

- 1 M** 1914: Ralph Ellison, author, born
- 2 T** 1867: Congress enacts charter to establish Howard University.
- 3 W** 1865: Freedmen's Bureau established by federal government to aid newly freed slaves.
- 4 T** 1965: Bill Russell of the Boston Celtics honored as NBA most valuable player for fourth time in five years.
- 5 F** 1770: Crispus Attucks becomes one of the first casualties of the American Revolution.
- 6 S** 1857: Supreme Court issues Dred Scott decision.
- 7 S** 1965: Supreme Court upholds key provisions of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.
- 8 M** 1945: Phyllis Mae Daley becomes first black to join the Navy Nurse Corps.
1977: Henry L. Marsh III becomes first African American elected mayor of Richmond, Virginia.
- 9 T** 1841: Amistad mutineers freed by Supreme Court.
- 10 W** 1869: Robert Tanner Freeman becomes first black to receive a degree in dentistry.
1913: Harriet Tubman, abolitionist and Civil War nurse, dies.
- 11 T** 1959: Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun* opens at Barymore Theater, New York, the first play by a black woman to premiere on Broadway.
- 12 F** 1932: Andrew Young, former U.N. ambassador and former mayor of Atlanta, born.
- 13 S** 1773: Jean Baptiste Pointe Du Sable, black pioneer and explorer, founded Chicago.
- 14 S** 1956: Montgomery bus boycott ends when municipal bus service is desegregated.
- 15 M** 1947: John Lee, first black commissioned officer in the U.S. Navy, assigned to duty.
- 16 T** 1827: *Freedom's Journal*, the first U.S. black newspaper, is founded.
1846: Rebecca Cole, second black female physician in the U.S., born.
- 17 W** **St. Patrick's Day**
1885: William F. Cosgrove patents automatic stop plug for gas and oil pipes.
1890: Charles B. Brooks patents street sweeper.
- 18 T** 1822: The Phoenix Society, a literary and educational group, founded by blacks in New York City.

- 19 F** 1971: The Rev. Leon Sullivan elected to board of directors of General Motors.
- 20 S** 1883: Jan E. Matzeliger patents shoemaking machine.
1912: Carter Woodson receives doctorate from Harvard University.
- 21 S** 1965: Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. leads march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama, for voting rights.
- 22 M** 1898: J.W. Smith patents lawn sprinkler.
- 23 T** 1873: Slavery abolished in Puerto Rico.
- 24 W** 1837: Canada gives black citizens the right to vote.
- 25 T** 1843: Explorer Jacob Dodson sets out in search of the Northwest Passage.
- 26 F** 1872: Thomas J. Martin patents fire extinguisher.
1911: William H. Lewis becomes U.S. assistant attorney general.
- 27 S** 1930: Of the 116,000 blacks in professional positions, more than two-thirds were teachers or ministers.
- 28 S** 1870: Jonathan S. Wright becomes first black state supreme court justice in South Carolina.
- 29 M** 1898: W.J. Ballou patents combined hat rack and table.
- 30 T** 1870: Fifteenth Amendment ratified, guaranteeing voting rights to blacks.
- 31 W** 1988: Toni Morrison wins Pulitzer Prize for *Beloved*.

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March

"To be able to start programs, open facilities, provide access to care for people who didn't have access before, change children's lives, develop a mobile vehicle program. The things that I do make a difference in lives every day."

Dennis Mitchell, D.D.S., M.P.H.



DENTAL PUBLIC HEALTH

Dennis Mitchell

D.D.S., M.P.H. Harlem, NY

When Dr. Dennis Mitchell goes home each night from Columbia University, he teaches his daughter how to brush her baby teeth. One-year-old Danielle and wife, Bridgette, are one part of a life he calls "truly blessed." The rest of his blessed life comes from the powerful impact he's made during his tenure at the university's school of dental and oral surgery.

Growing up in Toronto, Canada, then going to Harlem to practice dentistry with his uncle was quite an awakening experience. "In Harlem you see the disparities in health every day. It set me back quite a bit." To address these disparities, he said, "we need to get rid of existing diseases that come from the past, as well as prevent diseases of the future. A lot can be done with children three to four years old. They need to understand that it is a regular routine to see the dentist two times a year."

Through his work at Columbia, Dr. Mitchell has helped establish a community-based dental service program that treats more than 25,000 patients a year, a Mobile Dental Center that provides service to children in 40 Head Start and day care centers, and a \$2.5 million state-of-the-art elderly-focused medical and dental practice in central Harlem. And he was only 34 when he started doing this.

Dr. Mitchell is a strong proponent of sealants for inner-city children, who typically do not have access to this type of prevention. He was hoping to address this need through the mobile units and school-based clinics, until he saw the poor condition of many of the children's mouths. "We couldn't do just preventive medicine because we're too far behind. We had to implement new protocols of scaling and cleaning, and convert our clinics to full-service treatment centers for children."

"I am blessed to be able to be a leader in all of this," said Dr. Mitchell. "To be able to start programs, open facilities, provide access to care for people who didn't have access before, change children's lives, develop a mobile vehicle program. The things that I do make a difference in lives every day."

While he has a warm spot for his dental alma matter, Howard University, Dr. Mitchell said, "I'm not done with New York yet. I'd like to someday see public health dentistry at the forefront of dentistry. There are so many unsung heroes doing good work in the field."



Toothbrush

Taub's patented toothbrush, early 20th century.