

# BLACK WOMEN'S NON-ELECTORAL POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN THE 20TH AND 21ST CENTURIES

Non electoral political participation organized and led by Black women has been integral to American progressivism. Despite racial gaps in voting, Black women have always been major players in political life through their engagement with protests, petitions, and social advocacy.

## 1922 BLACK SORORITIES

Black sororities were founded upon goals of impacting American politics, building networks, and fighting for social change. For example, Delta Sigma Theta, depicted right, was a sorority founded for the purpose of marching in the 1913 Women's Suffrage March.



Delta Sigma Theta at Wilberforce University in 1922

## 1955 MAMIE TILL MOBELY

In 1955, Mamie Till's son, Emmett Till, was brutally lynched by two white men. She bravely chose to have an open casket for her son and allow photos of his body to be published in order to expose the violence and racism Black people face in America. Her actions helped spark a movement, and her contributions to the Civil Rights era were essential.



Mamie Till on September 23, 1955

## 1969 CIVIL RIGHTS ERA

Black women, including Coretta Scott King (third from left), were integral members of the Civil Rights Movement and other progressive movements of their time. For example, this photo depicts Black women leading a march supporting striking hospital workers in 1969.



Julia Davis, Mary Moultrie, Coretta Scott King, Rosetta Simmons, Juanita Abernathy and Doris Turner on April 30, 1969

## 2016 MOTHERS AGAINST POLICE BRUTALITY

Collette Flanagan founded Mother's Against Police Brutality after her son Clinton Allen was killed by a Dallas Police officer in March 2013. Since then, Flanagan has mobilized countless mothers through non-electoral political participation in the fight against police murders of Black individuals.



Black mothers marching against police violence in their communities

## 2020 BLACK LIVES MATTER

Black women are integral to the Black Lives Matter Movement. Their participation and leadership in BLM protests, petitions, and social media engagement helps make the BLM movement as widespread and impactful on U.S. politics as possible.



Protestors at a BLM march in 2020

# Works Cited

1. Bragg, Ko and The 19th. “A History of Great Glory’: The Consequential, Evolving Role of Black Sororities in Suffrage.” Harper's Bazaar, 20 Aug. 2020, <https://www.harpersbazaar.com/culture/politics/a33658144/black-sororities-womens-suffrage/>.
2. Defender News Service. “This is how women of color are affected by police brutality.” Defender Network. 15 August, 2017. <https://defendernetwork.com/tag/mothers-against-police-brutality/>.
3. “Mamie Till.” Wikipedia. 23 September, 1955. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mamie\\_Till](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mamie_Till).
4. Parker, Adam. “Leading ladies: The civil rights movement depended on many strong women.” Post and Courier. 30 April, 1969. [https://www.postandcourier.com/black-history/leading-ladies-the-civil-rights-movement-depended-on-many-strong-women/article\\_2fe79d1a-73bb-11ec-afc8-9f56c128eb39.html](https://www.postandcourier.com/black-history/leading-ladies-the-civil-rights-movement-depended-on-many-strong-women/article_2fe79d1a-73bb-11ec-afc8-9f56c128eb39.html)
5. Whitman, Jason. “Black women are often overlooked by social justice movements, a new study finds.” CNN. 18 July, 2020. <https://www.cnn.com/2020/07/18/us/black-women-overlooked-social-justice-movements-trnd/index.html>.