



Montefiore

From the OFFICE OF THE DEAN



Dear Einstein Community:

February is Black History Month and represents an opportunity for us to enhance our knowledge and understanding of Black history and culture while celebrating Black excellence. It's also a fitting time for our institution to renew its commitment to improve diversity and inclusion. In particular, I'd like to recognize and thank those who have held us to a higher standard, to make sure that we live up to our institution's founding ideals at all times.

In a recent message, I shared the good news of Einstein earning [a prestigious HEED Award](#) for our diversity and inclusion efforts. While we are proud of this honor, we can always strive to do and be better.

Not too long ago, for example, in the wake of far too many reports of police shootings of unarmed Black men and women, our Black and BIPOC students let us know that they were not feeling sufficiently supported amid the painful trauma that these events aroused. We were reminded that silence can be construed as complicity and that public acknowledgements can be meaningful.

Opportunities to Participate, Learn, and Grow

In celebrating Black History Month, I want to thank the more than 40 individuals who took part in our second annual MLK Service Challenge. And thanks to our Einstein Student National Medical Association (SNMA), there are a number of events and activities throughout February that offer the chance to be an active participant and learner. Please see below to learn more about these offerings, in which all members of our community are invited to participate.

- On February 2, a screening of the documentary *Black Men in White Coats* was held, offering insights into the systemic barriers that prevent Black men from becoming physicians and the impact on patient care. You can learn about the initiative established by Dale Okorodudu, M.D., by visiting [this website](#).
- Also on February 2, our graduate division of biomedical sciences and Einstein Minority Scientist Association hosted the eighth annual Marie M. Daly, Ph.D., Memorial Lecture. The event honors the memory of the former

faculty member who conducted groundbreaking research into heart health and was the first Black woman in the United States to earn a Ph.D. in chemistry. It featured W. Marcus Lambert, Ph.D., from SUNY Downstate, who presented his lecture, "Promoting an Inclusive Scientific Workforce."

- This Thursday, February 10, at 7 p.m., tune in via Zoom for a panel discussion on "Underrepresented Physicians." Panelists include Oladimeji Oki, M.D., Deborah White, M.D., Shani Scott, M.D., Roger Duvivier, M.D., and Alecia Thompson, M.D.; each will share their experiences in medicine. (Zoom Meeting ID: 964 9472 9879)
- On Saturday, February 19, SNMA will conduct a virtual trip to the African Burial Ground National Monument, the oldest and largest known excavated burial ground in North America for both free and enslaved Africans. If you're interested in learning about the history of slavery in New York, be sure to [connect via Zoom](#). You also can [register](#) for the Zoom or to join a live visit to the site.
- Throughout February and March, SNMA is again teaming with Westchester Bronx Society of Black Physicians on their annual Feminine Hygiene Initiative, collecting much-needed feminine hygiene products for women and transgender individuals.

Remembering an Exemplary Alumna

In celebrating Black excellence, we take pride in many of our alumni who have risen to the top of their professions, have been mentors to those who have followed behind them, and who have excelled in their chosen fields. A recent article by David Kingsley in [Kenyans.co.ke](https://kenyans.co.ke) highlights one such alumna, Florence Ng'endo Mwangi, M.D., from our class of 1965.

Dr. Mwangi, who was born in Kenya, was our first student from Africa and is known as Kenya's first female physician. After completing her training and working in hospitals for some years, she established her own practice, the Athi River Clinic, in a rural area southeast of Kenya's capital, Nairobi. The clinic served more than 300,000 Maasai people. Dr. Mwangi later established the Reto Medical Center. And she might have accomplished much more had her life not been cut

short in 1989 by breast cancer.

Whether remembering Dr. Mwangi or participating in on- or off-campus activities this month, I invite you to find your own ways of celebrating Black history, culture, and excellence. It will help open our eyes to aspects of our nation's history that we should know and understand. The options are only limited by our imagination and curiosity.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Tomaselli', with a stylized, flowing script.

Gordon F. Tomaselli, M.D.

The Marilyn and Stanley M. Katz Dean

Albert Einstein College of Medicine

Executive Vice President and Chief Academic Officer

Montefiore Medicine