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THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

National Black History Month  
February 1976

In the Bicentennial year of our Independence, we can review with admiration the impressive contributions of black Americans to our national life and culture.

One hundred years ago, to help highlight these achievements, Dr. Carter G. Woodson founded the Association for the Study of Afro-American Life and History. We are grateful to him today for his initiative, and we are richer for the work of his organization.

Freedom and the recognition of individual rights are what our Revolution was all about. They were ideals that inspired our fight for Independence: ideals that we have been striving to live up to ever since. Yet it took many years before these ideals became a reality for black citizens.

The last quarter-century has finally witnessed significant strides in the full integration of black people into every area of national life. In celebrating Black History Month, we can take satisfaction from this recent progress in the realization of the ideals envisioned by our Founding Fathers. But, even more than this, we can seize the opportunity to honor the too-often neglected accomplishments of black Americans in every area of endeavor throughout our history.

I urge my fellow citizens to join me in tribute to Black History Month and to the message of courage and perseverance it brings to all of us.

*Gerald R. Ford*

