

Influential african american leaders

[History](#), [African American](#)



In the years following Reconstruction, many African Americans rose to the challenge of bringing rights and equality to blacks. Booker T. Washington, W. E. B. DuBois, and Ida Wells-Barnett are just a few examples of the outstanding influential African American leaders that had an impact on the people, time period, and history. Booker T. Washington did what seemed like the impossible for blacks; he founded the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama. It was there that the former slave trained uneducated African American students in a trade that would help them achieve economic freedom and experience the same equality as whites.

To achieve this freedom and equality, he taught that if blacks excelled in fields like teaching, agriculture, and manual labor trades (blue collar fields), then eventually they would be treated as the equals they strived to be. Even though the Institute became an important center for technical education in the South, many blacks found his philosophies and teachings controversial. While those blacks wanted to integrate and become a bigger part of society, Washington saw no problem with segregation. One of his most famous doings is his Atlanta speech given 1895.

In support of his campaign for segregation, he said during the speech, " In all things that are purely social, we (whites and blacks) can be as separate as the fingers, yet one as the hand in all things essential to mutual progress. " As always there are two sides to everything, and Mr. W. E. B. DuBois was the exact opposite of Washington. W. E. B. DuBois was the very first black Ph. D. graduate from Harvard University. DuBois was one of those African Americans that found Washington's philosophies and teachings controversial, and he disagreed with him in many things.

Offended by the ideas that Booker T. expressed in his Atlanta speech, DuBois saw Washington as someone that only wanted to please the white community and population. In response to Washington's Atlanta speech, DuBois delivered the "Atlanta Compromise." Within this speech he argued about how the acceptance of segregation and settling for achievement would not get the African American community anywhere. He thought that blacks should go after occupations in humanities and managerial/professional (white collar) fields.

It was his thoughts that blacks must be politically, legally, and socially active in order to achieve equality. DuBois helped organize a group of black intellectuals known as the Niagara Movement; it was their goal to outline an agenda for African American progress in the US. In 1909, he was also an important part of the founding of the NAACP, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; they also devoted themselves to the progress of African Americans. Ida Wells-Barnett, an African American woman, led campaigns against the Ku Klux Klan and for the women's movement.

As the KKK terrorized southern blacks, Ida led a campaign against the lynchings that made many of the unaware northerners aware of the situations occurring in the southern states. As for the women's movement, her active role gained even more notoriety when she refused to march at the end of suffrage parades just because she was black. She, along with others, helped DuBois form the NAACP. These African Americans fought for the rights that they felt they were granted by the Bill of Rights and the

amendments added afterwards. It was because of the efforts of these three men and women, African Americans and women now have the rights that they do.