

## The Origins Of Black History Month

*Texas A&M professor Albert Broussard explains the history and importance of Black History Month and what it represents for the Black community.*

*By Mia Mercer '23, Texas A&M University College of Liberal Arts Source: <https://today.tamu.edu/2021/02/08/the-origins-of-black-history-month/>*

The observation of Black History Month dates back to 1915, when Carter G. Woodson, now known as the “Father of Black History,” created an organization called the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History.



In 1926, Woodson initiated the first “Negro History Week” on Feb. 7 to celebrate and raise awareness of Black history. And in 1976, said Texas A&M University Afro-American history professor Albert Broussard, this turned into a month-long celebration and was renamed Black History Month.

“You can learn a lot from history, and learning about particular achievements of people who have struggled under great adversity can be tremendously inspiring to all people, not just African Americans, but all groups, whether it be from women or the LGBTQ+ community,” Broussard said.

Black History Month not only highlights important historical figures, he said, but is an educational tool that teaches individuals about their history. “We celebrate Black History Month in February because Black people had traditionally celebrated the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglas, both of whom were born in the month of February,” Broussard said. “Oftentimes Black history is taught as a celebration of this great man or this great woman, but that wasn’t what Woodson had in mind. He wanted this time to be a celebration of the achievement of Black people as a race, recognizing that Blacks were part of the history of this country from the very beginning.”

Broussard said Black Americans are pioneers who’ve built a society from the ground up since 1619, when the first enslaved people were brought to America. However, even though the Black community has contributed to

society throughout American history, Black history itself is just now becoming a widely taught subject.

Growing up in the public schools of San Francisco in the 1950s and 1960s, Broussard wasn’t taught about Black history. It wasn’t until he attended Stanford University that he took his first Black history course. When he joined the Texas A&M faculty in 1985, Broussard was the first to develop and introduce a chronological, two-semester sequence in Black history. The first semester focused on the slave trade up to the Civil War, and the second half covered the period after the Civil War to the present.

Black History Month emphasizes the history of the struggles Black Americans face, he said. In 2020, the Black Lives Matter movement brought attention to racial inequality in the hope of inspiring change both in America and across the globe. According to Broussard, this movement reinforces the idea of activism in the struggle to achieve racial justice. At the large numbers of African Americans that have lost their lives to senseless violence.

That is where I think the BLM movement connects very much with the long history of a long struggle with Black history. And I think Black History Month can do good to highlight what the organization has been doing for Black Americans thus far.”

“I think one of the great tragedies of American society is that certain people have been deemed expendable,” Broussard said. “Look Black history is American history, Broussard said — that’s why it is so important to recognize this month by learning more about Black history through books, podcasts, articles, or taking a Black history course.

“There is no excuse to not learn more about Black history or quite frankly the history of any group,” Broussard said. “There’s a wealth of material out there to choose and learn from, you just have to be self-motivated to do it.



### February 2021 Calendar

*Black History Month  
American Heart Month*

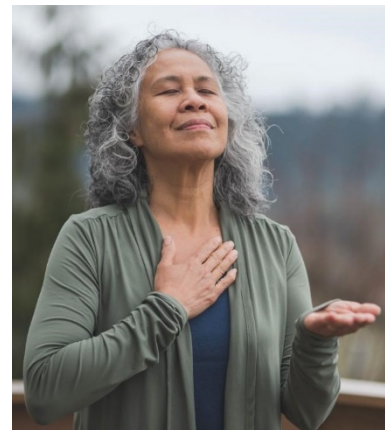
- 1 – National Freedom Day (US)
- 2 – Groundhog Day (US)
- 4 – World Cancer Day
- 4 – Rosa Parks Day (US)
- 12 - Lunar New Year (International)
- 12 – Abraham Lincoln’s Birthday (US)
- 14 – Valentine’s Day (Christianity)
- 15 – Nirvana Day (Buddhism)
- 15 – President’s Day (US)
- 16 - Vasant Panchami (Hindu)
- 17 – Ash Wednesday (Christianity)
- 26 – Lantern Festival (International)
- 26 – Purim (Judaism)
- 27-28 - Magha Puja Day (Buddhism)

## Emotional and Stress Management For Medical Interpreters

Source: <https://interpretertrain.com/tips-for-handling-emotions-and-stress-while-interpreting/>

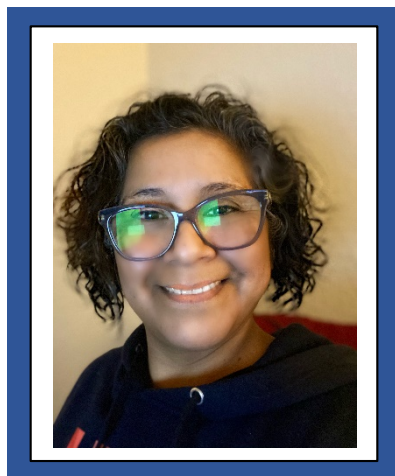
There are many techniques people employ to manage their emotions as medical interpreters, and each person will have a different method that works best for them. Check out the following tips regarding stress management for medical interpreters while they are interpreting:

1. If you begin feeling anxious or upset, take deep breaths while listening to doctors and patients speaking to calm yourself.
2. Choose a point in the room to focus on when relaying information that is difficult, giving you something to focus on aside from the information you're conveying.
3. Avoid the stress of getting stuck if, in a particularly emotional moment, you forget a word by making sure you always carry a dictionary with you.
4. Focus on the words themselves that you must relay instead of the overall context of the situation.
5. If you begin to feel helpless or upset while interpreting, remind yourself that what you're doing does affect patients' health in a positive way, and without an interpreter they may not be getting the help they need.



Of course, medical interpreters are only human – there are only so many tips on stress management for medical interpreters you can read, and there will be times when you won't be able to control how you react to certain scenarios. Do your best to remain as calm as possible, but if you don't think you can, excuse yourself briefly from the room.

With experience and training you will be more adapted to handling extreme emotional distress. Remember that what you do outside of work to cope with emotional wellbeing is just as important as what you do while interpreting to maintain your composure on the job.



### New Staff Profile: Irma Olortegui

Irma is the newest bilingual professional to join the UCDH Medical Interpreting Team. She was born and raised in Peru and came to the United States in 1996. She lived in New Jersey initially but found during a visit to California that she enjoyed it so much more, she eventually moved to Sacramento in 2004. With the diverse population in Sacramento, Irma discovered her passion for interpreting and helping the LEP communities. She has interpreted for different businesses, non-profits, healthcare organizations and also volunteered for WEAVE. She is happy to be joining the Medical Interpreting team where all professional interpreters are transforming communities. Outside of work, Irma enjoys spending time with her family, baking and playing with her cat Noah and Shih-Tzu puppy Benito. Welcome to the Medical Interpreting team, Irma!