



# What is Black History Month?

- Black History Month is a time set aside each year to celebrate the achievements of black men and women in the past and today.
- In 1987, the first Black History Month took place in the UK.
- Black History Month in the UK and in February in America. **takes place annually in October**
- This year CHSG departments will be sharing stories of inspirational people in their field.
- Today's stories are from the **Media, drama, RE, Science and Geography department.**

# Economics Department

## Dr Sadie T M Alexander

A female economist who achieved  
many firsts in her time



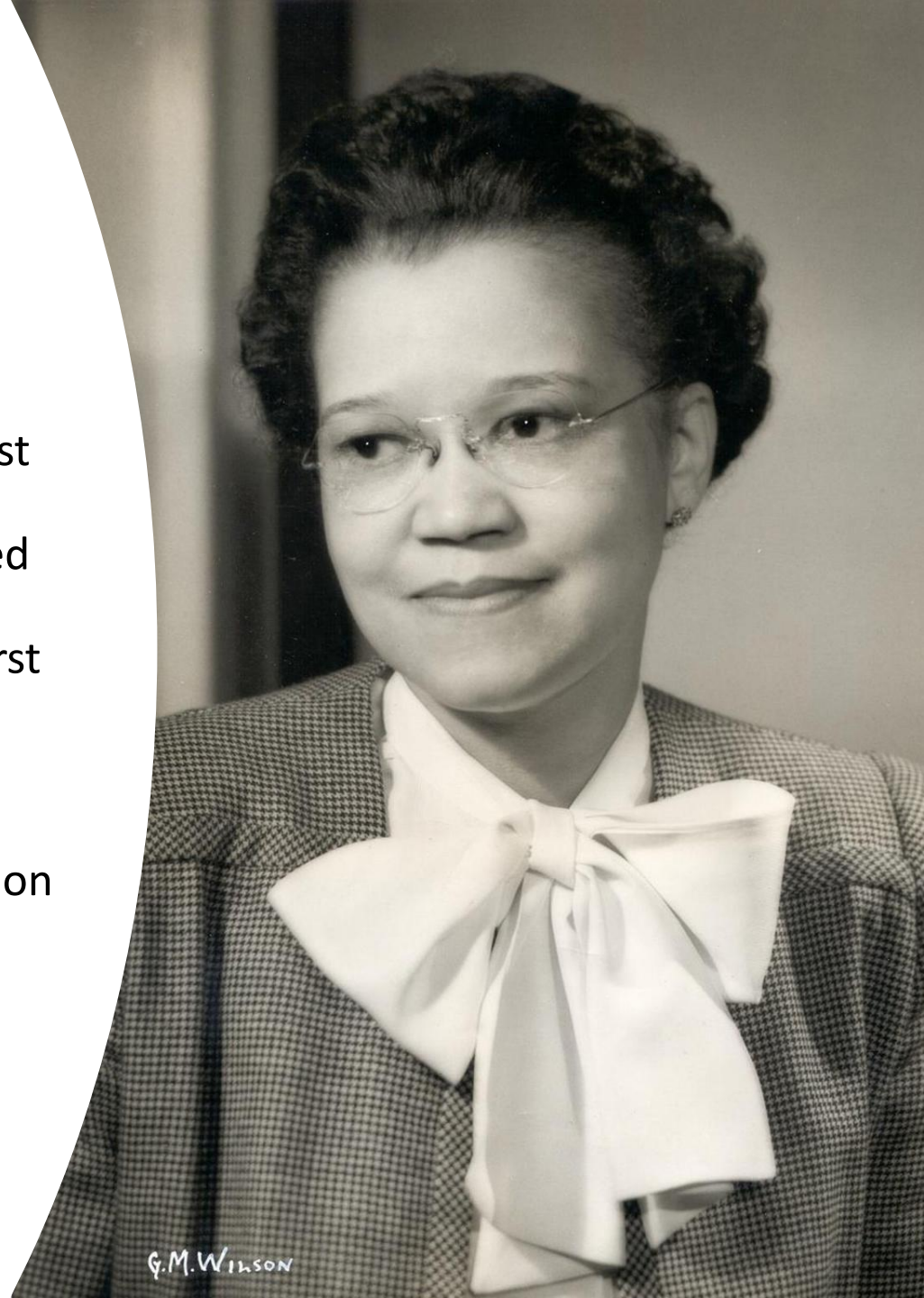


# Dr. Sadie Alexander (1898 – 1989)

## Key career milestones



- **1921** - She became the first African-American to receive a Ph.D. (Doctor of Philosophy) in economics in the USA after completing her undergraduate and masters degrees.
- **1924 – 1927** - She was the first African-American woman accepted to enter and graduated from the University of Pennsylvania Law School and first to be allowed to practice law in Pennsylvania.
- **1946** – She served on the President Truman’s Committee on Civil Rights.
- **1927 – 1982** – She practiced law, particularly civil rights law and made contributions to economics.



G.M. Wilson

# Why is Dr. Sadie Alexander my hero?



- She was denied the opportunity to work as an economist because she was not only a woman but also an African-American woman but she kept persisting to achieve her goals.
- She has broken down gender and racial barriers at a time period in history where discrimination was the norm.
- She has championed racial and economic justice for working women and men, especially black women, who were the most disadvantaged by the Great Depression.
- After the WWII, her focus shifted towards civil and human rights while continuing to promote the idea of universal employment and economic justice for all.





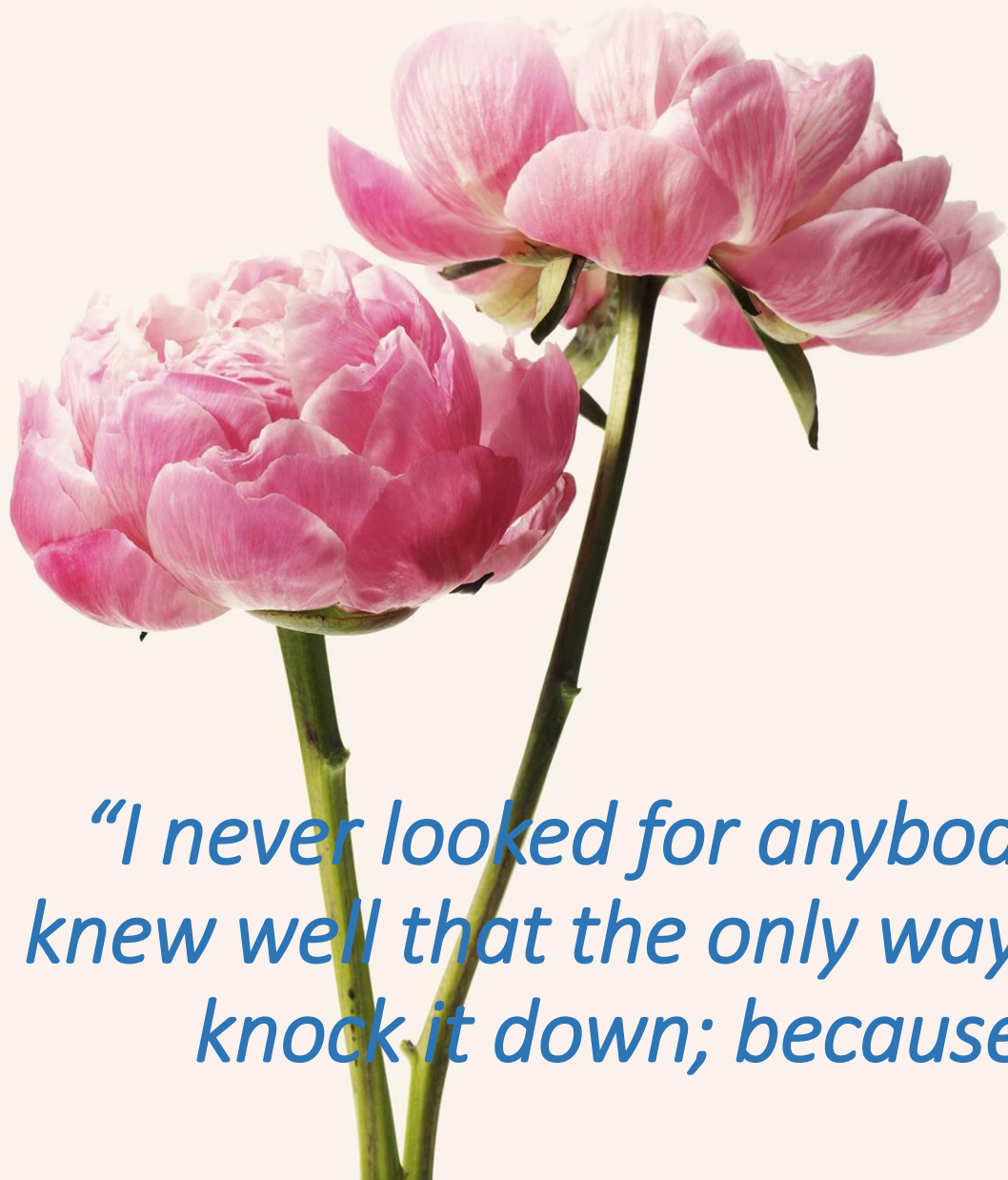
***“Don’t let anything stop you. There will be times when you will be disappointed, but you can’t stop. Make yourself the best that you can make out of what you are. The very best.”***



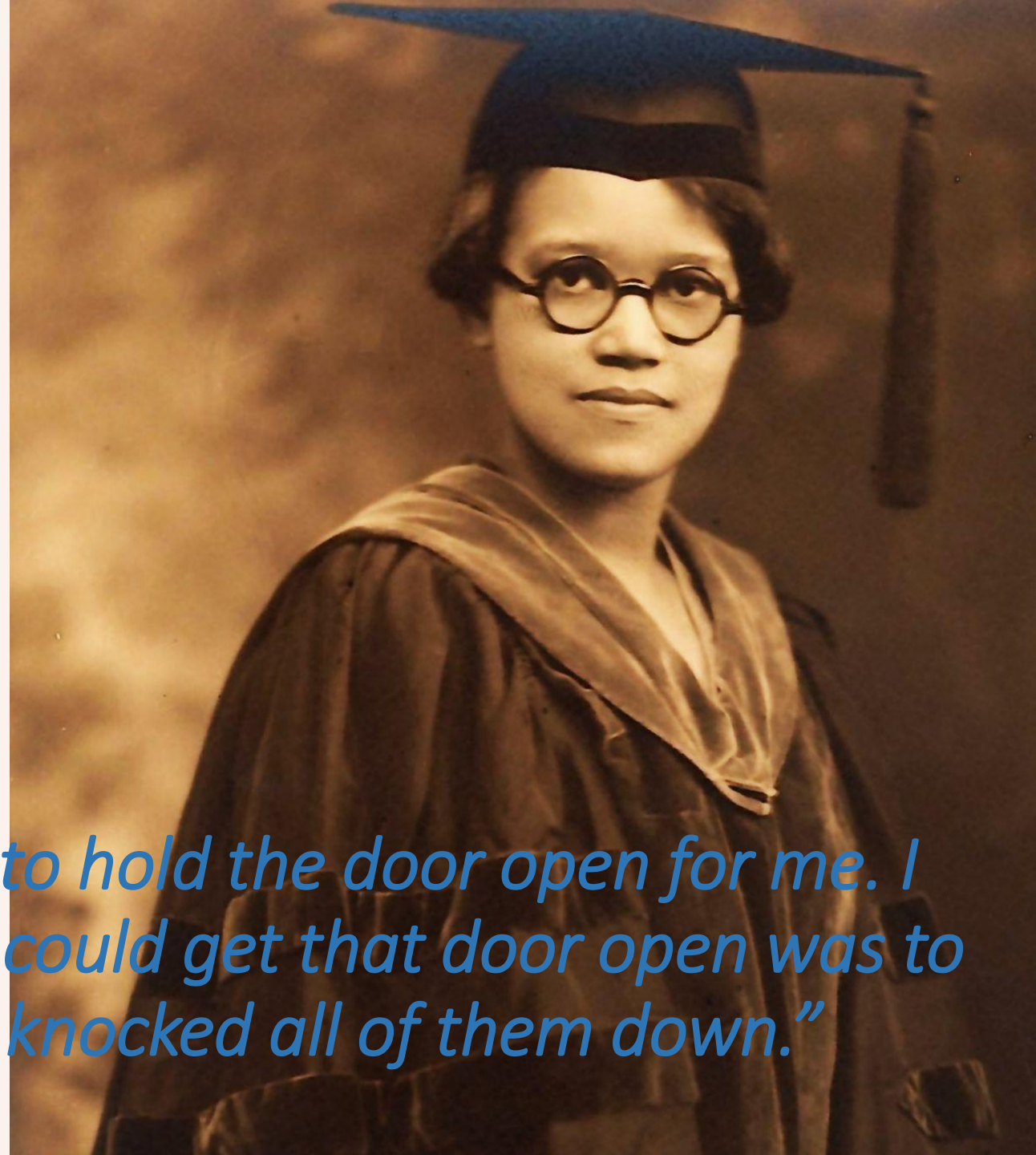
Dr Sadie T M  
Alexander







*"I never looked for anybody to hold the door open for me. I knew well that the only way I could get that door open was to knock it down; because I knocked all of them down."*



# Drama Department

**Ira Aldridge**

**Famous 19th century black Shakespearean actor**



Ira Aldridge was born in New York on 24th July 1807. His father, a clerk and lay preacher who became a minister, intended him for the church and sent him to New York's African Free School, where many future leaders of the American abolitionist movement were educated. But young Ira was attracted to the theatre, at a time when British actors were playing in New York, and when the city's free black community had just launched its own African Theatre.

Aldridge made his acting debut as Rolla in Pizarro, a Sheridan adaptation of August von Kotzebue's *Die Spanier in Peru*. But the only way for an ambitious young actor to succeed was to emigrate. Accordingly, when he was 17 or 18, Aldridge worked his passage to Liverpool as a ship's steward.

His first known British performance was at the Royal Coburg (now known as the Old Vic) on 10th October 1825, as Oroonoko in *The Revolt of Surinam*, or *A Slave's Revenge*. The playbill announced him as a 'Man of Colour' - for the novelty. His first performance had a mixed reception. The *Times* claimed that it was utterly impossible for him to pronounce English properly 'owing to the shape of his lips'. The *Globe*, on the other hand, found his enunciation 'distinct and sonorous'. Purely because of Aldridge's colour, the press was largely hostile, which prevented him from establishing himself in London.

He therefore honed his craft for the next few years, travelling and performing all around England. He became the victim of a sustained London press campaign motivated by racism, and found it difficult to secure engagements, but he never gave up. Outside London, he continued to win respect; a Hull paper said his *Othello* 'was such as can be equalled by very few actors of the present day'. His contemporaries also praised his work. In the provinces, he played to crowded houses, but was boycotted by the West End stage, so in 1852, Aldridge and his family sailed for Europe.

He returned from his European tours so loaded with honours that the West End stage could no longer exclude him. Having become Chevalier Ira Aldridge, Knight of Saxony, he was at last in 1858, deemed worthy to perform at the Lyceum. He performed *Othello* in Russia and was lionized, earning more money than any Russian actor. One Russian critic said that the evenings on which he saw Aldridge's *Othello*, *Lear*, *Shylock* and *Macbeth* 'were undoubtedly the best I have ever spent in the theatre'. 'After Aldridge', wrote another, 'it is impossible to see *Othello* performed by a white actor, even Garrick himself'.

After another tour of the British provinces in 1859-60, Aldridge went to Russia again. Between 1861-66, he embarked on a lengthy tour, visiting many places no foreign actor had ever been. He died on tour, in the Polish town of Lodz, on 7th August, 1867, aged 59. The whole town turned out to mourn the passing of an artist of world stature.

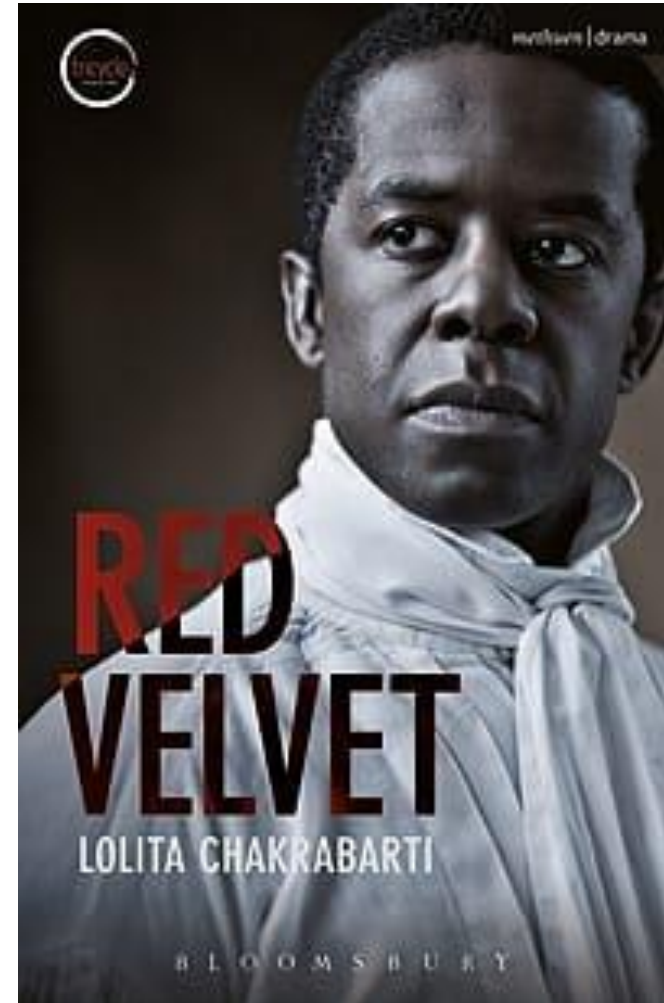
His youngest daughter, Amanda, gave elocution lessons to the young Paul Robeson in 1930 when he was preparing for his first appearance as *Othello* in London.



Ira Aldridge with his son



**Red Velvet:**  
an excellent play in which Ira Aldridge is the protagonist

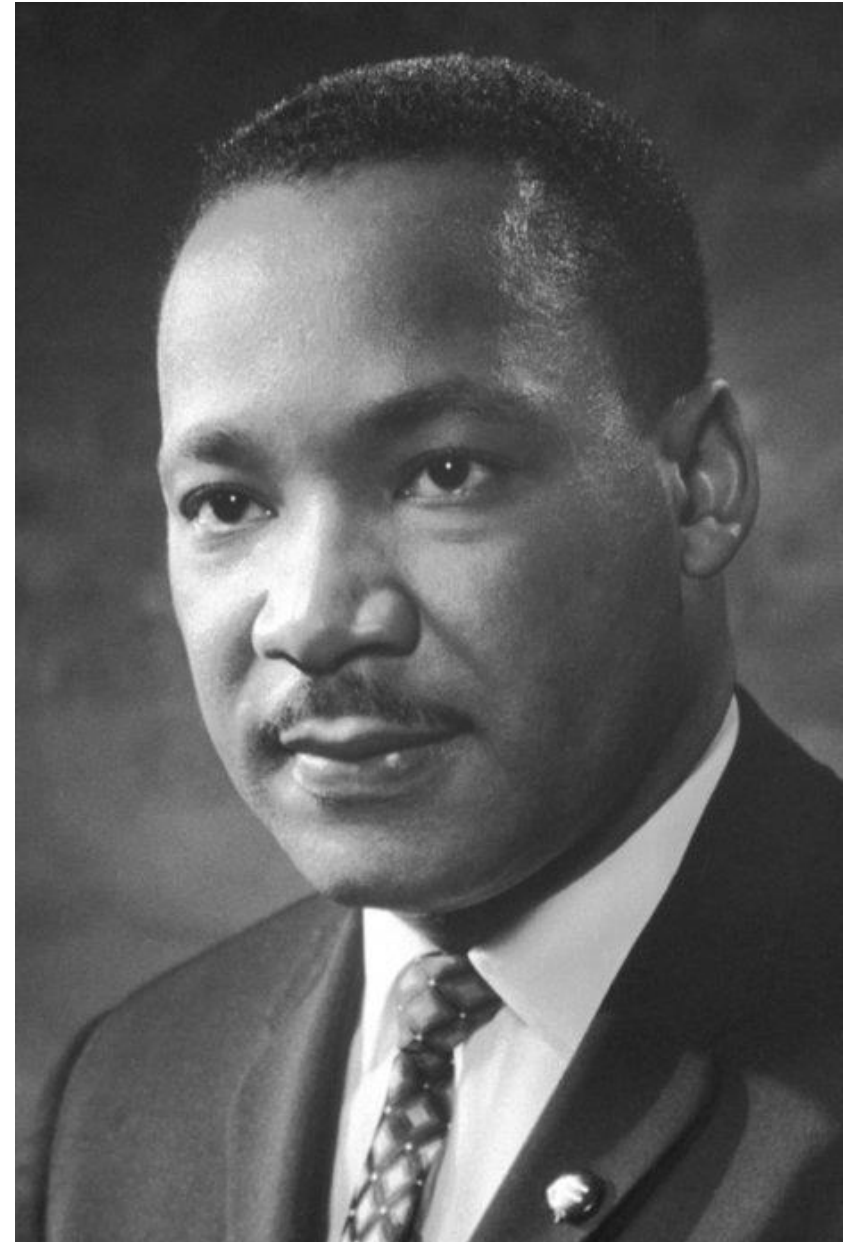


# RE Department

## Martin Luther King

Martin Luther King is arguably the most iconic civil rights' activist of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. From his involvement in bus boycotts in the mid-1950s through to his era defining 'I have a dream' speech in the August of 1963, he was the living embodiment of his Christian faith. As a black man in America, who knew only too well about the injustice and violence of racism. With a family background of leadership within the religion, his beliefs about equality inspired him to take action wherever he found this injustice, most influentially in support of marginalised black Americans. Despite jail sentences and death threats he stayed resolutely true to his principle of peaceful protest. He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964, one of the highest human rights' awards in the world. Despite his premature death in 1968 due to assassination, he remains a giant of the continued fight for social justice across the world, a fight inspired by his Christian background.

'Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that'





# Science Department

## Dr Marie Maynard Daly



We all know the importance of a healthy diet, exercise, and not smoking. But what evidence led to this understanding of health? One scientist whose work contributed to our current knowledge of healthy lifestyles was Dr. Marie Maynard Daly, whose pioneering research resulted in a new understanding of the relationship between high cholesterol and clogged arteries. In fact, Daly's work helped to shape much of what we now know about the biochemical aspects of cardiovascular health, helping us to understand the causes of heart attacks and other cardiovascular disease.

Dr. Daly overcame financial, gender, and racial hurdles to eventually become the trailblazer that she was. She came from a family that placed great value on education; in fact, her father had enrolled at Cornell University with the goal of becoming a chemist, but had to withdraw due to the high cost of tuition<sup>1</sup>. Daly continued her father's legacy by becoming the first Black woman to earn a PhD in chemistry in the United States.

In addition to her contributions to the field of biochemistry, she also advocated for increased enrolment of Black students in medical schools and science graduate programs<sup>1</sup>. In honour of her father, she even created a scholarship program for minority students pursuing science degrees at Queens College<sup>2</sup>

# Geography Department

Katherine McKittrick



## Inspirational Geographers

*Katherine McKittrick:*



Katherine McKittrick is a professor in Gender Studies at Queen's University. She is an academic and writer whose work focuses on black studies, cultural geography, anti-colonial and diaspora studies, with an emphasis on the ways in which social justice emerges in black creative texts (music, fiction, poetry, visual art). While many scholars have researched the areas of North American, European, Caribbean, and African black geographies,

*McKittrick was the first scholar to put forth the interdisciplinary possibilities of black and black feminist geography, with an emphasis on embodied, creative and intellectual spaces engendered in the diaspora.*