

Cora May Jones (Thurman) Contributions page

- Cora was born on March 9th in 1894 in Hamilton Township, Franklin County Ohio.
- Her family moved to Gahanna in 1904, where Cora went to school from 5th through 12th grades.
- She was the first African American to graduate from Gahanna in 1913 along with the seven other students in her graduating class. She was the 100th to graduate Gahanna High School between 1882 - 1913. (31 years)
- She died in 1987 in Tucson Arizona at 93 years old (she moved there in 1960 - her last 27 years).

Employment

- Once she graduated from Gahanna High School in 1913, she attended The Columbus Normal School from 1913 -1915 and graduated in June of 1915 as a teacher with a lifetime teaching certificate.
- She was appointed to teach in a one room schoolhouse in Jackson County Public Schools near where her parents were born and grew up. (1915 - 1917)
- Cora worked in another rural one room schoolhouse as a teacher and later a principal/supervisor for Urbancrest School for seven years. She was the first Black teacher in the Urbancrest Village School District. (1917 - 1925)
- She taught elementary school in the Mansfield School District for 5 years. (1925 - 1930) She was the first Black teacher employed by the Mansfield School District in 1925.
- She spent her last 26 years as a special needs educator for Columbus Public Schools. (1930 - 1957)
- She retired from Columbus Public Schools in 1957 with over 40 years in public education.

Education

- Graduated Gahanna High School in 1913
- Graduated from The Columbus Normal School in 1915 with a lifetime teaching license
- Attended Capital University (one of the first African American females to attend), The Ohio State University, Miami University, Chicago State University, and The Hampton Institute in Virginia (1930-1946)
- Earned a Bachelor's Degree in Education from the Hampton Institute in Virginia with honors (1944)
- Earned a Masters Degree in Special Education from the Hampton Institute in Virginia (1946)

Awards and Distinctions

- One of Cora's students in the Urbancrest one room schoolhouse, Ellen Walker (Craig-Jones), became Urbancrest's Mayor in 1972-75 (the first elected female African American Mayor in the United States)
- Cora was part of a select staff that was chosen along with her students at Mount Vernon Avenue Elementary School in 1940 to come and officially greet President Franklin D. Roosevelt when he visited Columbus
- Cora conducted demonstrations in methods of teaching remedial reading throughout the state of Ohio
- Cora was the first woman elected to serve in the vestry for St. Phillips Episcopal Church (1940's)
- Cora was elected treasurer for the community club "The Study of Negro Life and History" (1946)
- Cora was elected special education division secretary of the Central Ohio Teachers' Association (1947)
- Cora was chairman of the budget and project committee Nightingale Cottage Wing 41
- Cora was a National Ohio Finalist for the "Best Teacher of 1948" contest sponsored by the "Quiz Kids" radio show based on letters they received from present and former students about her work in the classroom
- Cora was president of the Columbus Area Auxiliary to the Real Estate Brokers Association (1949)
- Cora was treasurer for the Benevolent Prison League in 1949
- Featured Speaker demonstrating reading techniques at the National Remedial Reading Conference (1953)
- Cora was written about in the Columbus Dispatch about a special lending library of toys. Her students created toys and acted as librarians for underprivileged students to check toys out and take home (1954)
- One of ten teachers selected by the 1955 Columbus Board of Education for a grant (\$500) for summer study based on her teaching performance and explaining how the money will benefit her students achievement
- Cora received an award for her outstanding teaching from the Beatty Elementary School PTA (1956)
- Cora won Sojourner Truth award in 1956 (This national award was given annually to outstanding women for their work and dedication to the community by the National Negro Business and Professional Club) "Her philanthropic work is far reaching - many widows, orphans, and poor have been helped by her financially".
- Was awarded \$500 in 1956 by the Columbus Board of Education for outstanding achievement in the field of Remedial Reading, which was a program she developed and shared with her colleagues from Ohio, other states and England. The average Columbus Teacher salary in 1956 was \$4,712 when she received the award.
- Cora was inducted into the Gahanna High School Alumni Hall of Fame for advancing African American, Women and Handicapped individuals rights.

Cora Jones/Thurman's Firsts & Notable Achievements

- The **first** African American student to attend any Gahanna school (1904).
- The **first** in her family to attend four years of high school (1909-1913).
- The **first** African American to graduate from Gahanna Lincoln High School (1913).
- The **first** in her family to attend a Normal School to get a lifetime teaching certificate or any type of professional certificate (1915).
- The **first** in her family to take any college classes (1930-1946).
- **One of the first** female African American students to attend classes at Capital University, the oldest college (est. 1830) in central Ohio (1937-1944).
- The **first** in her family to get a Bachelor's Degree attending classes from five different colleges—Capital University, Miami University, Ohio State University, University of Chicago and The Hampton Institute (1944).
- The **first** in her family to get a Master's Degree (1946).
- The **first** African American teacher employed by Jackson County School system (1915).
- The **first** African American teacher employed by the Urbancrest school system in Franklin County to teach in a one room schoolhouse (1917).
- The **first** African American to become a principal/school supervisor in the Urbancrest school (about 1920).
- One of Cora's students from the one room schoolhouse in Urbancrest went on to become the mayor of the Urbancrest community, Ellen Walker Craig-Jones from 1972 - 1975. Mrs. Walker Craig-Jones was the **first** African American female elected as a mayor in the United States.
- The **first** of two African American teachers employed by Mansfield City Schools (1925).
- The **first** woman elected to the church vestry at St. Philip Protestant Episcopal Church.
- Cora and her school colleagues and students were the **first** to greet President Franklin D. Roosevelt when he came for the Columbus dedication of Poindexter Village (1940).
- Cora was **elected** secretary for the Central Ohio Teachers Association, COTA (1947).
- One of the **first** African American female teachers to be nominated as a finalist for the national Quiz Kids Best teacher of the year award (1948).
- Cora **was an expert** Remedial Reading specialist developing superior methods shared with teachers in Ohio, other states and even England (1950-57).
- **Featured Speaker** - for the National Alliance for Post Office Employees Women's Auxiliary Meeting on "The Misunderstood Child" (1951).
- **Featured Speaker** - Demonstrating reading techniques at the National Remedial Teaching Conference held at the Ohio Union Conference Theater at O.S.U. (1953).
- Cora was **1 of 10** teachers in The Columbus Public Schools to receive a monetary award based on teaching performance and student achievement (1955).
- Cora **was chosen** to receive the 1956 Sojourner Truth Award for "her meritorious community service, her deep concern for all activities advancing the status of women, and her sincere effort to advance the brotherhood of man." (1956).
- Cora **was inducted** posthumously into the Gahanna Lincoln High School Alumni Hall of Fame for being an active member of the Central Ohio community and a 42 year public educator who was a trailblazer in advancing African American, Women and Handicapped individual's rights (2025).

Cora Jones (Thurman) 1894-1987



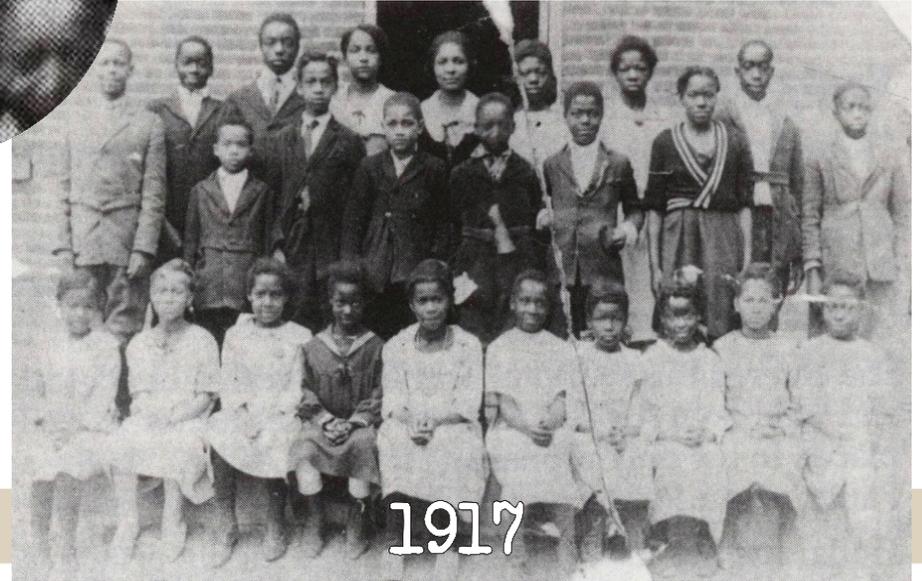
1905

1st African American
to attend Gahanna
Schools



1948

Finalist for
"Best Teacher of
1948" Contest



1913

1st African American to graduate
from Gahanna Schools

1917

1st African American One-room Schoolhouse
Teacher/ Supervisor in Urbancrest, Ohio

BUSINESSWOMEN LAUD MRS. THURMAN

By **BLANCHE M. VAN HOOK**

Columbus chapter of National Ass'n of Negro Business and Professional Women's Clubs, Inc., worshipped in a body Sunday at Shiloh Baptist Church.

Occasion was for the purpose of presenting its annual Sojourner Truth award. Chosen as this year's recipient was Mrs. Cora Mae Thurman, 1420 E. Long st., Columbus.

On the award committee were Misses and Mesdames Helen Paxton, chairman; Dorothy Roberts, LaVerne Dukes, Eunice Wood, Beulah Barnett, and Rosa Raglin.

Through Mrs. Paxton, the

chapter presented Mrs. Thurman with a hybrid orchid corsage and then stated the following reasons for her having been selected to receive the award:

MRS. THURMAN obtained her BS and MA degrees from Hampton institute in Virginia and engaged in further study at University of Chicago and Ohio State and Capital universities, Columbus. She is a teacher at Beatty Pk. school and treasurer of its PTA.

She is well known for her outstanding work in the teaching of remedial reading. She has developed a number of unique methods in this regard and has shared her aids and devices not only with teachers in her own community but others from several states and one from England. She was one of the recipients of a \$500 grant from the Board of Education last year in recognition for outstanding achievement.

Her pet hobby is her work at the Winner Av. Old Folks' Home, where she has brought much happiness to the residents by teaching arts and crafts to them. Her untiring work there

has helped many persons to live richer and fuller lives.

HER PHILANTHROPIC work is far-reaching. Many widows, orphans, and unfortunate people have been helped by her, financially and otherwise, without thought of compensation. Scores of "Friendship Boxes" and "Sunshine Boxes" have brought happiness to persons who are ill, bereaved, or lonely. As a public school teacher, she is beloved by both parents and pupils.

She is an active member of St. Phillips Episcopal church and a faithful worker in St. Margaret's Guild of this denomination.

MISS DOROTHY ROBERTS, president of the Columbus chapter, presented a scroll to Mrs. Thurman, which stated:

"The Nat'l Ass'n of Negro Business and Professional Women's Clubs, Inc., presents its 1956 national annual Sojourner Truth community service award to Mrs. Cora Mae Thurman in recognition of her meritorious community service, her deep concern for and participation in all activities advancing the status of women, and her sincere effort and acceptance of responsibility to advance the brotherhood of man."

Mrs. Thurman received the award with an expression of gratitude. After this, a vocal solo, "The Voice in the Wilderness," was rendered by Mrs. Etheline Alexander.



MISS DOROTHY ROBERTS, president of Columbus chapter of Nat'l Negro Business and Professional Women's Clubs, presents Sojourner Truth award to Mrs. Cora Thurman. See story.

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\$3.25
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