

* [Today in Black History - February 21](#) *

1864 - Saint Francis Xavier Church in Baltimore, Maryland is dedicated. It is the first exclusively African American parish in the United States.

1895 - The North Carolina Legislature adjourns for the day to mark the death of Frederick Douglass.

1933 - Eunice Waymon (Nina Simone) is born in Tryon, North Carolina. She will begin her entertaining career in 1954 and bolstered by critical praise for her 1959 recording of "I Loves You, Porgy," she will tour in the U.S. and Europe during the 1960's and early 1970's. Returning to the concert stage and recording studio in 1977, she will be called the "High Priestess of Soul." She will record rarely in the 1970's and 1980's, but will experience a career comeback in the United States with her 1993 album release, "A Single Woman." She will join the ancestors in Carry-le-Rouet (South of France) on [April 21, 2003](#). As she wished, her ashes will be spread in different African countries.

1936 - Barbara Jordan is born in Houston, Texas. The first African American state senator in the Texas legislature since 1883 and a three-term congresswoman, she will play a key role in the 1974 Watergate hearings. In 1976, she will be the first woman and first African American to make a keynote speech before the Democratic National Convention. She will join the ancestors on [January 17, 1996](#) in Austin, Texas.

1940 - John Lewis is born in Troy, Alabama. He will become founder and chairman of SNCC, organizer of the Selma-to-Montgomery March in 1965, executive director of the Voter Education Project, and congressman from Georgia's 5th District. Lewis' power will continue to be felt when he is named Democratic deputy whip by Speaker of the House Thomas S. Foley in 1991.

1965 - El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz (Malcolm X) joins the ancestors after being assassinated at the Audubon Ballroom in Harlem at the age of 39. He was best known for his doctrine of self-determination for African American people, including their right to fight for their rights and protect themselves in a hostile America by "whatever means necessary."

1976 - Florence Ballard, one of the original Supremes, joins the ancestors in Detroit, Michigan, at the age of 32. Ballard had said that she never received a royalty check prior to 1967 for any of her work with the Supremes, who featured Diana Ross and included Mary Wilson.

1998 - Julian Bond, civil rights leader from the 1960's, former Georgia state legislator, and college professor, becomes the new chairperson of the NAACP.