CLARENCE ELLIS

COMPUTER SCIENTIST

Ellis was the first African American PhD in computer science. A pioneer of "groupware," which allows several users to collaborate on a document, he also helped to develop the idea of clickable icons. Ellis became a self-taught expert as a teen in Chicago by reading manuals for a mainframe computer he was hired to guard at night. Ellis earned a scholarship to study Math & Physics at Beloit College and went on to work at some of the world's most prestigious companies and universities, including Xerox, IBM, Los Alamos Scientific, Stanford and MIT. Ellis preferred to teach undergraduates with little experience in CS because he wanted to encourage students of all backgrounds to stretch their academic abilities. He was passionate about civil rights, mentoring students from HBCUs & teaching in Africa.

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