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**A special online companion**  
exhibition

**Learning resources** and further  
reading on Black feminism in DC,  
including detailed biographies  
on key Black feminists in the  
exhibition

**Visual descriptions** and a Spanish  
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Black feminist stories

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[womenshistory.org/BlackFeministDC](http://womenshistory.org/BlackFeministDC)

#BlackFeministDC



## About The National Women's History Museum

Founded in 1996, the National Women's History Museum (NWHM) is an innovative cultural institution and online museum dedicated to uncovering, interpreting, and celebrating women's diverse contributions to society.

### OUR SUPPORTERS

NWHM would like to extend our gratitude to all the sponsors, investors, and partners who made this exhibition possible.

### DC PUBLIC LIBRARY

The exhibition is brought to the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library as part of a groundbreaking partnership between the National Women's History Museum and the DC Public Library.



DC Public Library

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## WE WHO BELIEVE IN FREEDOM BLACK FEMINIST DC

**"The cause of  
freedom is not the  
cause of a race or  
sect, a party or a  
class—it is the cause  
of humanity, the  
very birthright of  
humanity!"**

Anna Julia Cooper  
1858-1964

Exhibition now on view  
March 2023-September 2024

## Exhibition Guide



National Women's History Museum

[www.womenshistory.org/BlackFeministDC](http://www.womenshistory.org/BlackFeministDC)

# Explore the Exhibition!

*We Who Believe in Freedom: Black Feminist DC* shares the stories of Black feminist thinkers and organizers throughout the long 20<sup>th</sup> century and shows how they changed DC and the nation.

Black feminists built their ideas and activism around challenging the intersections of racism, sexism and other forms of oppression: struggling for equality for all while paying unique attention to the experiences of Black women.

## Black Feminist DC is a journey in four parts:

### The Post-Emancipation Era

### The Civil Rights and Black Power Era (Part 1 & 2)

### Where Do We Go from Here?

Use the following reflection questions and close looking guides to explore each section.

## What does it mean to be a Black feminist?

This is a large-scale photograph of the National Welfare Rights Organization's Mother's Day march in 1968. Black feminists like Etta Horn, here in the dark dress with light dots, worked together with other people and groups, or in coalitions, to advocate for the rights of their communities.



## The Post-Emancipation Era

In the decades after Emancipation, tens of thousands of formerly enslaved people migrated to DC to chart a freer life. Activists, educators, artists, and thinkers developed Black feminism to address their vision of freedom.

Learn more about **Anna Julia Cooper, Mary Church Terrell, Georgia Douglas Johnson, and Ophelia Settle Egypt**

## How can we remember those on whose shoulders we stand?



You'll find Anna Julia Cooper (left) and Mary Church Terrell (right) meeting together in 1952 in this photograph. Anna Julia Cooper and Mary Church Terrell began their work in their youth and continued lifelong, as this newspaper article about these elders shows.

Look Closer

## The Civil Rights and Black Power Era

During the mid-20th century, DC's Black feminist authors, artists, and organizers continued to share their visions for a new world through their writings, songs, and demonstrations. They understood that "we who believe in freedom cannot rest until it comes."

Learn more about **Pauli Murray, Eleanor Holmes Horton, Sweet Honey in the Rock, and Etta Horn**

## How do you spread the word about causes that are important to you?

This is a first edition copy of Pauli Murray's memoir, *Song in A Weary Throat*, published two years after Murray's death. The title is also a line from Murray's book of poetry *Dark Testament and Other Poems* (1970). The line reads: Hope is a song in a weary throat.



## The Civil Rights and Black Power Era

Black feminists joined the broader Black Power call for independent Black institutions. They created and led organizations and movements that served Black DC residents, including addressing poverty and leading the fight for reproductive justice.

Learn more about **Mary Treadwell, Nkenge Touré, and Loretta Ross**

## Where can you work with your community to create change?

Notice the bright yellow banner carried by the Women of Color delegation at the March for Women's Lives in DC in 1989. Loretta Ross was the National Co-Director for the march. In 1977, Ross and a number of other Black women developed the term "women of color," emphasizing that the term "is a solidarity definition, a commitment to work in collaboration with other oppressed women of color who have been 'minoritized.'"



## Where Do We Go from Here?

Where is Black feminist thought and action now? On whose legacy do Black feminists today build upon? At the center of the exhibition, you can reflect on the stories throughout *Black Feminist DC*, see what today's leaders think about the future, and express your own ideas:

- Create your own manifesto
- Reflect on those who came before
- Hear from leading Black feminist educators, scholars, and leaders today.

## What will you do next?