Architecture | History | NOTABLE DATES | Engineering | Interior Design



20 Africans were brought to Jamestown to be sold into slavery — 1619

The Revolutionary War — 1775

1783



American Civil War — 1861

Emancipation Proclamation issued by President Abraham Lincoln outlaws slavery — 1865

14th Amendment grants equal protection of the laws to African Americans — 1868

15th Amendment establishes the right of African Americans to vote — 1870



Elijah McCoy, mechanical engineer, obtains his 1st of 57 patents for lubricators in steam engines. He is the 1st African American to do so — 1872

Ellen Richards is 1st woman admitted to MIT, and the 1st woman to graduate from MIT with a Chemistry degree; she created the sanitary engineering lab — 1873

Civil Rights Act grants equal access to public accommodations — 1875

Supreme Court nullifies Civil Rights Act of 1875. — 1883



Granville T. Woods patents the multiplex telegraph; he later earns the nickname "the Black Edison" and receives over 40 patents — 1887



Sophia Hayden comes 1st academically-trained female architect — 1890

Robert R. Taylor becomes 1st academically-trained African American architect — 1892

William Dammond, a civil engineer, becomes 1st African American graduate of the University of Pittsburgh — 1893

Supreme Court validates the principle of "separate but equal" in Plessy vs. Ferguson — 1896

Before interior design was seen as a profession, **Candance Wheeler** founded the Society of Decorative Art to encourage women to support themselves through decorative art and handiwork — 1897

For the first time, all Native Americans are counted on the U.S. Census — 1900

The 1st female labor union, the National Women's Trade Union League, is founded — 1903

Walter T. Bailey becomes 1st African-American architect licensed in Illinois — 1904



Elsie de Wolfe is the 1st individual to receive a commission for Interior Design, making her the first known professional interior designer. She is also a pioneer for the LGBTQ+ community because of her open "Boston Marriage" to Elisabeth "Bessie" Marbury. — 1905

Moses McKissack, a Black slave, started the McKissack firm which is now the oldest minority-owned AEC firm in the U.S.

George Biddle Kelley graduates from Cornell University's Civil Engineering program, then becomes 1st African American engineer registered in New York; he was also a founding member of Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity, the oldest Black Greek fraternal organization



National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) formed — 1909

Ruby Ross Wood publishes "The House in Good Taste," one of the 1st Interior Design manuals — 1913

WWI — 1914

"Silent Protest Parade" is the 1st major civil rights demonstration of the century

Jeanette Rankin sworn in as 1st woman in Congress — 1918

19th Amendment Ratified — 1920



Bessie Coleman becomes 1st African American and Native American woman to earn a pilot license — 1921

Garrett Morgan, an African American inventor, patents his three-position traffic signal, which still helps regulate passing vehicles more safely today — 1923

Paul R. Williams also becomes known for his Interior Design work

American Indians granted citizenship and the right to vote — 1924



Dorothy Draper begins 1st known Interior Design business

Threatened to deny his sexuality or leave the industry, **William Haines** leaves Hollywood to open a design studio that served many of the Hollywood elite — 1935

Beverly Green becomes 1st African American woman to receive engineering degree from UIUC — 1936

Paul R Williams is the 1st African-American member of AIA

Harold Curtis Brown (Central Park South's Hotel Navarro) and **Sogata** (NY nightclubs), two of the 1st African American interior designers. — 1938

1939

WWII

Japanese Americans and Aleutian Natives are placed in internment camps.

Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) founded to fight for civil rights using nonviolent, direct-action protests

The "Tuskegee Airmen"

1942



Jackie Robinson broke the color barrier in baseball — 1945

Euphemia Haynes becomes 1st African American woman to earn a Ph.D. in mathematics — 1943



Hattie Scott Peterson becomes 1st African American woman to earn a Civil Engineering degree

Howard Grant becomes 1st African American to graduate from Berkeley College of Engineering, later becoming 1st African American member of ASCE

Yvonne Clark becomes 1st African American woman to graduate from Howard University with a mechanical engineering degree — 1946

Hattie Scott Peterson joins the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers as the 1st woman engineer

President Harry Truman ends segregation in the U.S. military — 1948

Congress passed the "Federal Housing Act" — 1949

1951



Brown v. Board of Education — 1954

Norma Merrick Sklarek becomes 1st licensed African American female architect in New York

Norma Harvey, daughter of architect Paul R. Williams, led the interior design for Frank Sinatra's residence and became a respected Black interior designer — 1955

Montgomery Bus Boycott — 1956



Little Rock Central High School Integration — 1957

Mary Jackson becomes 1st African American woman engineer to work at NASA — 1958



1959

Norma Merrick Sklarek becomes 1st African American woman member of AIA

Greensboro Four & Sit-in movement

Civil Rights Act reaffirms voting rights for all Americans

Freedom Rides — 1960

Sister Parish is hired by Jackie Kennedy to design the interiors of the White House. She is considered the pioneer of the American country style.

John F. Kennedy signs Equal Pay Act — 1963

Martin Luther King, Jr. is arrested in Birmingham Demonstrations. Later he delivered his famous speech, "I have a dream"



Assassination of **Malcolm X** — 1965

Selma-Montgomery March

Voting Rights Act nullifies local laws and practices that prevent minorities from voting

Black Panthers is founded — 1966

Loving v. Virginia — 1967

Louis Weller becomes 1st licensed Native American architect

Detroit Riots

Civil Rights Act outlaws discrimination in the sale or rental of housing — 1968

Martin Luther King, Jr. is assassinated

AIA Launches Minority Disadvantaged Scholarship — 1969



Louis Weller - First Native American member of AIA — 1970

National Organization of Minority Architects founded in Detroit — 1971



The McKissack firm becomes the oldest minority-owned and woman-owned A/E/C firm when **Leatrice McKissack** takes over after her husband dies

Whitney M.Young Jr Award established to recognize architects and organizations for social justice — 1972

Roe v. Wade — 1973

AIA passes law to"To integrate women into all aspects of the profession as full participants."

AIA Taskforce on women in architecture reports 1.2% of the field are women

The Society of Hispanic Professional Architects Founded — 1974

American Indian Council of Architects & Engineers is founded

Walter Braithwaite becomes senior engineer at Boeing, helping develop the first CAD software — 1975

The Community Reinvestment Act encourages investment in communities and addresses the disinvestment in minority neighborhoods caused by redlining — 1977

Hugh Robinson becomes 1st African American general officer in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers — 1978

Jean-Michael Basquiat, a Black artist, paved the way for Neo-Expressionism and would later set the record for the highest price sold by a Black artist — 1980

Sandra Day O'Connor becomes 1st woman in the Supreme Court

Wisconsin becomes 1st state to outlaw discrimination based on sexual orientation

Maya Lin, an Asian American architect, gains national recognition for her winning design of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial as an undergraduate student — 1981



Guion Bluford Jr, an aerospace engineer, becomes 1st African American to travel to space — 1983



Norma Merrick Sklarek becomes founding partner of Siegel, Sklarek, and Diamond, which became the largest women-owned practice — 1985

Cecil Hayes is one of the 1st African American designers to manufacture furniture and upholstery

Cheryl Riley establishes Right Angle Designs becoming one of the only Black designers to gain national reputation in furniture design — 1986



BE Founded by Ellen Bailey Dickson — 1991

The Los Angeles Riots

Mae Jemison, who studied chemical engineering, becomes 1st African American woman astronaut sent into space on a shuttle flight — 1992

The inaugural Diversity Conference is held in Washington, D.C.

Title IX signed into law

Named "America's Best Interior Designer" by CNN and Time Magazine, **Sheila Bridges** establishes her own interior design firm as a reputable Black designer — 1994

Tamara Eagle Bull becomes 1st licensed Native American female architect

Denise Scott Brown, Hon. FAIA, becomes the 1st woman to receive the AIA Topaz Medallion, recognizing outstanding individual contributions in architectural education — 1996

Aprille Ericsson-Jackson becomes 1st African American woman to receive a Ph.D. in mechanical engineering at Howard University and later the 1st to receive a Ph.D. in engineering from NASA's GSFC — 1995



Cecil Hayes is the 1st African American designer featured in Architectural Digest — 1997

BE is certified as a woman-owned business, one of the first in Chicago to be certified since the program's inception — 1999

Walter Braithwaite named President of Boeing Africa, becoming one of the highest-ranking black employees in Boeing's history — 2000

Tiffany Brooks is the 1st African American designer on HGTV



Barack Hussein Obama became the 1st African American to be elected President of the U.S.

The Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act is enacted. — 2007

Washington, D.C. architect **Marshall Purnell,** FAIA, serves as the 1st elected African American AIA president — 2008

Ursula Burns becomes 1st African American woman CEO of a Fortune 500 company called Xerox, 30 years after an engineering internship at said company

2009

AIA adopts employment non-discrimination act — 2010



#BlackLivesMatter is created by Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometis — 2013

Johnpaul Jones is the 1st Native American architect to receive the National Humanities Medal — 2014

AIA launches the Equity in Architecture commission

The National Museum of African American History and Culture opens in Washington, DC as the only national museum devoted solely to documentation of African American history and culture — 2016



Women's March on Washington

President Donald J. Trump signed Executive Order 13769, which bars entry to citizens of seven Muslim-majority countries

Paul Revere Williams becomes 1st African American architect to receive the ARIA Gold Medal — 2017



ARIA Large Firm Roundtable and NOMA launch the AIA LFRT 2030 Diversity Challenge to increase the number of licensed Black architects to 5,000 by 2030

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion working group is created at BE — 2020



President Joseph R. Biden signed the National Juneteenth Independence Day Act into Law

Deb Haaland becomes 1st Native American Cabinet secretary of interior — 2021