

* Today in Black History - February 28 *

1704 - A school for African Americans is opened in New York City by Elias Neau, a Frenchman.

1708 - A slave revolt occurs in Newton, Long Island in New York State. Seven whites are killed. Two African American male slaves and an Indian slave are hanged, and an African American woman is burned alive.

1776 - George Washington, in his letter of acknowledgment to Phyllis Wheatley for a poem she wrote for his birthday, says, "I thank you most sincerely for...the elegant line you enclosed...the style and manner exhibit a striking proof of your poetic talents."

1778 - Rhode Island General Assembly in precedent-breaking act authorizes the enlistment of slaves.

1784 - Phyllis Wheatley, poet, joins the ancestors.

1854 - Some 50 slavery opponents meet in Ripon, Wisconsin, to call for the creation of a new political group, which will become the Republican Party.

1859 - Arkansas legislature requires free African Americans to choose between exile and enslavement.

1871 - Second Enforcement Act gave federal officers and courts control of registration and voting in congressional elections.

1942 - Riots against African Americans occur in Detroit, Michigan at the Sojourner Truth Homes.

1943 - "Porgy and Bess" opens on Broadway with Anne Brown and Todd Duncan in starring roles.

1945 - Charles "Bubba" Smith is born in Beaumont, Texas. He will become a professional football player with the Baltimore Colts, Oakland Raiders and the Houston Oilers. After a successful football career, he will become an actor in the "Police Academy" series. He also will become the president and CEO of Vital Aircraft Company, which solicits the Department of Defense for government contracts. To illustrate his enduring interest in education and work with children, he will endow an engineering scholarship at his alma mater, Michigan State University.

1956 - Adrian Dantley is born. He will become a professional basketball player and star with the Utah Jazz. He will be their top scorer in 1981 and 1984.

1962 - Rae Dawn Chong is born in Edmonton, Alberta. She will become an actress in movies like "Quest for Fire."

1967 - Wilt Chamberlain sets a NBA record with his 35th consecutive field goal.

1968 - Frankie Lymon, a Rock and Roll singer who became a star with his teenage group, "The Teenagers," joins the ancestors at the age of 25 after a drug overdose.

1977 - Eddie "Rochester" Anderson joins the ancestors at the age of 71. Born in Oakland, California, to a theatrical family, Anderson's guest appearance in a 1937 Jack Benny Easter show grew to be a 30-year career on the popular radio, and later television, program.

1991 - "The Content of our Character," the controversial book on affirmative action and race relations by Shelby Steele, wins the National Book Critics Circle Award.

1998 - Todd Duncan joins the ancestors at his home in Washington, DC, at the age 95. His ascension is on the fifty-fifth anniversary of his starring role in the Broadway opening of "Porgy and Bess."