumni. His efforts raised more than \$1 million dollars.

Georgiana Simpson (1865 – 1944)

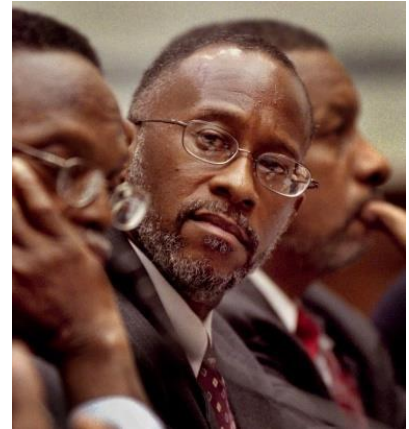
[Georgiana Simpson](#) was a philologist and the first African-American woman to receive a PhD in the United States. Simpson received her doctoral degree in German from the University of Chicago in 1921. Her arrival at the university caused an uproar from fellow white students because she was black. This led to her being asked to move off campus. Unphased, she continued her studies by commuting to campus. A native to Washington, D.C., Simpson attended public school and started teaching at Miner Normal



School in 1885 as well as [Dunbar High School](#) where she taught world languages. Her role as the first black woman to finish a doctorate from University of Chicago went [largely unknown](#). The University of Chicago dedicated a bust of her atop a pedestal in the university's student center which was once only accessible to white men.

Paul A. Quander, Jr.

Paul A. Quander, Jr served as the Deputy Mayor for Public Safety and Justice. In this role, he oversaw the police and fire departments in the district. He was also a Chief of Staff for Mayor Vince Gray. The [span of his career](#) also includes serving as a lawyer for the Assistant Corporation Counsel, time as a federal prosecutor as a U.S. Attorney and multiple leadership positions at the D.C. Department of Corrections. He was appointed by President George W. Bush to be the first Director of the Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency in the district. He was born and raised in Washington, D.C. Paul was a third generation Washingtonian and the son of two DC Public School teachers. He is also a 1973 graduate of Coolidge High School and attended Virginia State and Howard University Law School.



Mary Ann Shadd (1823 – 1893)

[Mary Ann Shadd](#) was an abolitionist and the first female African-American newspaper editor in North America when she started a black newspaper called *The Provincial Freeman*. This newspaper was a publication specifically for escaped slaves and it encouraged them to immigrate to Canada. She was born a free woman and her family was dedicated to the abolition of slavery. A native to Wilmington, Delaware, she attended Quaker school in Pennsylvania and moved to Canada after the passage of the Fugitive Slave Law. This law required slaves to be returned if they had escaped to a free state. In one of her major writings, she encouraged African-Americans to flee to Canada for better safety and opportunities. In addition to her newspaper, she founded a school that was [open to all races](#). She supported the union troops during the Civil War as a Recruiting Officer for the army. She [moved to Washington, DC](#) where she taught at public schools and studied law at Howard University. She became one of the first female black lawyers in the country.

