



NOTABLE MINORITIES WHO CHANGED HISTORY

February 1, 2008

Featuring
Z. Alexander Looby

“Greatness is not measured by what a man or woman accomplishes, but by the opposition he or she has overcome to reach his goals.”

- A Dorothy Height Quote

African American Firsts

- 1761 - First known African American Author
- Jupiter Hammon
- 1783 - First African American to formally practice medicine in the U.S. - James Derham
- 1823 - First African American to earn degree from an American College - Alexander Twilight
- 1849 - First African American university professor
- Charles L. Reason
- 1891 - First African American police officer in present-day New York City - Wiley Overton

February Dates to Remember:

- 2 - Groundhog Day
- 2 - Imbolc (Wiccan)
- 3 - Tu b'Shvat or Tu B'Shvat (Jewish, Israel)
- 4 - Rosa Parks Birth Anniversary
- 5 - Mexico - Constitution Day
- 12 - Abraham Lincoln's Birthday
- 12 - Lantern Festival (Taiwan)
- 12 - NAACP Founded
- 14 - Valentine's Day
- 14 - Race Relations Day
- 17 - Brazil, Carnival
- 17 - League of United Latin Citizens (LULAC) Founded American
- 18 - Chinese Lunar New Year (China, Korea, Taiwan, Vietnam)
- 19 - Orthodox Lent Begins
- 19 - President's Day
- 20 - Mardi Gras (United States)
- 21 - Ash Wednesday (Protestant, Roman Catholic)
- 22 - George Washington's Birthday
- 24 - Flag Day (Mexico)

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Z. Alexander Looby

Zephaniah Alexander Looby (1899 - 1972) Civil Rights Activist, Lawyer

Mr. Looby was born on April 8, 1899, in Antigua, British West Indies, and moved to the United States in 1914 following the death of his father. He received a bachelor's degree at Howard University, a Bachelor of Law degree from Columbia University, and a Doctor of Juristic Science from New York University. In 1926, he became the assistant professor of economics at Fisk University. He held this position for two years and later served as a lecturer at Fisk University and Meharry Medical College.

In 1929, Looby was working as a lawyer in Memphis and met Grafta Mosby, a schoolteacher. They were married in 1934. He helped found Kent College of Law, Nashville's first law school for blacks since 1911. He presided over the James C. Napier Bar Association during the second World War. Looby, along with Maurice Weaver and Thurgood Marshall, represented the defendants involved in the race riots in Columbia, TN, during their trial. Due to their efforts, 23 of the men were acquitted. Mr. Looby worked all over Tennessee fighting against Jim Crow laws and discrimination. In 1951, he and Robert E. Lillard became the first African Americans to be elected to the city council since 1911.



Mr. Looby headed the legal team of 12 lawyers that defended the college students who orchestrated and participated in the Nashville sit-ins. These non-violent demonstrators were protesting the segregation of the lunch counters in various department stores in Nashville. This protest lasted over a span of 3 months, December 1959 to February 1960. In the end, 145 people were arrested, mostly college students.

The trials of the sit-in participants sparked widespread interest in Nashville and the surrounding areas. On February 29, 1960, the first of the trials began. A crowd of almost 2000 lined the streets surrounding the courthouse to show their support for the protesters. Despite this show of support and the efforts of Mr. Looby and his team, the students were convicted of disorderly conduct. On April 19, 1960, a bomb was thrown through the front window of the Looby house while he and his wife slept in the back bedrooms. They were unhurt, but the blast was so powerful that it busted more than 140 windows in a nearby dormitory.

After news of the bombing spread, protesters gathered and around noon they all marched silently to city hall to confront the mayor, Ben West. He met them on the steps and told them that he agreed that the lunch counters needed to be desegregated, but also stated it was up to the store managers. The next day, Martin Luther King Jr. came to Nashville and spoke at Fisk University. He praised the Nashville sit-in movement as "the best organized and the most disciplined in the Southland."

On May 10, 1960, six downtown Nashville stores desegregated their lunch counters. Word of the desegregation was not publicized to avoid any more violence. Nashville became the first major city in the South to begin desegregating its public facilities. Mr. Looby retired in 1971 and passed away the following year, on March 24, 1972. In 1982, the Nashville Bar Association, who had denied his membership application in the 50's, posthumously awarded him membership. The Z. Alexander Looby Library and Community Center was erected by the city of Nashville in his honor.

(Sources: www.wikipedia.com & www.aaregistry.com)

Did You Know?

During Black History Month Access & Diversity will be hosting Movie Month at the following dates, locations, and times:

- Clement Room 110, February 5, 2-4PM, "30 Years to Life," featuring Tracey Morgan
- Clement Room 118, February 8, 6-9PM, "A Lesson Before Dying," featuring Don Cheadle
- Clement Room 118, February 12, 6-9PM, "Down in the Delta," featuring Alfre Woodard
- Clement Room 118, February 14, 2-4PM, "The Tuskegee Airmen," featuring Laurence Fishburne
- Clement Room 110, February 20, 1-3PM, "The Pursuit of Happyness," featuring Will Smith
- Clement Room 118, February 22, 6-9PM, "Rosewood," featuring Ving Rhames and Jon Voight
- Clement Room 110, February 25, 1-3PM, "Claudine," featuring James Earl Jones and Diahann Carroll
- Clement Room 118, February 29, 6-9PM, "Ghosts of Mississippi," featuring Whoopi Goldberg