

WOMEN'S FOREIGN POLICY GROUP

WFPG honoring

AFRICAN-AMERICAN WOMEN TRAILBLAZERS IN FOREIGN POLICY

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Edith S. Sampson

President Truman appointed Sampson as an alternate US delegate to the United Nations on August 24, 1950, making her the **first African-American to officially represent the United States at the UN**. She was a member of the UN's Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural Committee, where she lobbied for continued support of work in social welfare. She also presented a resolution pressuring the Soviet Union to repatriate the remainder of its Prisoners of War from World War II. During the Eisenhower Administration, she was a member of the US. Commission for UNESCO. In 1961 she was elected to the US Citizens Commission and became the **first black US representative to NATO**.

1950



Ambassador Patricia Roberts Harris

Patricia Harris was appointed by President Lyndon B. Johnson as Ambassador to Luxembourg on June 4, 1965 and was the **first African-American Woman to hold the rank of ambassador**. In 1969, she became the dean of Howard University's Law School, making her the first African-American to head a law school. In 1977, Harris was appointed by President Jimmy Carter to serve as Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, making her the **first African-American woman to hold a Cabinet post**, and the first to enter the line of succession to the Presidency. In 1980, she was appointed the first secretary of the newly reorganized Department of Health and Human Services.

1965

Ambassador Barbara Mae Watson

Barbara M. Watson became Administrator of the Bureau of Security and Consular Affairs on July 31, 1968, and served until December 31, 1974. She was re-appointed on April 7, 1977. On August 17 of that year, she became Assistant Secretary of State for Consular Affairs, and served until September 11, 1980. She was also the **first woman to serve as Assistant Secretary of State**. Later, she served as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to Malaysia from 1980 to 1981.



1977

Ambassador Cynthia Shepard Perry

Ambassador Perry was the **first African-American woman to serve as Ambassador to two different countries**: Sierra Leone (1986-1989) and Burundi (1989-1993). She subsequently served as Executive Director of the African Development Bank in Cote d'Ivoire and Tunisia from 2001-2007, where she promoted microlending loans, especially for women. She continues to serve as an Honorary Council General of Rwanda.



1989



Ambassador Ruth Davis

A pioneer throughout her career, Davis has worked diligently to increase diversity in the Foreign Service. She was the **first African-American Director of the Foreign Service Institute** (1997-2001) and the **first African-American woman to serve as Director General of the Foreign Service** (2001-2003). Ambassador Davis was also the **first African-American woman Career Ambassador** and the first female Senior Watch Officer in the Operations Center (1982-1984). During her distinguished 40 years of foreign service she also served as Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Consular Affairs, Ambassador to Benin (1992-1995), Consul General in Barcelona . In 2016 she was awarded AFSA's Lifetime Contributions to American Diplomacy Award.

1992

Ambassador Aurelia E. Brazeal

Aurelia Brazeal was a career diplomat and **the first African-American woman to rise from the entry level to the senior ranks of the Foreign Service**. She was appointed by President George HW Bush to serve as Ambassador to the Federated States of Micronesia (1990-1993), by President Bill Clinton to serve as Ambassador to Kenya (1993-1996), and by President George W Bush to serve as Ambassador to Ethiopia (2002-2005). She was also the first Dean of the new Leadership and Management School at the Foreign Service Institute, and also served as Deputy Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs.



2005



Hon. Condoleezza Rice

Dr. Condoleezza Rice is the **first woman to serve as National Security Advisor** (2001-2005) and the **first African-American woman to serve as Secretary of State** (2005-2009). Born in 1954 in Birmingham, Alabama, she enrolled in the University of Denver at the age of 15, where she studied under Josef Korbel, father of Madeleine Albright. After receiving her Master's degree from the University of Notre Dame and PhD from the University of Denver, Rice joined the faculty of Stanford University. In 1987, she served as an advisor to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and in 1989 was appointed director of Soviet and East European Affairs on the National Security Council. In 1991 Rice returned to Stanford and in 1993 began a six-year tenure as provost.

2005

Ambassador Susan Rice

Susan Rice was the **first African-American woman to serve as the US Ambassador to the United Nations** (2009-2013). During President Obama's second term, she served as National Security Advisor (2013-2017). Rice started her political career during the Clinton Administration where she served as Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Senior Director for African Affairs at the National Security Council, and as Director for International Organizations and Peacekeeping on the NSC staff. Rice received her Master's degree and DPhil in International Relations from Oxford University, where she was a Rhodes Scholar.



2009

“It is not enough to be the first. That achievement must be followed by a concerted effort to ensure that I am not the last.”

~Ambassador Ruth Davis



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Ambassador Sylvia Gaye Stanfield

Sylvia Gaye Stanfield was Ambassador to Brunei Darussalam from 1999-2002 and a **career member of the Senior Foreign Service. She began working for the State Department in 1968**, where she served in the former American embassy in Taiwan, as well as in Hong Kong and in Beijing, before becoming Chargé d'Affaires and Deputy Chief of Mission in New Zealand. Stanfield was a Diplomat in Residence at Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University from 2003-2005, and later served at Spelman College.



FOREIGN POLICY TRAILBLAZERS

Ambassador Joyce Anne Barr

Joyce Barr served as Ambassador to Namibia (2004-2007) and as the **first African-American Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of Administration** (2011-2017). She attained the personal rank of Career Minister with 37 years of service before retiring in 2017 and was inducted into the Hall of Fame at National Defense University at Fort McNair in 2018. She is currently a Professor of Practice at Virginia Tech. In addition to overseas tours in Sweden, Hungary, Kenya, Sudan, Turkmenistan, and Malaysia, her domestic assignments included work on human rights, UN, crises management, and a Congressional detail.



FOREIGN POLICY TRAILBLAZERS



Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield

After a 35-year career in the US Foreign Service, Ambassador Thomas-Greenfield is now the Distinguished Resident Fellow in African Studies at Georgetown's Institute for the Study of Diplomacy and a Senior Counselor at ASG. **From 2013 to 2017, she served as the Assistant Secretary for the Bureau of African Affairs.** Previously, she served as Director General of the Foreign Service and Director of Human Resources. Her distinguished career includes an ambassadorship to Liberia (2008-2012), as well as postings in Switzerland, Pakistan, Kenya, The Gambia, Nigeria, and Jamaica.

Ambassador Jendayi E. Frazer

Jendayi E. Frazer was a leading architect of US-Africa policy for nearly a decade serving in senior positions at across government. She was the **first woman US Ambassador to South Africa**, and served as Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs from 2005 to 2009. Frazer was also Special Assistant to the President for African Affairs at the National Security Council from 2001 to 2004. She was instrumental in establishing innovative development initiatives including PEPFAR, African Education Initiative, and the Millennium Challenge Account.



FOREIGN POLICY TRAILBLAZERS



Dr. Esther Brimmer

Dr. Esther Brimmer is the Executive Director & CEO of NAFSA: Association of International Educators. Dr. Brimmer's distinguished career includes three appointments within the Department of State, serving most recently as the **First African-American Female Assistant Secretary for International Organization Affairs (2009-2013)**. Previously she was a professor at George Washington University's Elliott School and earlier co-founded the Johns Hopkins SAIS Center for Transatlantic Relations. At the beginning of her career, she served on Capitol Hill as a legislative analyst for the Democratic Study Group in the House of Representatives.

Ambassador Gina Abercrombie-Winstanley

Gina Abercrombie-Winstanley served as the **first woman Consul General in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia** from 2002 to 2005. While there, she survived an al-Qaeda attack on the consulate, and was cited "for acts of courage" during the attack. She later served as Director of Middle East Area Studies in the Foreign Service Institute, and as Director for Egypt, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan at the Near Eastern Affairs Bureau. She also served as Deputy Coordinator for Counterterrorism (2008-2012), as Ambassador to Malta (2012-2016), and Foreign Policy Advisor to U. S. CyberCommand.



FOREIGN POLICY TRAILBLAZERS



Ambassador Crystal Nix-Hines

Crystal Nix-Hines served as Ambassador to UNESCO from 2014 to 2017. She previously served as Counselor to the Assistant Secretary for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor; member of the Department's Policy Planning Staff; and Special Assistant to the Legal Adviser. She also co-chaired a White House-State Department task force on implementing the human rights components of the Dayton Peace Accords. A former law clerk to Supreme Court Justices Thurgood Marshall and Sandra Day O'Connor, Ambassador Nix-Hines is currently a Partner at Quinn Emanuel Urquhart & Sullivan.



Ambassador Bonnie Jenkins

Bonnie Jenkins served as **Ambassador and Coordinator for Threat Reduction Programs in the Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation** (2009–2017). She is the founder and Executive Director of the Women of Color Advancing Peace, Security and Conflict Transformation (WCAPS) and also a nonresident senior fellow at the Brookings Institution. She is also a retired Naval Reserve Officer who began her career in the federal government at the US Arms Control and Disarmament Agency in the Office of the General Counsel.

Cheryl D. Mills

Cheryl D. Mills is an American lawyer and corporate executive. She first came into public prominence while serving as deputy White House Counsel for President Bill Clinton, whom she defended during his 1999 impeachment trial. She has worked for New York University as Senior Vice President, served as Senior Adviser and Counsel for Hillary Clinton's 2008 presidential campaign, and is considered a member of Hillary Clinton's group of core advisers. **She served as Counselor and Chief of Staff to Hillary Clinton during her whole tenure as Secretary of State.** After leaving the State Department in January, 2013, she founded BlackIvy Group, which builds businesses in Africa.



Reta Jo Lewis

Rita Jo Lewis is a Senior Fellow and Director of Congressional Affairs at the German Marshall Fund. Previously, she served as the **State Department's first Special Representative for Global Intergovernmental Affairs** (2010-2013), charged with leading engagement between state and local leaders and their counterparts in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and Europe. She served on the Obama-Biden Transition Team and was the **first African-American woman to serve as an officer at the US Chamber of Commerce**, focusing on small business and outreach to women and minority owned businesses. **In 1990, she led Nelson Mandela's national tour.**



FOREIGN POLICY TRAILBLAZERS

Natalie E. Brown

Natalie E. Brown, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, is currently the **Charge d'Affaires in Eritrea**. She previously served as Deputy Chief of Mission of the US Mission to the UN agencies in Rome, and Deputy Chief of Mission at the US Embassy in Tunisia. Other overseas assignments have included postings to Jordan, Kuwait, Ethiopia, and Guinea. Domestically, Brown has twice served in the Operations Center and was one of the Senior Watch Officers on duty on September 11, 2001; was the Desk Officer for Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger; and worked on international justice and non-proliferation issues in the Office of UN Political Affairs.



FOREIGN POLICY TRAILBLAZERS



Marissa Scott

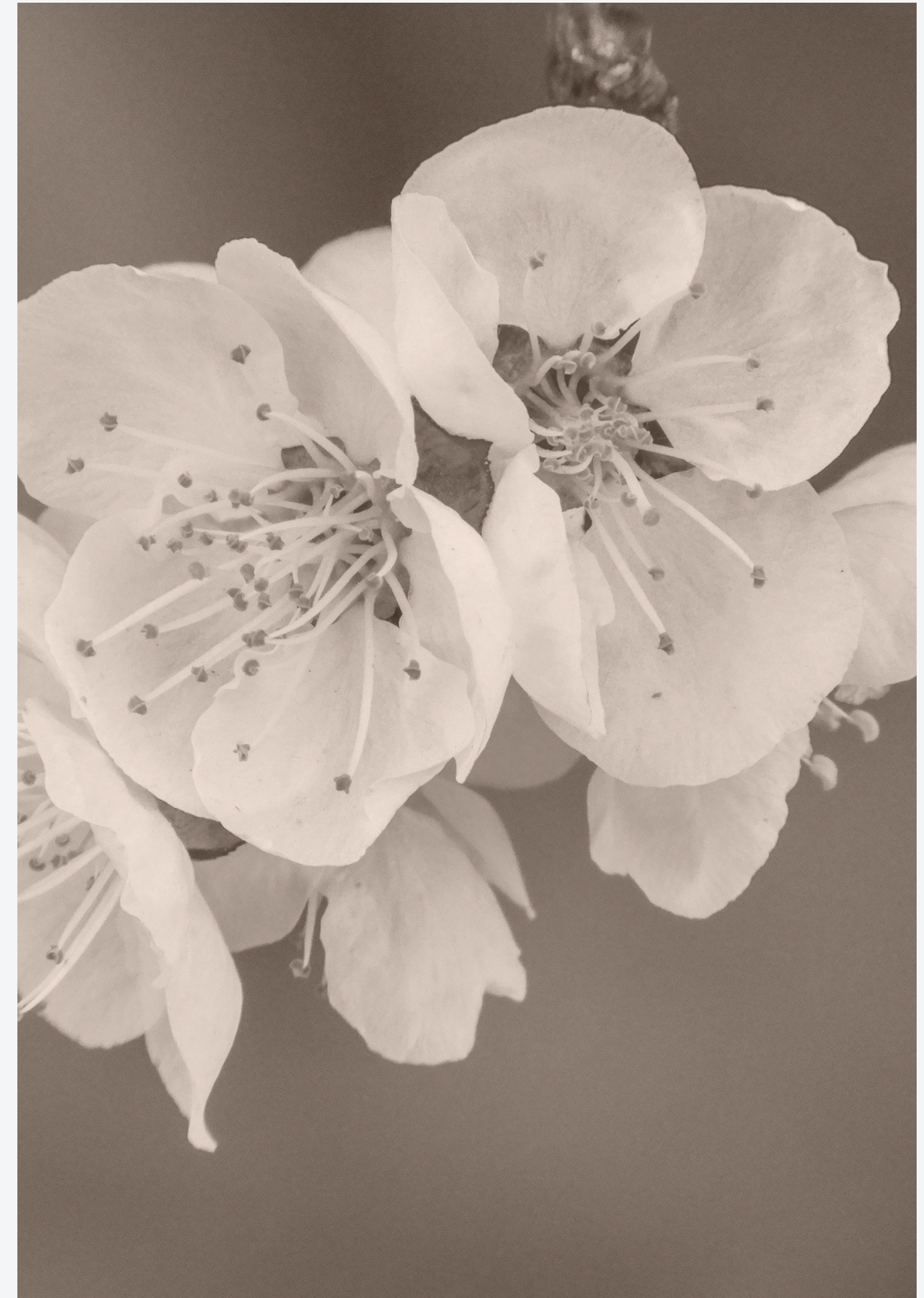
Marissa Scott currently serves as **Charge d'Affaires in Cabo Verde**. Previously, she worked in the Political-Military Bureau in the Office of International Security Operations. Scott then formally joined the Foreign Service in 2003. Her assignments have included Djibouti (2004-2006), Dominican Republic (2007-2009), Algeria (2009-2011), and most recently she served as the PAO and Director of the American Cultural Center in Niamey, Niger (2012-2015). Her work on counterterrorism issues led to recognition from the Special Forces Commander and a panel discussion on interagency cooperation and coordination at the 2014 TSCTP conference in Stuttgart.

**“The day has to come when
it's not a surprise that a
woman has a powerful
position.”**

~Hon. Condoleezza Rice



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Bunmi Akinnusotu

Bunmi Akinnusotu is currently **Deputy Director of the Rangel Fellowship at Howard University**. She created and produced *What in the World?*, a radio program and podcast that promotes US foreign policy and amplifies experts from underrepresented backgrounds. Bunmi attributes her passion for foreign policy to being a first-generation Nigerian-American. She was a political appointee at the Environmental Protection Agency during the Obama Administration, where she worked to advance initiatives for global resource conservation policy, civil rights and tribal partnerships. She aspires to be America's first Nigerian-American Ambassador.



FOREIGN POLICY INFLUENCERS



Asha C. Castleberry

Asha Castleberry, an Army veteran, teaches US Foreign Policy, International Politics, and UN Peace Operations at George Washington University. Since the 2014 ISIL incursion in Iraq, she served for for Combined Joint Task Force-Operation Inherent Resolve in Iraq and Kuwait. She served as the Kuwait Desk Officer for International Military Affairs at Army Central, worked at the US UN Mission, was an election observer in El Salvador, and worked on US peacekeeping operations in Nicaragua. She was awarded a Carnegie Council Meyers Fellowship to research populism in the defense community.



Algene Sajery

Algene Sajery is Senior Foreign Policy and National Security Advisor for Senator Benjamin L. Cardin (D-MD). She is a congressional staff author and the lead negotiator of human rights and foreign policy legislation, including the Global Magnitsky Human Rights and Accountability Act, the Syrian War Crimes Accountability Act, and the Global Development Lab Act. She also serves as a legislative negotiator, strategist, and coalition builder with the Congressional and Executive Branch decision making.

Dr. Mischa E. Thompson

Mischa Thompson is **Director of Global Partnerships, Policy, and Innovation at the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (US Helsinki Commission)**. She advises the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Special Representative on Anti-Semitism, Racism, and Intolerance and commissioners on security, economic, and diversity related human rights issues. She helped to found the Transatlantic Minority Political Leadership Conference, Transatlantic Inclusion Leaders Network, State Department's Social Inclusion Unit, and Congressional staff exchanges with the European Parliament. She is a German Marshall Fund and Salzburg Global Fellow.



FOREIGN POLICY INFLUENCERS

Dr. Mischa E. Thompson

Hon. Condoleezza Rice

Chargée d'Affaires Marissa Scott

Ambassador Linda Thomas Greenfield

Ambassador Susan Rice

Dr. Esther Brimmer

Freedom Seeker

Trailblazer

Asha Castleberry

Pioneer

Diplomacy

Career Ambassador

Chiefs of Mission

Policy Influencer

Peacekeeper

Bunmi Akinnusotu

Reta Jo Lewis

Cheryl D Mills

Cheryl D. Mills

Tenacious

Algene Sajery

Ambassador Sylvia Gaye Stanfield

Ambassador Aurelia E. Brazeal

Ambassador Crystal Nix Hines

Ambassador Joyce Barr

Ambassador Gina Abercrombie Winstanley

Ambassador Ruth Davis

Chargée d'Affaires Natalie E. Brown

Ambassador Bonnie Jenkins Foreign Service



Honoring African-American Women in Foreign Policy

"In diversity there is beauty and there is strength" ~Maya Angelou

Special Thanks

With deep gratitude, we feature just a few women who victoriously blaze(d) trails in foreign policy. We thank you for your sacrifices, continued commitment, and inspiration. We extend a special thanks to Reta Jo Lewis, Ambassador Ruth Davis, Ambassador Joyce Barr, Carmen Iezzi Mezzera, Dr. Kassie Freeman and Fran Hardin for helping us (re)discover amazing stories of incredible women. A slide is not enough to tell someone's story, a month not long enough to pay tribute, but we proudly journey with you. May future generations follow in your footsteps.



Who inspires you ?

This is an active tribute, so we will add biographies of other amazing trailblazers nominated for this celebration of African-American Women in Foreign Policy.

Share your story @wfpbg.

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