

The First Black Graduates at the University of Texas

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elists, poets, and playwrights — are likely to be far below the number of citations assigned to a scientist who publishes just one important paper in a scientific journal.

In JBHE's first four annual surveys of citations in the arts and humanities (1998-2001), the highly prolific and influential black scholar Henry Louis Gates Jr. of Harvard University led our rankings. In 2002 Paul Gilroy, now the Charlotte Marion Saden Professor of Sociology and African American Studies at Yale, was the leader in the citation count in the humanities. Toni Morrison, the Nobel laureate and Princeton University professor, led the rankings in 2003. In 2004 these three scholars were once again at the head of the rankings. Professor Gilroy held the top spot with 112 citations, followed closely by Professor Gates.



**Paul Gilroy**

*The most cited black scholar in the humanities in 2006*

In 2005 Professor Gates narrowly edged out Professor Gilroy with Professor Morrison not far behind. This year, for the third time in the past five years, Professor Gilroy is ranked first. He had 105 citations in humanities journals in 2006, six less than a year ago.

Toni Morrison's citations increased from 95 in 2005 to 100 this past year, placing her in second place. Henry

Louis Gates Jr. dropped to third place with 76 citations, down from 113 in 2005.

Novelist Alice Walker had 61 citations in 2006, placing her in fourth position in our survey.

Poet bell hooks had 58 citations in humanities journals in 2006. This puts her in fifth place in our survey, the same spot she held last year.

Princeton University philosopher K. Anthony Appiah was just behind hooks with 57 citations.

Also, among the top most highly cited black scholars in the humanities are Princeton's Cornel West; Paule Marshall of New York University; literary critic and novelist Albert Murray; Colin Palmer, Dodge Professor of History at Princeton University; Trudier Harris, J. Carlyle Sitterson Professor of English at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; author Chinua Achebe, who teaches at Bard College; and Houston A. Baker, who left Duke University a year ago for Vanderbilt University.



**Henry Louis Gates Jr.**

## The First Black Graduates at the University of Texas

Heman Sweatt is remembered as the first black student to integrate the University of Texas when he enrolled in the law school in 1950. Sweatt had sued the university after it denied him admission in 1946. The U.S. Supreme Court eventually ordered that he be admitted. But Sweatt, who was subjected to harassment by the Ku Klux Klan as well as by students and faculty, dropped out of the University of Texas law school and pursued a master's degree in social work at Atlanta University.

It has generally been considered that in May 1952 John S. Chase was the first African American to earn a degree of any kind from the University of Texas. Chase was a graduate of Hampton University, the historically black educational institution in Virginia. He enrolled at the University of Texas School of Architecture in 1950. Chase went on to become a successful architect in Houston.

But archivists at the university have produced new evidence which shows that geneticist Oscar Leonard Thompson earned his master's degree at the university in January 1952, four months before Chase received his degree.

Thompson was born in 1907. His father died in a mill accident when Thompson was only 2 years old. He enrolled at Paul Quinn College in 1928 but was forced to leave before graduating due to the Great Depression. He worked at a number of odd jobs until the onset of World War II during which time he served in the Pacific.

At the end of the war Thompson returned to Texas and completed his studies at Paul Quinn College under the GI Bill. He enrolled in the graduate school at the University of Texas in September 1950. In December 1951 he turned in his master's thesis with the title "A Study of Phenylthiocarbamide Taste Deficiency in a Negro Population and in Family Groups."

Thompson had a brief but successful career in genetics, specializing in research on sickle cell anemia. He died in 1962 at the age of 55.



**Edna Oddessa Humphries Rhambo**

Six years after both Thompson and Chase earned their master's degrees, Edna Oddessa Humphries Rhambo was the first African American to receive a bachelor's degree at the University of Texas. After transferring from Huston-Tillotson College in 1956, she majored in secondary education. After graduation, she taught in the public schools in Austin before moving to Denver in 1963. She later earned a master's degree in administration and supervision from Wichita State University.