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**BLACK HERITAGE MONTH: RECOGNIZING
NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS OF BLACK FEMALE
PHARMACISTS**

The mission of Black Heritage Month is to educate the community on the importance of the history and significance of the Black culture. ABHP joined in this mission and celebration this year to educate both the ABHP membership and the pharmacy community on the important roles that black and minority pharmacists have played in the health systems throughout history. By participating in Black Heritage Month, ABHP is able to provide an educational atmosphere of learning opportunities for students, pharmacists, and the community to acknowledge the contributions that black pharmacists have made to the profession of pharmacy. Our theme for the month is **"Notable Achievements of Black Female Pharmacists"**

presented by [John E. Clark, PharmD](#); [Deborah Williams, MD, PhD](#); [Angela D. Massey-Hill, PharmD](#)

JULIA P. HUGHES COLEMAN

Considered in 1900 by Philadelphians to be the first and only black female in Pennsylvania to be the owner of a pharmacy. The pharmacy was located on Christian Street in Philadelphia, PA. Julia P. Hughes is a native of North Carolina. She graduated in pharmacy from Howard University, where she was awarded a pharmacy certificate in 1897 and the PhG degree after attaining the necessary practical experiences. Her leadership started early in her career while serving as President of her graduating class of ten. Before entering Howard University, she graduated from Scotia Seminary in Concord, NC. She resigned a position she held as a pharmacist at the Frederick Douglas Memorial Hospital in Philadelphia to go into her own business. In 1910, Julia Hughes Coleman formed the Hair Vim Chemical Company in Washington, DC, which was among the first successful companies to produce hair products for African American women using chemicals.

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ANNA LOUISE JAMES

Miss Anna Louise James (1886-1977) gained a place in the history books for her "firsts" but, even before her death in 1977 at the age of 91, became a lasting legend in the history of her town. Her father was a slave on a Virginia plantation until he escaped at age 16 and headed north on the Underground Railroad, settling in Hartford, CT. Soon after graduating from Hartford's Arsenal Elementary School in 1902, the family moved to Saybrook, CT where Anna attended the local high school and graduated in 1905. Overcoming the bigotry of racism and sexism, she attended Brooklyn College of Pharmacy where she was the only woman in her class, graduating in 1908. The following year she became the first African-American woman in Connecticut to be licensed as a pharmacist. With the passage of the 19th amendment to the U.S. Constitution in 1920 she became one of the first women to register to vote. There were several member of her family who were pharmacists, including her brother Fritz who operated a pharmacy in Old Lyme, CT. Her brother-in-law and her niece were also pharmacists. Among the obstacles along her professional path was the Connecticut Pharmaceutical Association which rejected her application for membership because she was a woman and suggested she join the women's auxiliary. pharmacy..



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ANN LANE PETRY

Ann Lane Petry (1908-1997), Harlem Renaissance writer and first African American woman to have a book sell over a million copies, was born in an apartment above James Pharmacy, which was once owned by **Anna Lousie James**. At the time, it was known as Lane Drug Store and run by her father, Peter Lane. Petry's grandfather had been a pharmaceutical chemist, and her father, uncle, and aunt were all pharmacists. Annie Louise James was Petry's aunt. Petry attended the local schools and high school. Upon graduation from high school in 1929, she followed the family tradition and expectations and entered the Connecticut College of Pharmacy (now part of the University of Connecticut), where she completed the program in 1931. She then worked in Pharmacist James' Pharmacy in Old Saybrook, as well as, her uncle's pharmacy in Old Lyme, CT, until 1938 when she married George David Petry on February 22 and the couple moved to New York. .



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CLARA SMYTH TALIAFERRO

Important as an early black female pharmacist and drugstore owner, Clara Smyth (Fraction) Taliaferro is better known for her involvement in the black women's club movement. She was a founding member, and the first president, of the Tuesday Evening Club of Social Workers, which was established by a group of black women in Washington, D.C., with the aim of bettering the lives of black children and young adults. Taliaferro was also an active member of the National Association of Colored Women and the Federation of Women's Clubs in the District of Columbia. Clara Smyth Taliaferro was born in 1873 to John Henry and Fannie W. Shippen Smyth. Taliaferro was educated in the Washington, D.C., public schools and at Myrtilla Miner Normal School. She earned a PhG degree from Howard University in 1904. . [Learn More](#)

ANNA M. LOGAN BECKWITH

Mrs. Anna M. Logan Beckwith (b. 1884; d. 1964) was a pharmacist in Cincinnati, OH. In 1928, she purchased the Peerless Pharmacy, located on Alms and Chapel Streets. Beckwith was considered a leading member of the Colored citizens in Cincinnati as she was cited in several business publications throughout the state of Ohio. Anna Beckwith was born in Berea, KY, the daughter of Elijah and Amanda Logan. Anna Beckwith was a graduate of Berea College. . [Learn More](#)

RUTH GARDENA BIRNIE

Ruth Gardena Birnie was one of the earliest African American pharmacists in South Carolina, male or female. In the early to mid-1900s, health care among blacks in Sumter and the surrounding rural areas was improved as the result of Birnie's work as a pharmacist. She also helped enhance the social life of local blacks by making her drugstore available as a gathering place for those whose social outlets were restricted. She entered Benedict College, then went on to Temple University and received her degree in pharmacy. Upon her return to South Carolina, Birnie became one of the earliest female African American pharmacists in the state. About 1912, she opened her drugstore, People's Pharmacy, on West Liberty Street. Ruth Birnie worked in close proximity to her husband, Charles Birnie, a physician. Charles Birnie's office was located upstairs and the People's Pharmacy was located downstairs in the same building on West Liberty Street.

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