

Breaking Barriers: The First Ladies of Education



Firsts are always important. We don't know that something can be done until someone accomplishes the impossible and shows the way. Black women in America have always faced the double obstacles of gender and race. But in 1921, within 9 days of each other, three Black women fulfilled an impossible dream. They each earned a doctorate from White, Ivy League universities, becoming the very first Black ladies to receive their doctorates. Two were born in Washington D. C. and all three attended M Street High School or its predecessor (The Preparatory High School for Colored Youth).

Dr. Eva B. Dykes, Dr. Georgiana R. Simpson (she was born in Barry Farm of slave parents) and Dr. Sadie Tanner Mossell Alexander were pioneers and showed the world and other "colored" females that their minds were as sharp as any White male scholar. In succeeding years many other Black women would draw inspiration from these three ladies and follow their example. Dr. Williams presents a powerful PowerPoint presentation on these three ladies and the many obstacles they overcame to realize their dreams.

Dr. DeWitt S. Williams is a retired minister, missionary, and health educator. His very first book was about one of these pioneers, Dr. Eva B. Dykes, who was his college teacher. Dr. Williams has written nine books and traveled to all 50 states and 110 countries. His well-illustrated PowerPoint presentation is excellent for Black History Month, Women's History Month, National Education Week or other times of year when an inspirational talk is needed.

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