

## Maggie's Civics Corner

### Lesson #41 – Black History Month



*Today's lesson is about BLACK HISTORY MONTH. Each year during the month of February, we celebrate Black History Month in the United States. Also known as African American History Month, it provides us the chance to celebrate the contributions of African Americans and recognize the struggles they have had to overcome. President Gerald Ford officially recognized Black History Month in 1976, the 200<sup>th</sup> year ("bicentennial") of our nation.*

**Carter G. Woodson**, a renowned African American historian and the man considered to be the "father of Black history," began work to establish a nationwide study of African Americans because he found history textbooks overlooked, undervalued, ignored, or even excluded any mention of them. Once he had that foundation in place, he expanded his efforts and started the first celebration of **Negro History Week** in 1926. He selected the second week of February because of its connection to Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass – they each were born that week – and it traditionally was a time when African Americans held celebrations in honor of emancipation. Just because we celebrate **Black History Month** in February, doesn't mean you can't or shouldn't learn about African American history all year long.

**Sticky Situation:** I am a golden retriever. At my dog daycare, there is a lot of information about the history of golden retrievers and the most famous golden retrievers that ever lived. But there are other dog breeds, like Labs and Shepherds at my dog daycare, too. They have an important history, too, but throughout the year we hardly learn anything about the history of either breed. Recently, my dog daycare announced it would dedicate a month to Labradors and a month to Shepherds so we can learn about all the things each breed has contributed to dog history. I'm excited about this news. What do you think about it? Be prepared to explain your answer.

**Activity:** Black History Month is a time when we celebrate the contributions African Americans have made to our country. Do some research to learn more about important Black Americans other than ones you may already know. Now pick one person and answer the following questions:

1. What is this person's full name? When and where were they born?
2. Why is this person noteworthy? What did this person do to benefit the United States?
3. What is the importance or significance of this person's contributions?

**Bonus Activity:** Tell a friend, teacher, or parent about the historical figure you researched. Note whether or not they had ever heard of this person before.