

A Message from the Science Teachers Association of New York State In Honor of Black History Month

On this first day of February 2021, we at STANYS take a moment to honor our science educators of color in New York State for all they do to help in our mission of providing a high-quality science education experience for **ALL** students. Over the past ten months we have been in the throes of a horrendous pandemic which has further exposed the enormous inequities that exist in our education communities. Lack of adequate broadband internet access, the inability to access much needed materials and resources, and children and families not receiving much needed support services are just a few examples of the issues that have been dragged out of the shadows, but are always present. Additionally, communities of color have been struck disproportionately worse by COVID-19.

2020 was also a year of great pain caused by the abhorrent killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery at the hands of law enforcement officers. Yet, many of us drew great inspiration from the scenes of members of our black communities and their many supporters as they took to the streets to bring attention to the racism, bigotry, and police brutality that continues to permeate the fabric of this country. In January of 2021, we saw an attack on our very democracy that, if successful, would have surely empowered individuals that promote such beliefs. We must stand with our black family members and denounce such hatred that exists, for silence is tacit approval of the vile actions against our brothers and sisters.

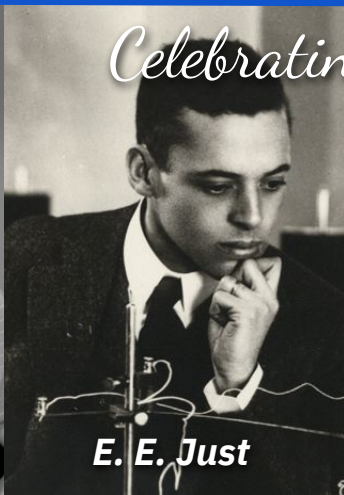
Education is one great weapon to fight the inequities and injustices that are present in this country. The power of knowledge, reasoning ability, and critical thinking are all so important in beating the scourge we have observed. Marian Wright Edelman (founder and president emerita of the Children's Defense Fund and Presidential Medal of Freedom recipient) said, "*Education remains one of the black community's most enduring values. It is sustained by the belief that freedom and education go hand in hand, that learning and training are essential to economic quality and independence.*" We must ensure that our students of color are getting their fair shot at an amazing education.

During the next month, I encourage all of us to celebrate the diversity in our classrooms. Take some time to highlight the many accomplishments of scientists of color. Include time to help students learn to evaluate information with a critical eye. Tell your students of color what an amazing profession science teaching can be. Each of us must take an active role so we don't repeat the history of the past year and so we can raise up our black students.

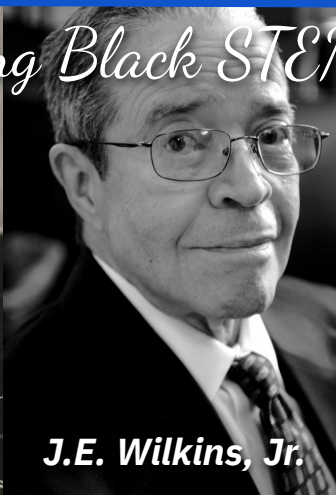
The STANYS Executive Committee



K. Johnson



E. E. Just



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Celebrating Black STEM Pioneers