

# Black History Month legal tribute: Loretta Lynch



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For Chicagoans who were unfamiliar with Attorney General Loretta Lynch before, the [164-page Department of Justice report](#) about the [Chicago Police Department](#) that was released on January 13, 2017 certainly caught their attention. The report gave graphic details about people being shot and killed even though they posed no immediate threat, foot chases for no serious crimes, pointed out how citizens with police complaints were not interviewed for months or years after the incident occurred, and police officers' code of silence.

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### Behind the legal scene

But in J. Paye in Brief's 2017 Black History Month series, we went behind the legal scene to learn 10 more facts about Lynch for those who may not know the woman behind former President Barack H. Obama's White House.

1. While letter writers are celebrating the 40th stamp in the Black Heritage Series, there's something else to celebrate with honoree Dr. Dorothy Height. The 10th national president of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc., who was initiated in 1939, is sorority sisters with Lynch. (Sources: [Xi Tau History](#), [DOJ](#), [Eastern Region DST](#))

2. Lynch was a senior prosecutor in the Abner Louima case involving police officers sodomizing the Haitian immigrant. Regardless of her high-profile reputation, she chose young federal prosecutor Kenneth P. Thompson to make the opening statement during the trial. Louima was later awarded with \$8.7 million in settlements from the city and police union, the largest police brutality settlement in New York City. Other high-profile cases she's been affiliated with include Terrence Crutcher and Freddie Gray. (Sources: [Baltimore Sun](#), [New York Times](#), [New York Times City Room](#), [The Root](#))

3. The daughter of a school librarian, Lorine (Harris) Lynch, and a fourth-generation Baptist minister, Lorenzo Lynch, got her start observing equal rights early. She would ride on her father's shoulders to his church where students were involved in organizing anti-segregation boycotts. (Source: [CNN](#), [Obama White House Archives](#))

4. Both she and former Attorney General Eric Holder supported another attorney general: Sally Yates, who was fired by President Donald Trump because she would not enforce his travel ban. According to Lynch, Yates showed "fierce intellect, unshakeable integrity" and Holder is using the #ThankYouSally hashtag. (Sources: [@EricHolder on Twitter](#), [Politico](#), [Washington Post](#))

5. Holder was also in charge of Lynch's chair appointment of the Attorney General's Advisory Committee of U.S. Attorneys (AGAC) in the Eastern district of New York in 2013, along with appointing Yates as the vice chair of the Northern district of Georgia. (Source: [DOJ](#))

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6. In 2014, Lynch became the first African-American woman attorney general in history. (Source: [CNN](#))

7. Lynch, a North Carolina native, got her early employment start in New York as a litigation associate for Cahill, Gordon & Reindel law firm, along with working in the Eastern district (Brooklyn, Queens, Staten Island and Long Island). (Source: [CNN](#))

8. She had to wait more than five months, a longer time period than the previous seven nominees, to be confirmed as Attorney General for then-President Barack Obama’s selection. Coincidentally her name, along with the second EPA administrator, Gina McCarthy, is avoided when GOPs complain about the length of time for voting on Trump’s Cabinet picks. (Sources: [Vogue](#), [Washington Post](#))

9. Texas congresswoman Barbara Jordan, who was the first black woman to give the keynote address (in 1976 at the Democratic National Convention), inspired Lynch. (Source: [American Rhetoric](#), [Teen Vogue](#))

10. Her stance on the Black Lives Matter movement: “The fact that people can now see on video what so many, particularly in minority communities, have been talking about for so long has allowed us to have conversations in a meaningful way — and for things to be handled much differently.” (Source: [Teen Vogue](#))

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Shamontiel L. Vaughn compiled this blog. Find out more about her at [Shamontiel.com](#).

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