

AFRICAN AMERICAN LIVES

Thirteen/WNET New York
450 West 33rd Street
New York NY 10001-2605
thirteen.org



press information

AFRICAN AMERICAN LIVES

Dr. Ben Carson biography



Before participating in *AFRICAN AMERICAN LIVES*, Dr. Ben Carson knew little about his family history. Through the series' genealogical research, however, he is able to locate some of his maternal ancestors both before and after the Civil War.



Benjamin Solomon Carson was born in Detroit, Michigan in 1951, younger brother of Curtis and son of Sonya and Robert Carson. After his father left the family, Carson and his brother and mother lived in poverty in Boston for two years before returning to Detroit in 1961, where he would witness the social upheaval of the coming decade.



Co-Produced By
Thirteen/WNET New York
and Kunhardt Productions

As a child, Carson was a poor student and suffered from low self-esteem and a bad temper. He credits his mother with helping him to turn things around by forcing him to stop watching television and read more books. Though illiterate herself, Sonya made him write book reports, which she pretended to read. Around age 14, Carson also began to draw strength and inspiration from his belief in God. By the end of high school, he received a scholarship to Yale.

Carson entered the University of Michigan Medical School in 1973. He received his degree in 1977 and, upon the strength of his recommendations, began his residency at Johns Hopkins in Baltimore. After serving as a senior registrar in neurosurgery at Charles Gardner Hospital in Australia for a year, he returned to Johns Hopkins in 1984 to become, at just 33 years old, the chief of pediatric neurosurgery.

Today Carson is one of the leading pediatric neurosurgeons in the world. In 1987, he gained worldwide recognition as the principal surgeon in the 22-hour separation of the Binder conjoined twins from Germany. A decade later, he was the primary surgeon in the team of South African and Zambian surgeons that separated vertical craniopagus twins (joined at the top of the head) in a 28-hour operation. He is also well-known for hemispherectomy surgery, which removes part of the brain in order to correct seizures.

In 1994 Carson and his wife created the Carson Scholars Fund, which recognizes young people's exceptional academic and humanitarian accomplishments. He is the author of three books and a highly sought-after motivational speaker.

Major funding for *AFRICAN AMERICAN LIVES* is provided by  and the following  brands: Pringles®, Folgers®, Bounty®, Charmin®, Tide®, Downy®, Pampers®, Crest®