

* Today in Black History - February 25 *

1867 - Tennessee Gov. William Gannaway Brownlow issues a proclamation warning that the unlawful events of the Ku Klux Klan "must and SHALL cease" and that militia would be immediately organized against the organization. This is in response to Ku Klux Klan activities in a nine county area. The Klan's aim is to reverse the interlocking changes sweeping over the South during the Reconstruction: to destroy the Republican's party's infrastructure, undermine the Reconstruction state, reestablish control of the black labor force, and restore racial subordination in every aspect of Southern life. (Editor's Note: The KKK was founded in Pulaski, Tennessee on December 15, 1865)

1870 - Hiram Rhoades Revels of Mississippi becomes the first African American Senator. He is elected by the Mississippi legislature to fill the Senate seat vacated by Jefferson Davis. After the Senate term expires, he will become the first President of Alcorn A&M College, in Lorman, Mississippi (the first African American land-grant institution in the United States).

1948 - Martin Luther King, Jr. is ordained as a Baptist minister. After graduating from Morehouse College in June, 1948, he will enter the Crozer Theological Seminary in Chester, Pennsylvania.

1964 - Twenty-two year old Cassius Clay becomes world heavyweight boxing champion when he defeats Sonny Liston in Miami, Florida. The feared Liston is the favorite, but Clay predicts he will "float like a butterfly, sting like a bee." Soon after his victory, Clay will assume his Muslim name of Muhammad Ali. He will be considered by many, the greatest heavyweight champion of all time.

1978 - Daniel "Chappie" James, Jr. joins the ancestors at the age of 58 in Colorado Springs, Colorado. James was an early graduate of the Tuskegee Institute Flying School and flew more than 100 missions during the Korean War. He was the first African American to achieve the rank of four-star general.

1980 - Robert E. Hayden, African American poet and former poetry consultant to the Library of Congress, joins the ancestors in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Hayden's most notable works include "Words in Mourning Time and Angle of Ascent: New and Selected Poems."

1991 - Adrienne Mitchell becomes the first African American woman to die in a combat zone in the Persian Gulf War when she joins the ancestors after being killed in her military barracks in Dharaan, Saudi Arabia.

1992 - Natalie Cole, Patti LaBelle, Lisa Fischer, Luther Vandross, B.B. King, Boyz II Men, and James Brown, among others, win Grammy awards in ceremonies hosted by Whoopi Goldberg.

1999 - A jury in Jasper, Texas, sentences white supremacist John William King to death for chaining James Byrd Jr., an African American man, to a pickup truck and dragging him to pieces.

2000 - The killers of unarmed African immigrant Amadou Diallo, four white New York police officers, are acquitted of all charges by a jury in Albany, New York. Diallo had been fired upon 41 times, with 19 shots hitting him while holding only his wallet in the vestibule of his own home.