



Photo: U.S. House of Representatives

Julia Carson

Indianapolis, Marion County

July 8, 1938 – December 15, 2007

A graduate of Crispus Attucks High School, Julia May Carson was elected to the Indiana House of Representatives in 1972 and served two terms. In 1976, she and Katie Hall were elected to the Indiana Senate – the first African American women in that house – where she served for the next fourteen years.

In 1996, Carson was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives, becoming the first African American and the first woman to represent Indiana's state Capitol. Shortly after her election, Carson underwent heart surgery and was sworn into office from her hospital bed. She was unable to travel to Washington, DC, until early March, which led to speculation that she would not return for re-election in 1998. However, she went on to win the next four consecutive reelection campaigns. In late 2007, Carson's health deteriorated, forcing her to take a two-week leave of absence in October. She announced one month later that she had been diagnosed with terminal lung cancer. Two months later on December 15, she died in her Indianapolis home.

Throughout her life, Carson worked to help those less fortunate. She worked to overcome racial and gender barriers imposed on her and on others. As testament of her public service, a bronze bust of Carson was unveiled at the annual Martin Luther King, Jr., Indiana Holiday Celebration on January 16, 2014. This public art legacy project was spearheaded by the Indiana Department of Administration, Indiana Historical Bureau, and Indiana Black Legislative Caucus in order to bring more diversity to the Indiana State House sculpture collection.

- For more information about Julia Carson, go to: [http://history.house.gov/People/Listing/C/CARSON,-Julia-May-\(C000191\)/](http://history.house.gov/People/Listing/C/CARSON,-Julia-May-(C000191)/).
- For more information about *Writing Her Story*, go to: <http://www.in.gov/icw/2440.htm>.

Additional and more detailed references available at the end of Women's History Month

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Writing Her Story