

Modern-Day Black Inventors

Compiled by Lashonda M. Winston

We know of famous African-American inventors of the past, such as George Washington Carver, who developed peanut butter and countless other inventions from the peanut, and Garrett Morgan, who invented an automated stoplight and a gas mask. But what do we know about the black inventors of today?

Check the bottom of the next page for the answers.

Thomas C. Cannon Jr., Ph.D.

Mark Dean, Ph.D.

Meridith Groudine, Ph.D.

James West

Valerie Thomas

Dennis Weatherby

Kenneth J. Dunkley

Kedrich Jackson

Ruane Jeter

Maxwell R. Mitchell

1 This former mathematical data analyst for NASA received U.S. patent #4,229,761 for an illusion transmitter, in 1980. This futuristic invention extends the idea of television, having three-dimensional projections appear as though they were right in your living room.

3 This inventor, the president of Hologram Laboratories Inc., discovered the existence of two points located on the periphery of a person's vision that, if obstructed, will cause an ordinary picture to appear three-dimensional. This discovery led to the invention of Three-Dimensional Viewing Glasses (3-DVG).

2 This head of User Devices in the Research Department of AT&T Bell Laboratories led a group of engineers who developed the Tactical Optical Fiber Connector (TOFC), the first fiber optic connector deployed under battlefield conditions.

5 This inventor, president of On-Line/Off-Line Inc., applied many years of experience in photography to develop a method to reduce documents without losing resolution. The MICRO ID SYSTEM can reduce a 60-page document to a 4 x 6-inch card that can be read easily using a special magnifying glass.

7 This IBM Fellow, who holds 20 patents, coined a microcomputer system with bus control means for peripheral processing. This enabled users to plug peripherals into computers, such as disk drives, video gear, speakers and scanners.

4 This industrial designer invented a toaster with a digital clock. The inventor is now seeking investors for the device, which is called the Tiltster.

6 This hardware design engineer played an important role in the development of Hewlett Packard's DeskJet 850C and 855C printers. The engineer invented a method to improve the print quality and developed a "spur gear" that dampened the vibration and thus reduced the noise made by the printers.

8 Ninety percent of microphones used today – including those in telephones – are based on the ingenuity of this African-American inventor. The inventor holds 47 U.S. patents and more than 200 foreign patents from a 40-year career with Bell Laboratories.

10 This researcher grew up in Harlem and Brooklyn, received a Ph.D. in engineering science from the California Institute of Technology and built a multimillion-dollar corporation based on personal ideas in the field of electrogasdynamics (EGD). This inventor, who holds more than 40 patents and served on the President's Panel on Energy, used EGD to convert natural gas to electricity for everyday use.

9 This inventor received a master's degree in chemical engineering from the University of Dayton in 1984 and, while employed by Procter & Gamble, developed and received a patent for the automatic dishwasher detergent known by the trade name Cascade.

- ANSWERS:
1. Valerie Thomas
 2. Thomas C. Cannon Jr., Ph.D.
 3. Kenneth J. Dunkley
 4. Ruane Jeter
 5. Maxwell R. Mitchell
 6. Kadrick Jackson
 7. Mark Dean, Ph.D.
 8. James West
 9. Dennis Weatherly
 10. Meredith Groudhine, Ph.D.