

Creating the Julius Rosenwald & Rosenwald Schools National Historical Park



"All the other pleasures of life seem to wear out, but the pleasure of helping others in distress never does."
JULIUS ROSENWALD



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Welcome to the Campaign's second update on the life and legacy of Julius Rosenwald. The first covered the friendship of Julius Rosenwald and Booker T. Washington, the visionary President of Tuskegee Institute who inspired the Rosenwald Schools building program. This update addresses the Julius Rosenwald Fund and the impact of its fellowship program on adults of exceptional promise, most of whom were African Americans, who went on to contribute importantly to American life and culture in the arts and sciences. Also the Campaign launched its Facebook page last week. Please "friend" and "follow" us at



<https://www.facebook.com/CreatingRosenwaldPark>

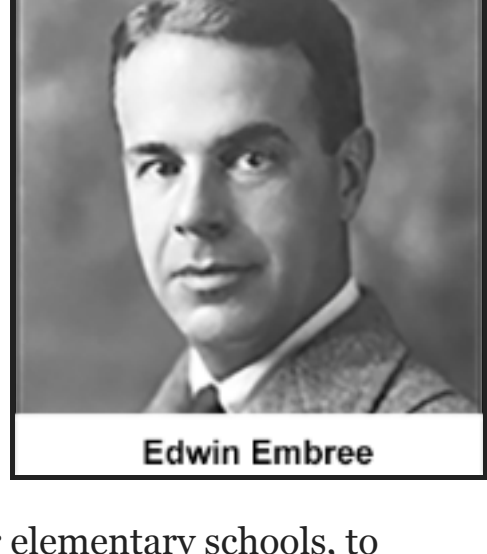
and ask your friends, family and colleagues to do the same. The more people who support the Campaign the sooner we will achieve our mission of creating the Julius Rosenwald & Rosenwald Schools National Historical Park.

THE JULIUS ROSENWALD FUND FELLOWS: INVESTING IN PEOPLE

In 1935 a major work of American scholarship appeared – a 700 page book called *Black Reconstruction in America, An Essay Toward a History of the Part Which Black Folk Played in the Attempt to Reconstruct Democracy in America, 1860 – 1880* by sociologist, historian and journalist **W.E.B. DuBois**. It opens with a note "to the Reader" thanking, among others, the Trustees of the Julius Rosenwald Fund, for making the study possible.

The Fund had been established in October 1917 for "the well-being of mankind," and for its first decade it had focused primarily on building schoolhouses for elementary education for black children in the rural South. By 1927, pulling back from hands-on management of both Sears, Roebuck and his philanthropy, Julius Rosenwald wished to give the Fund professional management.

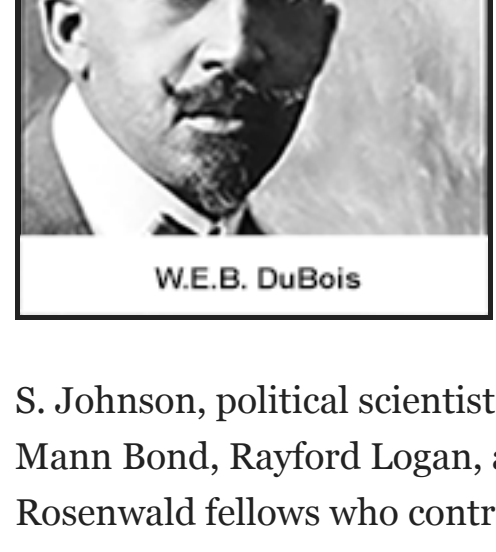
In 1928 he hired as Fund president **Edwin Embree**, whom he had met when both men served as trustees of the Rockefeller Foundation. Embree felt strongly, and Rosenwald and the other Fund trustees agreed, that the pressing need in the US was to open up opportunities for all people. From then on the Fund concentrated on four areas - education, fellowships, health care and the study of race relations.



In 1932, the Fund discontinued the building of schoolhouses but supported programs to improve the quality of teachers for elementary schools, to support high schools and colleges for African Americans, to develop county library services available to blacks in the South and to awarding fellowships to help advance the careers of persons of exceptional promise.

These fellowships supported the scholars, artists and educators that Du Bois had referred to as "the talented tenth," a leadership group to which he himself belonged. While the schools gave one third of the African American children in the South a basic education during the Jim Crow era, the fellowships sought to encourage and develop excellence, exceptional achievement in fields from medicine and the science of agriculture to painting, from history, anthropology, library science, journalism and nursing to sculpture, poetry and dance.

Between 1928 and 1948 these grants brought financial assistance and, with it, enhanced prestige and recognition, to 587 African Americans and 278 "white southerners." Some grantees used their awards to travel abroad, others were enabled to attend northern universities and prestigious graduate schools or to have time for creative work freed from financial strain. W.E.B. Du Bois received three fellowships. Singer Marian Anderson, writer and anthropologist Zora Neale Hurston, poet Langston Hughes, novelist Ralph Ellison, photographer Gordon Parks, historian John Hope Franklin, diplomat Ralph Bunche, writer James Baldwin, painter Jacob Lawrence – these are just a few of the men and women whose careers were given crucial assistance by the Rosenwald Fund.



The goal of these grants was both to break down racial prejudice by highlighting black achievement but also to provide a generation of African Americans with the tools they themselves would use to attack entrenched white hostility and systemic inequality. An extraordinary case in point is the team that Thurgood Marshall, as director of the NAACP's Legal Defense and Education Fund, put together to attack legalized segregation in schools in the *Brown v. Board of Education* case. Lawyer Robert Lee Carter, psychologists Mamie Phipps Clark and Kenneth Clark, sociologist Charles S. Johnson, political scientist John Aubrey Davis, historians John Hope Franklin, Horace Mann Bond, Rayford Logan, and C. Vann Woodward, a white Southerner – all were Rosenwald fellows who contributed to the legal briefs that went into preparation of the case. Mabel Murphy Smythe, an economist, became Thurgood Marshall's deputy director of non-legal research. The approach adopted by the Marshall team had been inspired, he later wrote, by work done documenting the different segregation laws in various states by a young lawyer named Pauli Murray, also a Rosenwald Fellow, who also did early key work on gender discrimination.

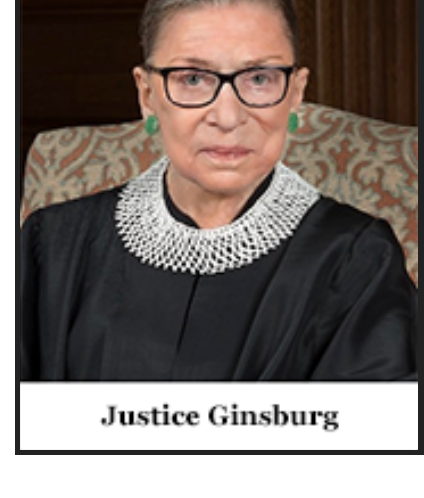
Some of these names are not well known. Their work is less widely recognized than Marian Anderson's soaring rendition of "My Country 'Tis of Thee" at the Lincoln Memorial or Jacob Lawrence's moving images of the Great Migration. But, as scholar Alfred Perkins has pointed out, the fellows shared a "similarity of outlook, a particular view of the social purposes of their scholarly vocation. What they held, along with Rosenwald Fund officials, was the profound conviction that scholarly endeavor could provide the basis for societal reform."

The fellowships enabled highly qualified African Americans to demonstrate their ability to do first-rate work in nearly every field of study, helping them to break down barriers to entering graduate and professional institutions and the mainstream of American life.

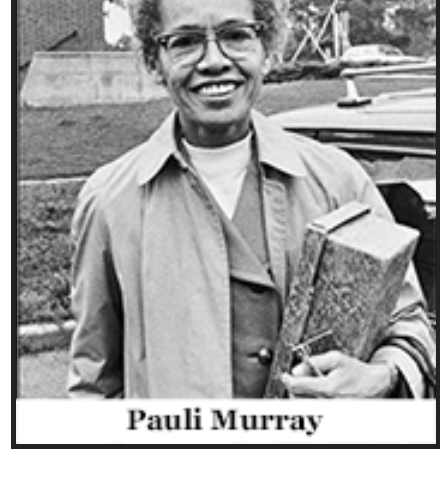
Julius Rosenwald's generous investment in people – in young school children in the rural South and in intellectuals and artists of exceptional promise – is still paying dividends today as, more and more, we recognize how much African Americans have contributed and continue to contribute to the uniquely American experiment in democracy.

THE ROSENWALD FELLOW WHO INFLUENCED RUTH BADER GINSBURG

Pauli Murray (1910 -1985) wore many hats in her lifetime – civil rights activist, lawyer, women's right activist, first African American Episcopal priest, poet and memoirist -- accomplishing a great deal in each of those fields. She received a Rosenwald Fund Fellowship for law in 1944.



Murray's pioneering work on gender discrimination influenced **Ruth Bader Ginsburg** so significantly that her first brief to the Supreme Court in 1971 in the *Reed v. Reed* case listed Murray as a coauthor, although Murray had not participated in its writing. In this case, for the first time, the Supreme Court struck down a preference based on gender leading to further sex discrimination wins that transformed American law and life. Ginsburg later said that the nation owed a great deal to Murray for keeping the fact of sex discrimination and the hope for its redress alive.



WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE RECEIVED ROSENWALD FUND FELLOWSHIPS?

(Answer at bottom of page)



Langston Hughes



Charles Drew



Katherine Dunham



Ralph Bunche



Woody Guthrie

I can testify that it is nearly always easier to make \$1,000,000 honestly than to spend it wisely.

Julius Rosenwald

DONATE

We need your support to continue.

For questions and suggestions, please write to info@rosenwaldpark.org.

Quiz Answer

All **five** received fellowships – **Langston Hughes** in creative writing in 1931/41, **Charles Drew** in medicine and **Ralph Bunche** in political science, both in 1931; **Katherine Dunham** in anthropology in 1935/36, and **Woody Guthrie** in language and literature in 1943. And, yes, **Katherine Dunham** was also a famous dancer!