

**Subject:** Celebrating Black History Month: Who is Annie Davis or Emmett Till, or St. Elmo Brady? And celebrating a Foothill Grammy Award winner!

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**From:** Bernadine Fong

**To:** foothill

**CC:** centralservices, ASFC

We have all heard of Frederick Douglass, Rosa Parks, Jackie Robinson, but what about Annie Davis who wrote to Abraham Lincoln after the Emancipation Proclamation.

*Belair Aug 25th 1864*

*Mr. President*

*It is my Desire to be free. to go to see my people on the eastern shore. my mistress wont let me you will please let me know if we are free. and what I can do. I write to you for advice. please send me word this[?] week. or as soon as possible. and oblidge.*

*Annie Davis*

*Belair Thaford*

*County. Mt D.*

It turns out, she was not free at the time because she lived in Maryland. However, when Maryland's state constitution was revised and slavery was abolished she was free a year later.

As we honor Black History Month, we honor the history of so many heroes, well known, as well as those who were little known. My longtime friend, Lalita Tademy, who wrote the Oprah Club pick and best seller, ***Cane River***, an example of little known heroes. When I met Lalita, she had just stepped down as a vice president and general manager for Sun Microsystems and was spending her free time researching her family history. She wanted to know more about a particular female relative who seemed to be the matriarch of the family. However, as she researched more and more into her roots, she discovered three generations of not one but several amazing matriarchs in her family. She ultimately turned her research and family history into a historical novel depicting the strength, endurance, and fortitude of three generations of admirable women who bore the brunt of slavery and the elusiveness of emancipation.

Last year we shared books or articles we had read about "heroes" commemorating Black History Month. This year let's take a virtual trip to the National Museum of African American History and Culture <https://www.si.edu/museums/african-american-museum> and click on the **Collections Sampler** for a view of the many artifacts in the museum. Visiting this museum is a sobering and humbling experience. Viewing diagrams and replicas of slave ships is impactful, as is viewing the exhibit on Emmett Till.

One disappointment I had on my museum visit was that Black scientists were not highlighted. I even asked if there was a science section that would honor Benjamin Banneker, George Washington Carver, Carolyn Parker, Beebe Steven Lynk, St. Elmo Brady, or Mae Jemison and many others. No such section existed, though there were sections on sports, entertainment, politics, and activism. However, *one goal for us is to afford our students the opportunity to take field trips to Washington, D.C. to visit the African American museum, as well as the National Museum of the American Indian, and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.* Do we have faculty who could incorporate such a fieldtrip into

their course and join me in a fundraising effort?

And congratulations to Molly Tuttle, a Foothill alum, who won a Grammy last night for best bluegrass album, *Crooked Tree*! Molly had also been nominated for best new artist. We now have a Grammy winner to add to our list of distinguished alumni!

Best regards,

**Bernadine**

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