

Bessie Coleman



In the face of poverty and discrimination, [Bessie Coleman](#) (1892-1926) beat all odds and became the first African American female pilot in the United States in 1922. After being refused admission to every flying school she approached in the U.S., Coleman traveled to Paris to train, where she was the only non-white student in her aviation class. Despite issues of racism and sexism, Coleman graduated with an international pilot's license and went on to become a wildly popular aviatrix drawing thousands of people to her air shows. After her tragic death in a plane-related accident in 1926, black and female pilots nationwide began honoring Coleman with an annual fly-over tribute above her grave site.

OPRAH WINFREY

Oprah Winfrey was born in Mississippi in 1954. First, she lived on a farm with her grandmother, and then in Wisconsin and Tennessee. She had a difficult childhood. In 1971, she went to university and began working in radio and television. She started to host her own TV show in Chicago in 1984. A dedicated philanthropist, today she is a very successful TV host and producer. She was the first African American person in the US to become a billionaire.

↑ Adapted from www.blackpast.org (2015)



SERENA WILLIAMS

“There should be no stereotypes, you know? Stereotypes are meant to be broken. That’s what I like to say so let’s break them all down! The success of one woman should be the inspiration to the next.”

Serena Williams, (born September 26, 1981, Saginaw, Michigan, U.S.)

Serena Williams is an American professional tennis player. She is considered as the sport’s greatest female player of all-time, and the most dominant US athlete, of any sex or sport.

She is famous for revolutionizing women’s tennis with her powerful style of play and for winning more Grand Slam singles titles (23) than any other woman or man during the open tennis era. In addition, Serena and her sister Venus won 14 Grand Slam doubles titles, the second most for a pair in the open era, and three doubles gold medals at the Olympics.

She was born in Saginaw, Michigan, but was raised in Los Angeles, where she learned tennis from her father on public courts. She turned professional in 1995, when she was 14 years old. Serena Williams’ journey to becoming a sports icon has not been easy because she is constantly the target of disgusting racist and sexist attacks. However, she is a role model for self-acceptance – saying she “loves her body” – despite constantly being told she does not look like a “normal female player”.