

In Celebration of

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Throughout the month of February, Noble's Diversity & Inclusion Council will share some of the great achievements of Black Americans to our country and our world. To learn more about this initiative or the goals of the Council, please contact co-chairs Kelvin Solares and Molly Lang.



Julia Carson

“ She left behind a legacy showing what heights can be reached and what barriers can be overcome through kind hearted hard work and dedication.

Indiana Commission for Women

”

Adapted from [https://history.house.gov/People/Listing/C/CARSON,-Julia-May-\(C000191\)/](https://history.house.gov/People/Listing/C/CARSON,-Julia-May-(C000191)/)

Overcoming poverty and racism, Julia Carson served nearly 20 years in the Indiana Legislature and as the Center Township Trustee before being elected to the U.S. House of Representatives. The **first African American and first woman to represent Indianapolis in Congress**, Carson focused on issues that affected working class Americans, many of which she knew firsthand.

In 1965, she was a secretary for the United Auto Workers when she met Rep. Andy Jacobs, who hired her as a district aide. Carson worked for him until 1972, when he encouraged her to run for office.

Carson served in the Indiana House of Representatives from 1973 to 1977, and then as a State Senator until 1990. In 1991, Carson was elected as Center Township Trustee, earning a reputation for defending the poor while putting the agency on sound financial footing by reducing welfare costs, implementing a workfare program, eliminating waste and fraud, and ultimately erasing its crippling \$20 million deficit.

When Rep. Jacobs retired in 1996, Carson ran for the seat and won, despite it being a conservative-leaning, majority-white district. When opponents tried to make her race an issue, Carson countered: “I am not your African American candidate. I am the Democratic candidate for Congress. I don’t allow my opponents to stereotype me and confine me to a certain segment of the population.”

During her five terms in Congress, she authored a bill to award the Congressional Gold Medal to Rosa Parks—whose refusal to move to the back of a segregated bus in 1955 galvanized the modern civil rights movement. The award is the highest civilian honor bestowed by Congress. She also co-sponsored the Equal Employment Non-Discrimination Act.

When Carson passed away in December 2007, grandson André Carson, who later succeeded her in the House, stated: “Let’s remember Congresswoman Carson by doing the people’s work and fighting for those who don’t have a voice.”