

This Week in History

JULY 15

1968 - Ellen Holly integrates daytime television when she appears on ABC's "One Life to Live" as Carla, an African-American "passing" for white. The role is a marked departure for the New York City-born African-American, whose first professional role was with Joseph Papp's New York Shakespeare Festival as the white Desdemona to William Marshall's Othello in 1958. Holly had been a featured player in Papp's company and had played several Shakespearean roles, including Lady Macbeth opposite James Earl Jones in Macbeth and Princess Katherine opposite Robert Hooks in Henry V before being signed to the soap opera.

1970 - James McGhee is sworn in as the first African-American mayor of Dayton, Ohio.

1980 - Benjamin Hooks addresses the GOP convention after a lobbying effort and threatened walkout by 121 African-American delegates. Hooks speaks before the convention despite leading candidate Ronald Reagan's refusal to appear at the NAACP convention earlier in the month.

1980 - New violence erupts in the riot-torn Liberty City section of Miami, Fla. Two months after riots that killed 18 and resulted in \$100 million in property damage, the violence will leave 40 injured and result in 40 arrests.

JULY 16

1829 - A poem in tribute to the late Philadelphia caterer Robert Bugle is published. Bugle is the first known professional African-American caterer. Among his descendants will be Robert W. Bugle, publisher of the *Philadelphia Tribune*, and Donald Bugle, noted film critic and author of *Black Americans in Film and Television*.

1930 - Donald McKayle is born in New York City. McKayle will make his debut, at 22, in Her Name was Harriet (a dance tribute to Harriet Tubman) and go on to dance in and choreograph House of Flowers, The Bill Cosby Special (1968), the 1970 Academy Awards, the movie version of The Great White Hope, and Sophisticated Ladies on Broadway.

1932 - Mari Evans, author of the poetry collections I Am a Black Woman and Nightstar: 1973-1978, is born in Toledo, Ohio.

1934 - Donald Payne is born in Newark, N.J. In 1988, he will become the first African-American congressman from New Jersey.

1936 - The movie The Green Pastures premieres in New York's Radio City Music Hall, featuring Eddie "Rochester" Anderson, the Hall Johnson Choir, and Rex Ingram as "De Lawd."

1977 - Janelle Penny Commissiong of Trinidad and Tobago is crowned Miss Universe. She is the first black to win the title.

JULY 17

1862 - Congress approves the rights of African-Americans to bear arms to fight in the Civil War and enlist in the Union Army by passing two laws, the Confiscation and Militia acts. Over 186,000 African-Americans will serve in the Union Army, with 38,000 losing their lives.

1911 - Frank Snowden is born in York County, Va. He will become the foremost scholar on blacks in ancient history, notable for his books Blacks in Antiquity: Ethiopians in the Greco-Roman Experience and Before Color Prejudice: The Ancient View of Blacks.

1935 - Carol Diahann Johnson is born in the Bronx, N.Y. She will be better know as Diahann Carroll, star of Broadway (House of Flowers), television (Julia), and films including Carmen Jones and Claudine, the latter earning her an Academy Award nomination as best actress.

1944 - An ammunition depot at Port Chicago, Calif., explodes, killing 320 men including 202 African-Americans assigned by the Navy to handle explosives. The resulting refusal of 258 African-Americans to return to the dangerous work formed the basis of the trial and conviction of 50 of the men in what will become known as the Port Chicago Mutiny.

JULY 18

1863 - The 54th Massachusetts Volunteers charges Fort Wagner in Charleston, S.C. Although the Union forces suffer great losses, Sergeant William H. Carney of Company C exhibits bravery in battle by maintaining the colors high despite three bullet wounds. Although cited for bravery, it will take 37 years for Carney to receive the Congressional Medal of Honor for his actions.

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Birmingham's first black mayor leaving legacy

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (AP) — Twenty years the mayor of Alabama's largest city, Richard Arrington knows he'll be remembered for one thing above all else — the color of his skin.

Arrington, whose long run as mayor ends Friday, boasts of Birmingham's expanded tax base and points out bank towers and sprawling hospitals that have replaced steel mills at the heart of the city's economy.

But it always seems to come back to race. The former college administrator knows he'll be remembered simply as the first black mayor of a city once rocked by racial violence.

"I'm very comfortable with it," Arrington says. "My being elected to office was very important to the city. It made all of our citizens feel a



RICHARD ARRINGTON part of it."

Arrington, 64, is stepping down with three months to go in his fifth term. City Council President William Bell, a fellow black, will become interim mayor while campaigning to replace Arrington - with the mayor's backing — in the Oct. 12 election.

Arrington says he's

leaving early because he's done all he can do in office and wants to finish a book. His critics say he's doing it as a way of choosing his successor. "It's similar to a remote-control vehicle, with Arrington holding the controls," complained Councilman Bernard Kincaid, a fellow black and one of four other announced mayoral hopefuls.

Critics also have accused Arrington of padding friends' pockets with city business. He endured a two-year federal grand jury investigation of City Hall deals under the Reagan administration; Arrington wasn't charged, but others were.

Through it all, Arrington kept a lid on the kind of racial hatred that plagued Birmingham when black civil rights demonstrators were

met with fire hoses and snarling police dogs 36 years ago.

He maintained his own black power base even as he dined with the city's white leaders, reassuring them Birmingham was a safe and stable place for businesses.

"He inherited a very tense situation as the first black mayor. The potential for mischief was very great," said Bill Hull, a professor and former provost at Samford University in Birmingham. "He was a splendid choice for the time."

Birmingham, like many urban areas, has been losing population for decades. The Census Bureau estimated its population last year at 252,997, an 11 percent decline from 1980, the year after Arrington took office. (See Arrington, Page 7)



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