



Celebrating Over Two Decades of Scholarship, Beauty and Talent

Miss Black USA Pageant, Inc.
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The Miss Black USA Pageant and Scholarship Foundation, Inc., is a non-profit corporation dedicated to providing educational opportunities to outstanding young women of color, and to develop the "whole woman" -- mind, body and spirit.

We celebrate scholastic achievement, and believe that education is the key to lifelong success and empowerment. We proudly promote education and leadership through scholarships opportunities.

We are also a community-driven organization, and are committed to addressing health and education -- two leading social issues in the African American community -- and during their reigns, winners of the official "Miss Black USA" state pageants use their civic platforms to promote awareness of these issues.



OUR STORY

On June 6, 1987, the J.W. Marriott hotel ballroom in Washington, D.C. was transformed into an elegant showplace. The atmosphere was electric. It was standing room only.

A celebrity panel of judges from the sports, entertainment, media and fashion industries took their seats. And at precisely 8:00pm, the lights dimmed and the curtains were raised. Something fresh, new and very special was unfolding...and everyone present could *feel* it.

And in a flash, there they were: 21 stunning, smart and talented African American women delegates from across the nation, representing the dreams of our ancestors, took to the runway.

The delegates modeled one-piece swimsuits in bold and shimmering palettes. And then, inspired by the works of some of the greatest African American writers and artists, they showcased their talents and performed everything from Billy Holiday, to ballet, to tap and modern dance, to dramatic recitations from the works of Maya Angelou, Nikki Giovanni, Zora Neale Hurston, and the renowned list went on. This was followed by the eveningwear competition, where delegates graced the runway with layers of chiffon flowing gowns, panels of lace, and strapless dresses that were made for the red carpet. These academic divas made no secret of their ambition to succeed, their high aspirations, and the positive change that they were advocating in their communities.

Alas, the remarkable evening culminated in the crowning of the first-ever *Miss Black USA*, Tamiko Gibson, a 21-year old University of Maryland broadcasting journalism student.

Bursting with pride, those gathered on both the runway and in the audience on magical night in 1987 bid farewell to the *Cotton Club* and the *Savoy*, and ushered in a new era: one that empowered African American women to conquer all.

And today, more than two decades later, the tradition continues...

Miss Black USA Milestones:

1986 – Miss Black USA Pageant and Scholarship Foundation, Inc. is founded by Karen Arrington
1987 – The first Miss Black USA Pageant is held. The pageant was held in Washington, DC.
1989 – Granted 501(c)3 tax exempt status from the Internal Revenue Service
1990 – The first full tuition scholarship is awarded. The winner received a full four year scholarship to Miles College and a fully furnished apartment.
1994 – Miss Black USA 1994 Tours Rio & Salvador da Bahia, Brazil
1995 – Miss Black USA 1995 Tours Johannesburg, South Africa
2003 – Miss Black USA 2003 Pageant is outsourced and licensed to Independent Company
2005 – Miss Black USA Partners with Bally Total Fitness
2005 – Miss Black USA is New Face of Flori Roberts Cosmetics
2006 – Miss Black USA organization partners with the American Diabetes Association
2007 - The Pageant is held outside the U.S. for the very first time (The Gambia, West Africa)
2007 – Over \$300,000 awarded in Scholarships
2007 – New Teen Division Announced: "Miss Black USA Talented Teen 2009"
2007 – Debra Carr, Miss Black USA National Advisory Board Member named President of Miss Black USA Talented Teen 2009
2007 – Miss Black USA Becomes National Spokesperson for American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons (AAOS) Cultural Competency Campaign
2007 – Miss Black USA Becomes Celebrity Advocate for Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation (JDRF)
2007 - Miss Black USA appears on Good Morning America Now
2008 - Miss Black USA Partners with the Heart Truth Campaign™. The Heart Truth and Red Dress are trademarks of the DHHS
2009 - Miss Black USA Pageant partners with Dr. Ian Smith and the 50 Million Pound Challenge to fight obesity in the African American community