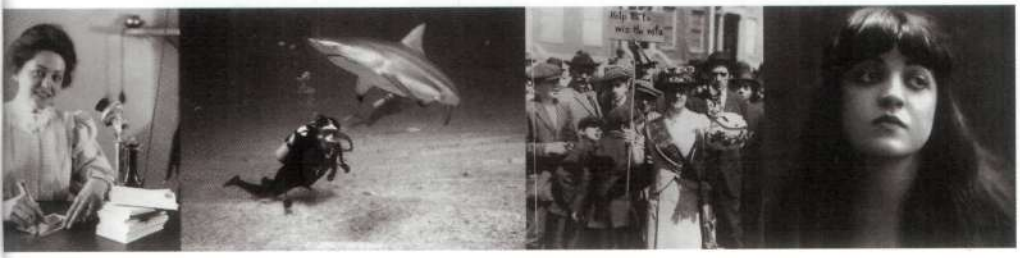
WOMEN OF ACHIEVEMENT IN MARYLAND HISTORY



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when she became the first woman elected to the organization's vice presidency, thereby becoming the chief female officer of a union that was over 80 percent female. As a defender of equal rights, Bambace encouraged the ILGWU to include more women and blacks. She also knew how important the union's participation in the political arena could be and subsequently became the first trade unionist sent to the Democratic National Convention.

However, Bambace's work went far beyond the ILGWU. Bambace was an active supporter of Hisdadrut, the Zionist labor movement in Israel, and she served on its council for decades, her work increasing scholarship funds for Israeli youth. Additionally, Bambace stayed busy in the Civil Liberties Union and Baltimore's antipoverty programs.

Angela Bambace believed in equality for all people and advanced their right to work in safe, hygienic conditions. Demonstrating this philosophy in every avenue of her life, she later became known as Maryland's "First Lady of the Labor Movement." According to a *Baltimore Sun* editorial marking her death in 1975, Bambace saw the labor movement as "an instrument of justice for downtrodden humanity" (Alexander 16).

Enolia Pettigen McMillan

1904–, Baltimore City

. . . she's altogether comfortable with making others uncomfortable.

The first woman president of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Enolia McMillan has had a long-distinguished career as an educator and administrator and is renowned for more than five decades of service in the cause of civil rights. Firmly believing in the need for increased education and employment opportunities for black Americans, McMillan has worked with many different organizations to help end discrimination (MacFarlane 773).

COURTESY OF MARYLAND WOMEN'S HISTORY PROJECT

As a young child, McMillan lived on the Eastern Shore of Maryland where her parents, both born into slavery, owned a modest farm. "We were poor," she said, "in fact I would say that poverty was the main obstacle in my life at that time" (Beckles 94). Although poor, McMillan's parents taught their daughter that with hard work and perseverance, one could succeed at any task and rise above poverty. They held high aspirations for their children, and one of the most important was education.

McMillan graduated from the segregated schools of Baltimore. Her earliest ambition was to become a doctor, but the racial discrimination of the 1920s usually forced black American women to choose either teaching or domestic work. So McMillan chose teaching. The recipient of a scholarship, she commuted daily by train to Howard University in Washington, D.C. Some years later, she earned her master's degree from Columbia University.

While studying at Columbia, McMillan began seriously questioning the inequities of the Maryland public-education system. Her thesis, "Factors Affecting Secondary Education in the Counties of Maryland," furnished a basis for attacks on Maryland's racist, dual school system, which had unequal school terms for blacks and whites, as well as disproportionate salaries and funding allocations. "When I started teaching in Baltimore at Booker T. Washington Junior High, that school, like most schools assigned to blacks, was poorly equipped. We only had secondhand books, no library and no auditorium," McMillan said (Beckles 94).

McMillan spoke out against institutional racism and was quickly branded a rebel and troublemaker. Her brave accusations did, however, result in her election as president of the Maryland State Colored Teachers Association and as the regional vice president of the National Association of Colored Teachers. On the other hand, it denied her promotions she deserved in the Baltimore County school system.

During her career as a teacher and administrator, McMillan began participating in the NAACP.[16] Through this forum, she fought successfully against a law allowing black teachers to be paid less than white teachers. In 1935, she joined the NAACP, and thus began five decades of struggle for civil and human rights. In 1969, at the age of sixty-five, she became president of the Baltimore chapter, and under her leadership, the previously declining membership increased. Additionally, McMillan successfully recruited younger members and raised significant funds.

By the early 1970s, the Baltimore chapter, through "negotiation, legislation, and litigation," had helped to effect considerable social change (Salahu-Din 709). McMillan guided the chapter in every major job-discrimination case and before her seventeen-year presidency ended, the Baltimore chapter distinguished itself as the "vibrant, effective vanguard" of the Civil Rights movement (Salahu-Din 709).

In 1985, McMillan became the first woman to be elected president of the national NAACP, prompting one magazine to write, " Defenders of the status quo had better prepare—Enolia McMillan is coming, and for the cause of civil rights, she's altogether comfortable with making others uncomfortable" (McMillan). During her tenure from 1985 to 1989, she initiated moving the group's national headquarters to Baltimore and worked diligently to raise funds for the building to house it. McMillan also emphasized the importance of both individuals' and the organization's economic well-being. She firmly believed that black Americans' future economic progress would be based on educational achievement and economic empowerment.

Enolia McMillan, the tireless leader who could mobilize forces, battled all her life to extinguish racism, social injustice, and discrimination. Through her efforts, many of these battles have been won, and Maryland citizens, black and white, are the lifelong beneficiaries of her hard work.

Harriet Elizabeth Brown

1907–, Calvert County

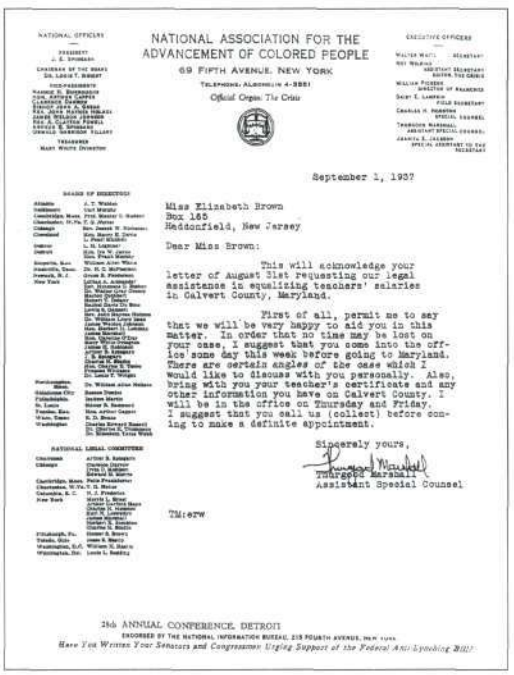
. . . forced the State of Maryland . . . to reevaluate and revise its laws . . .

COURTESY OF OLAN MILLS, PHOTOGRAPHERS

For many years, beginning in the 1930s, the "colored" teachers of Maryland fought for equal salaries. One woman, Harriet Elizabeth Brown, greatly disturbed by such injustice, became a catalyst for change in both the state of Maryland and the nation (Reid).

In 1937, Brown was employed in one of the "colored" schools of Calvert County, Maryland, when she discovered that black teachers were receiving a much lower salary than were white teachers. As a teacher with eight years experience and a first-grade certification, Brown received an annual salary of six hundred dollars. A white teacher with the same qualifications and experience was receiving an annual salary of eleven hundred dollars. As a general rule, black teachers in separate schools had never received salaries equal to those of their white counterparts who had similar training and qualifications and were doing the same work within the same community.

When Brown contacted the Maryland State Colored Teachers Association in August, 1937, she was referred to a National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) attorney, Mr. Thurgood Marshall,[17] in New York. Marshall gladly took her case. In November of that same year, he filed a petition contending that a statute based solely on race, which established separate salary scales for public-school teachers, violated the Fourteenth Amendment[18] to the United States Constitution and the constitution of Maryland. The case sought a writ of mandamus[19] to compel the Calvert County Board of Education to adopt and establish equal salary scales for teachers and administrators without distinction as to the race of teachers or the school where they taught.



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE
69 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK
TELEPHONE, ALGONQUIN 4-3881
Official Organ: The Crisis

September 1, 1937

Miss Elizabeth Brown
Box 165
Haddonfield, New Jersey

Dear Miss Brown:

This will acknowledge your letter of August 31st requesting our legal assistance in equalizing teachers' salaries in Calvert County, Maryland.

First of all, permit me to say that we will be very happy to aid you in this matter. In order that no time may be lost on your case, I suggest that you come into the office some day this week before going to Maryland. There are certain angles of the case which I would like to discuss with you personally. Also, bring with you your teacher's certificate and any other information you have on Calvert County. I will be in the office on Thursday and Friday. I suggest that you call us (collect) before coming to make a definite appointment.

Sincerely yours,

Thurgood Marshall
Assistant Special Counsel

TM:erw

25th ANNUAL CONFERENCE, DETROIT
ENDORSED BY THE NATIONAL INFORMATION BUREAU, 215 FOURTH AVENUE, NEW YORK
Have You Written Your Senators and Congressmen Urging Support of the Federal Anti-Lynching Bill?

Through the able assistance of Marshall, Brown's case was settled on December 27, 1937. The Calvert County Board of Education agreed to equalize salaries incrementally, with full equalization by August 1939. Two days later, on