



1995 Freedom Award  
National Recipient  
Dorothy Height



**PRE-VISIT ACTIVITY**

**Biography**

Dorothy Height was born in 1912 in Richmond, Virginia. She began her career as a caseworker in NYC and soon joined the civil rights cause. She became a member of the National Council of Negro Women and was appointed president of the organization in 1957. Height organized “Wednesdays in Mississippi” to bring together black and white women from the north and south. Eleanor Roosevelt, Dwight Eisenhower, and Lyndon B. Johnson frequently sought her counsel. Height tirelessly worked to encourage desegregation of schools and the appointment of African American women to government positions.

What is Ms. Height’s profession? (circle your answer or answers)

- A. Receptionist
- B. Philanthropist
- C. Attorney
- D. Activist

Answers:  
D - Ms. Height is a social activist.

**Vocabulary**

**Activist:** A person who practices direct action to effect changes in social conditions and governments

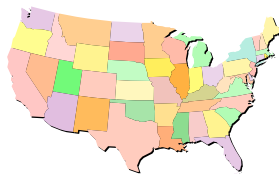
Name two people (aside from Dorothy Height) who you think are **Activists**:

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1.



2.



3.



4.

**Can you identify the images above?**

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_ 4. \_\_\_\_\_

Answers:  
1. World Map 2. United States 3. Virginia 4. Virginia’s state flag



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**POST-VISIT ACTIVITY**

Founded by Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune in 1935, the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW) played an important role in the struggle for human and civil rights. As the largest and most enduring organization of and for African American women, the NCNW organized a nationwide network of African American women's groups and pushed them to collect, interpret, and spread information about African American women's activities. Frustrated by the large numbers of similar organizations that were either all white or predominantly white, Bethune sought a larger voice for herself and her associates in the national discussion. She encouraged NCNW members "to develop competent and courageous leadership among Negro women and effect their integration and that of all Negro people into the . . . life of their communities."

The NCNW rapidly exerted political force. The organization protested the poll tax that was widely used in the South to keep African Americans from voting. Bethune also confronted discrimination in President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal programs while calling for greater numbers of black women to be appointed to government positions. By 1960, the NCNW had shifted its primary focus to housing. Under the leadership of Dr. Dorothy Height, it helped integrate public housing in the Northeast and sponsored several home-ownership programs for low-income families in the South. As the calls for civil rights grew louder through the 1960s, the NCNW remained actively engaged in voter registration, education campaigns, lobbying efforts, as well as in a variety of programs to provide social services and economic relief. The NCNW remains an important center for research and advocacy on behalf of black women to this day.

How might the concerns of African American women be particularly vulnerable? In what ways would someone have to fight for her rights as a *woman* and as an African American?

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Can you think of any ways that black woman play especially important roles in the Civil Rights Movement?

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The women's rights movement (begun in 1848 at the Seneca Falls Convention) gained new force in the 1960s. Do you know any important events in women's rights history?

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