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Recognizing Generations of Leadership

Let the powerful stories of National Inventors Hall of Fame® Inductees motivate you to make your own lasting mark on this world.
Charles Richard Drew
Surgeon and Educator
Inventor of Blood Plasma Preservation and Other Surgical Tools
U.S. Patent No. 2,389,355
Inducted in 2015
Charles Richard Drew was a pioneer in blood plasma preservation and the first Black surgeon to serve as examiner on the American Board of Surgery.

Drew also set up the first American Red Cross blood bank in 1941 and became a mentor to many of the most eminent surgeons of the postwar period.
Along with her siblings, research scientist and former elected official Charlene Drew Jarvis has proudly maintained her father’s legacy of service.

She served as Southeastern University’s first female president and as the chair of the D.C. council’s Economic Development Committee, which launched the Housing Production Trust Fund and other initiatives to counter the discriminatory lending practices of commercial banks.
Find inspiration for building your own legacy.

Learn about more innovative leaders by visiting the National Inventors Hall of Fame Museum.
Honoring Legacies of Perseverance and Progress

Discover the enduring influence of National Inventors Hall of Fame® Inductees and find inspiration for your own innovative journey.
Thomas JENNINGS
Entrepreneur and Civil Rights Advocate
Inventor of Dry Scouring
U.S. Patent No. 3306x
Inducted in 2015
Over 200 years ago, Thomas Jennings earned a patent for the dry scouring method that led to modern dry cleaning. Likely the first patent granted to a Black American, his innovation was described in an article from the New York Gazette.

Jennings used his patent profits to support the abolitionist and desegregation movements and in 1854, along with his daughter Elizabeth, he led the charge to desegregate public transportation.
Elizabeth Jennings Graham

Educator and Civil Rights Advocate
The Original Freedom Rider
When Elizabeth Jennings Graham was removed from a streetcar in Manhattan in 1854, she advocated for her rights and later won the court case leading to the desegregation of New York City’s transit system. She went on to establish the city’s first kindergarten for Black children in 1895.

In acknowledgment of Jennings Graham’s impact, a street sign was installed in 2007 near the site where she took a stand.
Where will your own INNOVATIVE JOURNEY take you?

Meet more world-changing innovators by visiting the National Inventors Hall of Fame Museum.