THIS WEEK IN BLACK HISTORY

May 17, 1875–

Oliver Lewis was the first jockey to win the Kentucky Derby during its inaugural race at Churchill Downs in Louisville, KY, on this day. Lewis rode the thoroughbred Aristides, one of the fifteen three-year-olds in the field. The horse was named after an ancient Greek general and horse and rider battled to victory in a time of 2 minutes, 37 seconds. Other Black jockeys who made their mark in the Derby were Alonzo Clayton, James "Soup" Perkins, William Walker and Willie Simms. Fourteen of the fifteen jockeys in the historic race were Black.

May 19, 1965 –

Patricia R. Harris, lawyer, educator and diplomat, was named ambassador to Luxembourg by President Lyndon B. Johnson on this day. This made her the first Black woman to have diplomatic rank in United States history. Harris served in the post until 1967. A native of Mattoon, IL, Harris earned a bachelor's degree at Howard University, graduating summa cum laude. In 1960, she graduated from George Washington University's National Law Center, ranked first in her class. Twelve years after her Luxembourg appointment, she again made history when she became the first Black woman to hold a presidential Cabinet post in 1977. President Jimmy Carter named her secretary of the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development. In 1979, Carter appointed her secretary of the United States Department of Health, Education and Welfare. Later that year, Congress established a separate United States Department of Education, which she also headed until 1981. She died in 1985 of cancer at the age of 60. In 2000, the United States Postal Service dedicated a stamp in her honor, and she became the 23rd American and seventh woman honored on a commemorative.

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Dr. Robert Michael Franklin Jr. Named New President Of Morehouse College

Morehouse College in Atlanta recently named Dr. Robert Michael Franklin Jr. as the 10th president of the all-male institution.

Dr. Robert Franklin

Franklin, who currently serves as the presidential distinguished professor of social ethics at the Candler School of Theology at Emory University in Atlanta, will succeed Dr. Walter E. Massey, who will retire on June 30.

A scholar and educator, Franklin graduated from Morehouse in 1975 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in political science and religion. He also earned the Masters of Divinity in Christian Social Ethics, Pastoral Care from Harvard Divinity School, and a Ph.D. in Ethics and Society, Religion and the Social Sciences from the University of Chicago Divinity School.

A frequent commentator for the National Public Radio program "All Things Considered," Franklin is also author of several publications, including his latest book *Crisis in the Village: Restoring Hope to African American Communities.*

Franklin will officially begin his new position July 2. ❐

RUBY DEE HONORED: Legendary stage and screen actress Ruby Dee accepts the 2007 Harvard Foundation Humanitarian Award from Dr. S. Allen Counter (r), director of the Harvard Foundation, and the Rev. Professor Peter J. Gomes during ceremony at Harvard's Memorial Church in Cambridge, MA. Dee and her husband, the late Ossie Davis, were recognized for their humanitarian and civil rights contributions.

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