The Falcon Review

Volume 57, Issue 4A

February 12, 2019

Extra! Extra! All About Black History Month!

Amber Riley

By Bethany Lautt

Have you ever watched the hit series, *Glee*? You might remember a character by the name of Mercedes. She was portrayed by Amber Riley. Riley is the daughter of Tiny and Elwin Riley, and she has two older sisters, Toyia and Ashley. She was born on February 15, 1986. When she was just 17 years old, she auditioned for the second season of *American Idol*, but was turned down by the producers. In 2008, she was casted as Mercedes Jones in *Glee*, and appeared in all five of the six seasons, but only received guest star credit for Season 5. For her role on *Glee*, she won a Screen Actors Guild Award, was nominated for three NAACP Image Awards and three Teen Choice Awards. In 2013, Riley won the 17th season of *Dancing With The Stars*, partnered with six-time champion, Derek Hough. In February of 2016, she announced that she would be portraying the lead role in *Dreamgirls*, which she won awards for, including Whatsonstage.com Award for Best Actress in a Musical, Olivier Award for Best Actress in a Musical, and Evening Standard Award for Best Musical Performance. In 2018, she stared in the movie *Nobody's Fool*, as Kalli. These days, Riley is still pursuing a career in music and film, but spends a lot of time speaking out for women's rights and black rights.



Viola Davis

By Hunter McCoy

Viola Davis was born on August 11, 1965, in St. Matthews, South Carolina. She is a current actress and producer. Davis is one of the small amount of people to be awarded the Triple Crown of Acting. This is accomplished by receiving an Academy Award, an Emmy Award, and a Tony Award. Davis has been in a number of movies and TV shows since the 1990's, including, *The Help* and *How To Get Away With Murder.* She and her husband, Julius, founded a producing studio. She has also been recognized by Time Magazine as one of the 100 most influential women.

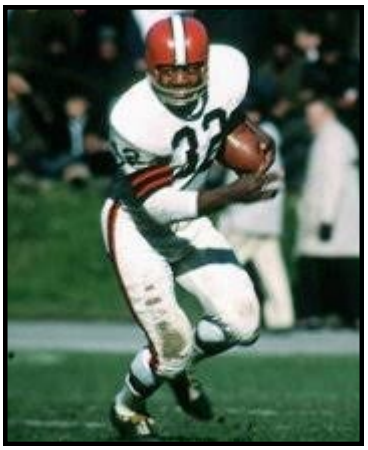


Jim Brown

By Cody Smith

Jim Brown was a legendary football player who played for the Cleveland Browns. He is now recognized in the Pro Football Hall of Fame in Canton, Ohio. Brown played during a time where it was not common for African-American people to play or even be involved with sports. He is not only a ferocious football player, but he is also an actor and current civil rights activist. Brown was born in 1936 and was a two-sport star. In high school, he was so good at baseball that he was offered a minor league contract with the New York Yankees before he even went to college. In the end, Brown chose football over baseball, playing for the University of Syracuse. There, he is still known as the greatest athlete in Syracuse Athletics history. During his senior season with the Orange, he scored 43 points alone in a game against Colgate, who touted an All-American running back. Because of his accomplishments in college, he was drafted first overall by the Cleveland Browns in 1957. During eight of his nine seasons, he led the NFL in total rush yards. Brown is a two-time Most Valuable Player in 1958 and 1965, and he was a member of the Pro-Bowl team for all nine of his incredible seasons. All of the sudden, Brown retired only at the age of 30 to pursue his acting career, landing lead roles and starring in Pepsi-Cola commercials. He is considered by many as the greatest running back of all time. In just nine seasons, Brown is 11th all-time in career rush yards with 12,312, and 5th all time in career rush touchdowns, putting up a total of 106.

Brown was a big influence to not only future NFL stars and young children, but also to the African-American community. He set a great example for those who looked up to him, in the football, entertainment, and political worlds. Brown was a perfect example of a leader in just about every way possible.
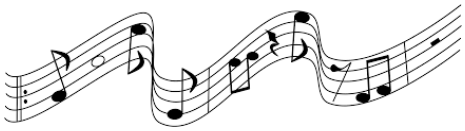


Kevin Abstract

By Cora Owen

Clifford Ian Simpson, more commonly known by his stage name Kevin Abstract, is a rapper, director, singer-songwriter, and founder of the boy band Brockhampton. He was born in Corpus Christi, Texas, where he lived with his mom. He never met his dad, and he and his mom were never close. He didn't even know where she worked. This distance caused him to run away and live with his sister at 15. Although his childhood wasn't that great, he later took his chance to be more open than he could in his younger years and came out in 2016.

With lyrics like, "I love my mom, I hate my boyfriend," and "I found my way, you're my American boy," Abstract became an inspiration for young gay kids everywhere, stating on twitter, "The goal is to normalize this." He stuck by that, frequently posting about his boyfriend, Jaden Walker. Something interesting about him is that one of his biggest inspirations is Shia Labeouf, who he says is his hero.





Susan Kelechi Watson

By Morgen Durant

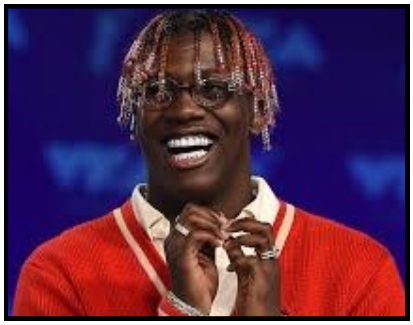
Susan Kelechi Watson was born on November 11, 1981 in Brooklyn, New York. She is currently 37 years old. Watson is Jamaican; both of her parents lived in Jamaica before they had her. Watson received her Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from Howard University and her Master of Fine Arts degree from the Tisch School of the Arts Graduate Acting Program. Watson is an actress; she started acting in 2004, and still is to this day. Watson has been in 28 movies and television shows. A fun fact about Watson is her middle name, 'Kelechi,' is of Igbo origins. It means, "Thank God."



Lil Yachty

By Cavick Decker

When you think of people that have made a big impact on others, you do not typically think of a rapper. Lil Yachty is an African-American rapper that has made a lasting impact on countless people. Yachty, also known as Miles Parks McCollum, was born in 1997 in Atlanta, Georgia. He was raised in the suburbs and now gives back to communities just like his. McCollum spends a lot of time helping struggling kids. He finds ways to let them express themselves, whether it be in a song or something silly, like dressing up as a superhero! Aside from those contributions, McCollum gives one much better. Growing up, he was the center of many people's attention and not for a good reason. McCollum was constantly bullied, and it got to the point where he did not want to leave his room. When people that are bullied see the success that he has made, even through the bullying, it gives them hope. To me, hope is one of the biggest impacts you can make on a young and hurting soul.



Shaggy

By Erika Lear

Have you heard the songs "It Wasn't Me," "Angel," or "Boombastic?" Then you may know Shaggy. He is the Jamaican artist of these famous 2000s hits. His real name is Orville Richard Burrell and he was born in Kingston, Jamaica on October 22, 1968. Shaggy started recording in Brooklyn and the way he began mixing reggae with R&B made him unique. Many people, however, do not know that he joined the United States Marines at the age of 20 to help save money to start back up in music. While in the Marines, he served in the Gulf War in Iraq, and was later stationed at Camp Lejeune in North Carolina. Shaggy came back and made his first hit, "Oh Carolina," in 1993. After that, his music career shot off and to this day he is still performing. His next concert will be in the Cayman Islands on February 15th and 16th.



Chance the Rapper

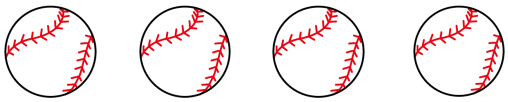
By Jada Burson

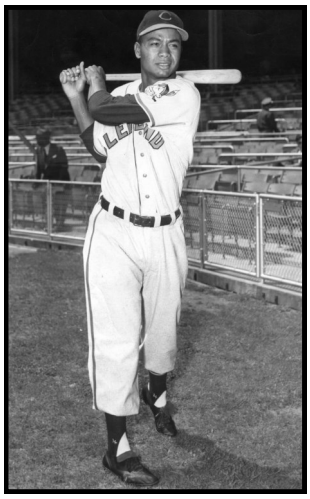
Chance the Rapper is a rapper, singer, songwriter, record producer, philanthropist and actor. His real name is Chancelor Jonathan Bennett, and he was born on April 16, 1993. He was born in Chicago where he lived with his father, who was the aide to the former Chicago mayor Harold Washington and then-Senator Barack Obama, and his mother, who worked for the Illinois Attorney General. When Bennett was young, he spoke to Obama about his aspirations to become a rapper, to which the former president replied, "Word." He did not do well in school and was often suspended.





Larry Doby





By Noah Gill

Lawrence Eugene Doby was born on December 13, 1923. Doby is famous for being the second African-American player in Major League Baseball, and first in the American League in 1947. The Hall of Fame center fielder played in the Negro Leagues for five seasons and then for the the MLB's Cleveland Indians, Chicago White Sox, and Detroit Tigers over a 12 year span. Doby took a break from baseball to serve in the U.S. Navy during World War II. He was inducted into the MLB Hall of Fame in 1998 not just for breaking the AL color barrier, but for being an outstanding player overall. Doby was also the second African-American manager, behind Cleveland's own Frank Robinson. Not many people know that he was also the first African-American player in the American Basketball League, which was the well-known league before the NBA. It is extremely rare to find a two sport athlete anywhere! Doby's number was retired by the Indians in 1994, but today, there is a bill in Congress to retire his number in the entire league. Only one player has had his number retired in the whole league; none other than the first African-American player in the MLB, Jackie Robinson. If this bill is passed, Doby's number will be hanging in every Major League stadium to be honored. Doby passed away on June 18, 2003 as one of the most famous African-American baseball players of all time.

Childish Gambino

By Morgan Leonard

Donald McKinley Glover Jr. is an American actor, rapper, comedian, producer, director, singer, songwriter, and DJ. He was born on September 25, 1983. When he is rapping or singing, he goes by the stage name Childish Gambino. He has been writing and producing his own music since 2011 and has had three studio albums, one of which peaked at number 12 on the Billboard Hot 100. Before he began his musical career, he was known more as a comedian and actor. He stars on the TV show Community, and even created and directs his own show on FX, Atlanta. He has also been in several blockbuster films, such as *Spider-Man: Homecoming*, *Star Wars: Solo*, and he will be playing Simba in the upcoming remake of *The Lion King*. Glover is such already an accomplished man in the entertainment business and he is only 33 years old.





Bryan Stevenson

By Emma Engel

Bryan A. Stevenson is a lawyer that graduated from Harvard Law School. He was born on November 14, 1959 in Montgomery, Alabama. He is an author of three books about inequality and justice. Stevenson is the founder and executive director of the Equal Justice Initiative, an Alabama based law firm. They work to end mass incarceration, excessive punishment, and racial inequality. Stevenson was awarded at the People's Choice Awards, where he talked about his initiative and what he has done to help African Americans all over the world. He was voted as one of the top 100 most influential people in the world in 2015 by Time Magazine. He has dedicated his career and life's work to helping those who have been incarcerated and condemned.

Serena Williams

By Madison Reese

At the age of 34, Serena Williams has been dominating on the tennis court for more than half her life. She made her pro debut 20 years ago, at the age of 14. She holds the most major singles, doubles, and mixed doubles titles combined amongst active tennis players, male or female. Williams is arguably the best women's tennis player in the world. Not only that, but she is an inspiration to young African American girls. Back in 2008, her foundation created the Serena Williams Secondary School in Matooni, Kenya. The Serena Williams Foundation also gives college scholarships for underprivileged students in the United States every year.

She's a great competitor, and even her opponents respect her. You know you're an incredible person and athlete when even your fiercest competitors are in your corner. The world's No. 2 player, Simona Halep, said in a recent interview that she'll be rooting for Williams at the U.S. Open. "If I will not be in the finals, I want her to win," Halep said. Williams gives hope to all young women to be great and to follow your dreams.





Dr. Charles Drew

By Mary Hammel

About five million blood transfusions are administered every day in America. If it was not for Dr. Charles Drew's discovery of long-term storage for blood plasma, most of these transfusions could not happen.

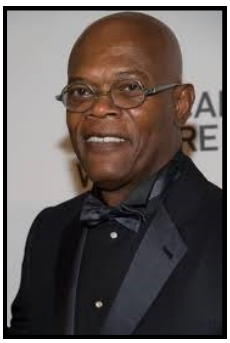
Drew was born on June 3, 1904. He attended Amherst College for a MD and a Master Surgery Degree at McGill University School of Medicine in Montreal, Canada; then, he got a doctorate in Medical Science at Columbia University. He married Minnie Lenore Robbins and together they had three daughters and one son. After organizing the first large-scale blood bank in 1938, he was called to help in the Blood for Britain Project in New York in 1940 for World War II. He became Chief of Staff at Freedmen's Hospital in 1944, and then became the first African American to be Examiner for the American Board of Surgery in 1949. He went on to train a new generation of African American physicians at Howard University. After a fulfilling life, he unfortunately died at only 46 on April 1, 1950.



Samuel L. Jackson

By Cameron Majors

Samuel L. Jackson; a very well known actor in many films throughout the years. Although he is very famous many people don't know what his favorite food is, which is fried chicken that was fried first then baked. Samuel only met his father once in his whole life. He was born on born December 21, 1948. A cool fact about Jackson attended Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia, where his intent was to become a marine biologist which obviously, he didn't do. It's just as well, because if the film *Deep Blue Sea* was any indication, he would likely have been eaten by a shark.



Muhammad Ali

By Alyssa Neff

Muhammad Ali was one of the greatest heavyweight boxers of all time. He was born on January 17, 1942 in Louisville, Kentucky. His parents, Cassius Marcellus Clay Sr. and Odessa Grady Clay, raised him and his brother in the American South. He experienced a lot of segregation growing up, as did his family.

Ali took up boxing when he was only twelve years old. When his bicycle was stolen one night, he filed a police report and that policeman took him under his wing to teach him how to box. After training for years, he went on to win a gold medal at the Rome Olympics in the 175-pound weight class, launching his professional career. In 1967, Ali joined the Nation of Islam during the draft of the Vietnam War. When he refused the draft due to his religious beliefs, he was stripped of his championship title and was sentenced to five years in prison. Ali never went to jail, and his conviction was overturned by the court.

Ali was very popular in the United States due to his impact on black pride, black resistance, and the Civil Rights Movement. Ali stood for resistance and was against the Vietnam War. He had said, "Unless you have a very good reason to kill, war is wrong." Ali's final record of boxing was 56 wins, five losses, and 37 knockouts. Ali finally suffered from too much brain trauma and eventually Parkinson's syndrome. Even though he was limited to what he could do, he stayed active in his beliefs and pride.



Rosa Parks

By Katie Feucht

Rosa Parks is a name that most people know. She is known as the "Mother of the Freedom Movement," and the "First Lady of the Civil Rights Movement." Her most famous act from the Civil Rights movement was her act of defiance on a bus in Montgomery, Alabama, but she also did so much more. Parks, originally known as Rosa Louise McCauley, was born on February 4, 1913 in Tuskegee, Alabama. Soon after she was born, her parents split, and she moved to live on a farm with her grandparents, mother, and younger brother. Parks lived a poor and tragic childhood. She dropped out of high school at the age of 11 in order to take care of her ill grandmother and mother.

In 1932, she married Raymond Parks, and he encouraged her to finish her schooling studies in 1933. She joined the NAACP activist group in December of 1943. When she joined, she was the only woman, and there was no secretary, so they felt the need to make her the new secretary. She held that position until 1957.

On December 1, 1955, Parks denied her bus driver's orders to give up her seat in the colored section to a white person because the whites only section was already full. As she sat there, many people became appalled by her actions. This was one of the acts that allowed the Montgomery Bus Boycott to go into action. Parks was diagnosed with dementia in 2002. She died of natural causes in her apartment in Detroit on October 24, 2005 at the age of 92. Her accomplishments will always be remembered and appreciated by people in the years to come.

LeBron James

By Adam Tucker

Not only is LeBron James is the greatest basketball player in the world, he also has had an impact on the society around him. James has opened the "I Promise" elementary school in Akron, Ohio for troubled youth and at-risk children. He is one of the main contributors to the Boys and Girls Clubs of America, the Children's Defense Fund, ONEXONE, which provides clean water, food and shelter for underprivileged children, and After School All-Stars, which encourage kids to get involved in after-school activities. He has three children: LeBron Jr., Bryce, and Zhuri James. As an only child growing up without a father, James was not favored to become the man he has today. Growing up poor in Akron, it was likely he would've become involved in gangs and likely ended up dead. James had one goal in mind: to get out of the hood, and he did just that. After becoming one of the top recruits in the 2003 NBA draft class, he was chosen as number one overall and the rest is history.

