

Black Legacy Our Past, Present and Future.



The First Black Wimbledon Champ!

PAST

Althea Gibson

Born: August 25, 1927

Contribution: Sports



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Althea Gibson lived in Harlem in the 1930s and 1940s. Her family was on welfare. Public programs brought tennis to children in poor neighborhoods, though those children couldn't dream of playing in the elite tennis clubs. Althea started playing and realized that she had a talent. She began winning competition after competition. Gibson won the American Tennis Association (the then governing body for black tournaments) women's singles tournament ten years in a row. Yet tennis tournaments outside the ATA remained closed to her. In 1953, she graduated from Florida A&M University on a tennis and basketball scholarship and became an athletic instructor at Lincoln University. With the color barrier finally broken, she was able to compete against the best and won a series of brilliant victories: the 1955 Italian Championships, first of the 4 Grand Slam events in Paris capturing the French Championships in singles and also in doubles, the US Championships and she became the first black person to win a Wimbledon Championship. Upon returning to the US, she was given a ticker-tape parade in New York City and an official welcome at New York City Hall. For her performance that year, Gibson earned the No. 1 ranking in the world and was named the Associated Press Female Athlete of the Year



All Of That And Then Some!

PRESENT

Venus & Serena Williams

Born: June 17, 1980

Born: September 26, 1981

Contribution: Sports



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Venus & Serena Williams were born in Lynwood, California and Saginaw, Michigan respectively. Both grew up in the LA suburb of Compton, California and were coached by their father from a very young age. Home schooled by their mother, it was Venus who turned pro at 14 and three short years later made it to the U.S. Open in 1997. Meanwhile, sister Serena was already rising through the ranks and in 1999 became the first sister to win a Grand Slam event at the U.S. Open. She is the first African American woman to claim a Grand Slam singles title since Althea Gibson in 1958. After the tournament, she received a call from President Clinton and also talked to the president's daughter, Chelsea. The prize for the tournament was \$750,000. The following year, it was Venus' turn to win the 2000 Wimbledon championship - with both sisters easily taking the Wimbledon doubles title that year. The next day, Serena and her sister Venus won the doubles title at the U.S. Open. The sisters had previously won five career women's doubles titles together. Since then, Venus and Serena Williams have been two of the most watched players on the women's tennis circuit.

What Will You Contribute To The Legacy?