

Black Legacy Our Past, Present and Future.



Is that the real McCoy?

PAST

Elijah McCoy

Born: May 2, 1843

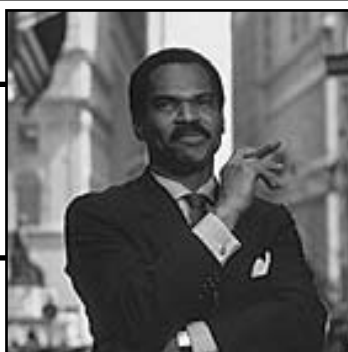
Contribution: Inventor



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In 1837 Elijah's parents, who were slaves in Kentucky, escaped to Canada. His parents were able to save enough money to send Elijah to school in Edinburgh Scotland to learn mechanical engineering in 1859/1860. Elijah returned to Canada after the American Civil War was over, living with his family for about a year before moving to Ypsilanti Michigan. The management of the Michigan Central Railroad could not imagine that a Negro could be an engineer, yet did hire him as a train fireman/oilman. He had to stoke the boiler and lubricate the steam cylinders and sliding parts of the train. One of the problems of hot, high pressure steam is that it is murderously corrosive of most metals, and a thin film of lubrication is required to protect and seal the steam cylinders and pistons. In 1872, Elijah patented his first invention, a self-regulating lubricator that utilized the steam pressure in the cylinders to operate the valve. Within ten years, his device was so successful that buyers of steam trains and steam engines used in mines and factories would ask if the lubrication systems were the "Real McCoy". This is where the popular phrase, that we still use today, comes from. He also performed consulting work for local firms, was granted fifty-two patents and worked on his own inventions.



Making Power Moves!

PRESENT

Reginald F. Lewis

Born: December 7, 1942

Contribution: Business



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Reginald Lewis was born in Baltimore, Maryland. He grew up in a middle class neighborhood, won a football scholarship to Virginia State College and graduated with a degree in economics in 1965. He was a dedicated member of Kappa Alpha Psi, Fraternity, as well. He went on to graduate from Harvard Law School in 1968. He then was recruited by a top New York law firm yet left to start his own firm two years later. After almost 20 years as a corporate lawyer with his own practice, Lewis then moved to the other side of the table by creating TLC Group L.P., a venture capital firm, in 1983. His first major deal was the purchase of the McCall Pattern Company, a home sewing pattern business. In 1988, after reporting gross sales of \$1.8 billion, it became the first black-owned company to have more than \$1 billion in annual sales and the nation's largest black-owned and black-managed business. It held the top spot for 11 years, growing to \$2.2 billion in sales. He later sold the company at a tremendous profit for investors. In 1992, Forbes magazine listed Lewis among the 400 richest Americans with a net worth estimated at \$400 million. Lewis attributed much of his success to his family's support. "They instilled in me that I could do whatever I wanted to do".

What Will You Contribute To The Legacy?