

February 17, 1983 -

Barbara M. Watson, the first Black and the first woman to serve as assistant secretary of state died at age 64 on this day in Washington, DC. She held that post from 1968 to 1974. She also served as administrator of the Bureau of Security and Consular Affairs from 1977 to 1980 and as U.S. ambassador to Malaysia from 1980 to 1981.

February 18, 1965 -

Gambia Independence Day. Independence was granted from Britain on this day.

February 18, 1932 -

Toni Morrison, novelist, essayist and the 1993 winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature, was born on this day in Lorain, OH. Morrison is the first Black American to win the Nobel Prize in Literature and the second American woman to win the prize in literature. She was presented the award in Stockholm, Sweden. From her first novel *The Bluest Eye* published in 1970 to her latest novel *Jazz* published in 1992, Toni Morrison has examined what it means to be either a slave or a descendant of slaves in a country dominated by Whites. She was a 1988 Pulitzer winner for her work *Beloved*.