

BLACK HISTORY MONTH NEWSLETTER

University of Leicester School of Physics and Astronomy
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Black in STEM: Spotlight on Prof. Francisca N. Okeke

Today, we're highlighting the work of [Professor Francisca Nneka Okeke](#) from the University of Nigera, Nsukka.

Francisca is a physicist whose work focusses on [geophysics, atmospheric physics and climate variability](#). Her work aims to advance our understanding of climate

change and help pinpoint sources of natural disasters like tsunamis and earthquakes. In 2013, she was awarded with the prestigious [L'O'Real-UNESCO Award for Women in Science](#) for her work on ion currents in the upper atmosphere and their relation to climate change.

As well as having an impressive academic career,



Photo credit: UNESCO.org

Today's donation link is the [Black Minds Matter](#), a charity designed to support the mental health of Black British people and their families by connecting them with resources. Donate [here!](#)

Francisca is a fierce advocate for women in science. She was the first female indigenous Professor in Science and Engineering at UNN, as well as the [first female Professor of Physics](#) in Eastern Nigeria. In 2003, she became the first female head of Department in the University, and in 2008, the first female Dean of

the Faculty of Physical Sciences.

During her time as the Dean, her priority was to employ women who were qualified in the Faculty, and she more than doubled the number of female staff in the Department.

In 2015, she was featured on CNN's "African Voices", a clip of which is available

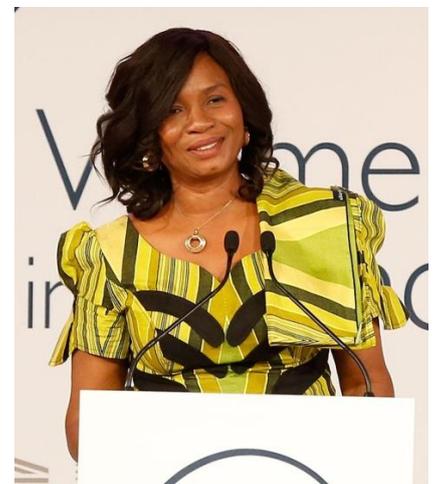


Photo credit: Getty images

EVENTS TODAY

The Afrikan Origins of the United Kingdom

On October 30th, join Andrew Muhammad as he examines the true history and origins of the United Kingdom in the context of the Black Lives Matter movement. Register [here](#).

RECOMMENDATIONS & RESOURCES

Book for younger readers:

[Counting on Katherine](#) by Helaine Becker, which tells the story of the African-American NASA mathematician Katherine Johnson. Available from the Black-owned bookshops [Afrori Books](#) and [Black Star Books](#).

Book for older readers: |

[Know Why the Caged Bird Sings](#), an autobiography by

American poet Maya Angelou. The book deals with the racism and trauma Maya faced, whilst also celebrating the quest for independence and self-definition. Available from the Black-owned bookshops [Sevenoaks Bookshop](#) and [Afrori Books](#).

Podcast: [Black History Buff](#)

created by Kur Lewis, a thrilling journey through time

covering the full historical tapestry of the African Diaspora. Available on [Apple Podcasts](#) and [Spotify](#).

Livestream: [SheGamerxo](#) is

a UK-based member of [Black Girl Gamers](#), streaming a variety of content on a regular schedule. Follow her on [twitch](#) and [twitter](#).



Photo credit: BBC Radio 4

Today's key figure from Black British history is Asquith Xavier. Moving to England from Dominica after the Second World War as part of the Windrush generation, Asquith found work as a porter and then train guard at Marylebone Station. In 1966 cuts caused him to attempt a transfer to Euston station, which offered better pay, but his application was rejected due to an unofficial whites-only recruitment policy. With the support of politicians and his union, Asquith successfully campaigned against this discrimination and became the first non-white guard to be employed at the station, as well as paving the way for a strengthening of anti-discrimination legislation in the Race Relations Act of 1968. You can find out more about his story [here](#), or watch this short [video](#) from ITV News

Contact us

To recommend scientists, events, donation links, books and podcasts for future editions, please contact the PGR Reps at the emails below:

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Special Thanks to [Nicolle Finch](#) for her recommendation!