



Union Baptist Church of Cincinnati
405 West Seventh Street
Cincinnati, OH 45203
(513) 381-3858
www.union-baptist.net
Rev. Dr. Orlando Yates, Pastor

QUICK FACTS

NAME

W.E.B. Du Bois

OCCUPATION

Civil Rights Activist, Educator,
Journalist

BIRTH DATE

February 23, 1868

DEATH DATE

August 27, 1963

DID YOU KNOW?

W.E.B. Du Bois was the first African American to receive a Ph.D. from Harvard University (1895).

DID YOU KNOW?

The first case study of an African-American community was conducted by W.E.B. Du Bois, published as *The Philadelphia Negro: A Social Study* (1899).

DID YOU KNOW?

W.E.B. Du Bois co-founded the NAACP in 1909.

DID YOU KNOW?

W.E.B. Du Bois died one day before Martin Luther King Jr. delivered his "I Have a Dream" speech at the March on Washington (August 28, 1963).

EDUCATION

Harvard University, Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität (now Humboldt-Universität), University of Berlin, Fisk University

PLACE OF BIRTH

Great Barrington, Massachusetts

PLACE OF DEATH

Accra, Ghana

W.E.B. Du Bois¹

Civil Rights Activist, Educator, Journalist (1868–1963)

W.E.B. Du Bois was one of the most important African-American activists during the first half of the 20th century. He co-founded the NAACP and supported Pan-Africanism.

Who Was W.E.B. Du Bois?

Scholar and activist W.E.B. Du Bois was born on February 23, 1868, in Great Barrington, Massachusetts. In 1895, he became the first African American to earn a Ph.D. from Harvard University. Du Bois wrote extensively and was the best-known spokesperson for African-American rights during the first half of the 20th century. He co-founded the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in 1909. Du Bois died in Ghana in 1963.

Early Life & Education

William Edward Burghardt Du Bois, better known as W.E.B. Du Bois, was born on February 23, 1868, in Great Barrington, Massachusetts. While growing up in a mostly white American town, Du Bois identified himself as mulatto, but freely attended school with whites and was enthusiastically supported in his academic studies by his white teachers.

In 1885, he moved to Nashville, Tennessee, to attend Fisk University. It was there that he first encountered Jim Crow laws. For the first time, he began analyzing the deep troubles of American racism.

After earning his bachelor's degree at Fisk, Du Bois entered Harvard University. He paid his way with money from summer jobs, scholarships and loans from friends. After completing his master's degree, he was selected for a study-abroad program at the University of Berlin.

While a pupil in Germany, he studied with some of the most prominent social scientists of his day and was exposed to political perspectives that he touted for the remainder of his life.

"And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen." Matthew 28:18 – 20





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Du Bois' Unprecedented Accomplishment

Du Bois became the first African American to earn a Ph.D. from Harvard University in 1895, and went on to enroll as a doctoral student at Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität (now Humboldt-Universität). (He would be awarded an honorary doctoral degree from Humboldt decades later, in 1958.)

Writing and Activism

Not long after, Du Bois published his landmark study — the first case study of an African-American community — *The Philadelphia Negro: A Social Study* (1899), marking the beginning of his expansive writing career.

In the study, he coined the phrase "the talented tenth," a term that described the likelihood of one in 10 black men becoming leaders of their race.

W.E.B. Du Bois and Booker T. Washington

While working as a professor at Atlanta University, W.E.B. Du Bois rose to national prominence when he very publicly opposed Booker T. Washington's "Atlanta Compromise," an agreement that asserted that vocational education for blacks was more valuable to them than social advantages like higher education or political office.

Du Bois criticized Washington for not demanding equality for African Americans, as granted by the 14th Amendment. Du Bois fought what he believed was an inferior strategy, subsequently becoming a spokesperson for full and equal rights in every realm of a person's life.

'The Souls of Black Folks'

In 1903, Du Bois published his seminal work, *The Souls of Black Folk*, a collection of 14 essays. In the years following, he adamantly opposed the idea of biological white superiority and vocally supported women's rights.

In 1909, Du Bois co-founded the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and served as editor of its monthly magazine, *The Crisis*.

Pan-Africanism and Death

A proponent of Pan-Africanism, Du Bois helped organize several Pan-African Congresses to free African colonies from European powers.

W.E.B. Du Bois died on August 27, 1963 — one day before Martin Luther King Jr. delivered his "I Have a Dream" speech at the March on Washington — at the age of 95, in Accra, Ghana, while working on an encyclopedia of the African Diaspora.

¹ "W.E.B. Du Bois." Edited by Biography.com Editors, *Biography.com*, A&E Networks Television, 28 Jan. 2019, www.biography.com/people/web-du-bois-9279924.

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