Portrait of a Great Barrington Icon:
Dr. May Edward Chinn

Dr. May Edward Chinn may be an unfamiliar name to Berkshire County residents, but thanks to the Great Barrington Select Board, Great Barrington Historical Commission, Great Barrington Historical Society, and retired MCLA professor Dr. Frances Jones-Sneed, she could soon join 46 U.S. Black Heritage commemorative postage stamp honorees.

Born in Great Barrington in 1896, Chinn studied music at Columbia University's Teacher's College and became a piano accompanist to singer, actor, and activist Paul Robeson. While working in a pathology lab to earn money for college, her interest turned to medicine.

This was the early 20th century when few women, let alone African American women, attended medical school. Undeterred, Chinn earned her medical certificate from Bellevue Hospital Medical School and later opened a private practice where she saw patients alongside other Black physicians at Edgecombe Sanitarium. She later returned to school to earn a master's degree in public health, where she made her mark investigating methods for detecting cancer alongside the developer of the Pap smear, Dr. George Papanicolaou.

Her accomplishments did not stop there. She was invited to join the Strang Cancer Clinic in New York City; became a member of the New York Academy of Sciences; and, in 1980, the year she died, was awarded an honorary Doctor of Science from her alma mater, Columbia University.

"Dr. Chinn is an example of the African Americans who lived in the Berkshires and went on to achieve great success in their respective fields," says Dr. Jones-Sneed. "She demonstrated the drive and tenacity of a number of Black women from the area."
During a recent visit to Great Barrington, three women involved in the Committee to Honor May Edward Chinn for the U.S. Black Heritage commemorative postage stamp met with Dr. Jones-Sneed and Bernard A. Drew, a local historian and member of the Great Barrington Historical Society, and visited the neighborhood where Chinn was born (her house is sadly gone) and Clinton A.M.E. Zion Church, where Chinn’s father was an active member and Chinn was likely baptized.

“Dr. Chinn’s father William was born in Virginia and escaped slavery from the Cheyne (Chinn) plantation in Lancaster, Pennsylvania,” explains Drew. “He was the son of a white plantation owner and Susan Spencer, an enslaved Black woman. Making his way to Great Barrington, William Chinn worked odd jobs.

He married Martha E. Gunn of the Stockbridge Gunn family and, after their divorce, Lulu Ann Evans, the daughter of a Black slave named Evans and a Chickahominy Native American woman. That union produced May Edward Chinn, who was born on Church Street in Great Barrington.”

An exhibit about Dr. Chinn that opened at the Mason Library in February for Black History Month will remain up for Women’s History Month.

"We are so honored to host an exhibit about Dr. May Edward Chinn, a pioneering doctor on so many fronts," says Talya Leodari from the Mason Library. "As a municipal library, we are always excited to inform the public about trailblazing current and former community members."

A program about Dr. Chinn is being planned for April 15th (the day she was born) at 1:00 p.m. at First Congregational Church in Great Barrington. And for those wanting to learn more about her storied life now, check out Great Barrington: Great Town, Great History and African American Heritage in the Upper Housatonic River Valley. Young readers will gain an appreciation of her life by reading May Chinn the Best Medicine.
Great Barrington Arts Market (GBAM) hosts its third winter event at Saint James Place on Sunday, March 19th from 10 am to 3 pm. The final market date is Sunday, April 23rd. The event features a rotating roster of local and regional artists. For more information, write gbartsmarket@gmail.com or find them on Facebook @GB Arts Market and Instagram @gbartsmarket.

*GBAM's mission is to provide revenue for Berkshire-based and regional artists & offer locally-made products to consumers year-round.*

## Local Creative Economy Jobs

Find Berkshire County in-person, remote, and hybrid jobs that pay a minimum of $40K a year in all fields, including arts, education, nonprofits, and related, at [1Berkshire's The Jobs Thing](https://www.1berkshire.com/thejobsthing). Among some of the current openings of interest are:

- **Director of Marketing, Barrington Stage**
- **Director of Education, Berkshire Botanical Garden**
- **Carpenter, Residential Construction, Jack Miller Contractors**

You can also find exclusively creative economy jobs, including remote and hybrid opportunities, at [MCC's HireCulture](https://mcc.cultureworkers.org/). Three sample postings are below.

- **Program Associate, Berkshire Music School**
- **Research and Communication Assistant, Dream Tale Puppets**
Arts Funding and Resources

Curated information about funding and financial assistance for those working in the creative economy.

**Funding Opportunities to June 30, 2023.** Mass Cultural Council highlights grants, action alerts, community events, opportunities, and resources. Find fellowships, explore artists' galleries, discover apprenticeships, and identify art spaces and resources by subscribing to MCC's Monthly Newsletter.

**Artist Opportunities for March and April 2023**
Creative Capital is a nonprofit, grantmaking organization funding artists in the creation of groundbreaking new work, amplifying the impact of their work, and fostering sustainable artistic careers. Examples of current grants from other funders on their site include [Bemis Center For Contemporary Arts: Artist in Residence Open Call](#) (Deadline: 3/31/23) and [Wassaic Project Programs](#) (Deadline: 4/3/23).

**New England Foundation for the Arts**
New England Foundation for the Arts cultivates and promotes the arts in New England and beyond. Among their upcoming grants are [New England States Touring (NEST)](#) (Deadline: 8/1/23) and [National Theater Project Creation & Touring Grant](#) (Deadline: Preliminary applications 9/27/23).

**ArtsHub**
ArtsHub is an ever-evolving idea designed to highlight and bring together artists, organizations, and events in the creative communities of Western Massachusetts. Among current Calls for Art are [The Data Fluencies Project, a 2-year project based primarily in Boston and online](#) (Deadline: 4/1/23) and [Calling All Makers in the 413](#) (Rolling applications for pop-ups from March-June).

**MASSCreative** advocates for a well-resourced and equitable creative sector essential to the economic and civic vibrancy of Massachusetts. See their COVID-19 relief resources here.
What: Adirondack Theatre Festival And Lake Theatre Announce Combined Equity Auditions

When: March 21

Where: Charles R. Wood Theater in Glens Fall

Details: To schedule a 5-minute appointment time, contact jarel@lakegeorgedinnertheatre.org and put “Combined EPA” in the subject line. As this is an Actors Equity audition, union members will be given priority but non-union actors are encouraged to submit. In your email, please indicate your union status and whether or not you are local.

What: Icelandic-Chinese singer-songwriter Laufey

When: April 7

Where: Mahaiwe Performing Arts Center

Details: Laufey makes music that is the byproduct of rich cultural heritages and mixed musical influences. Inspired by her mother, a classical violinist, Laufey took up piano and cello but it wasn’t until diving into her father’s jazz record collection that she launched into her musical journey.

What: BIFF’s Environmental Film Focus Series

When: April 8

Where: The Bernstein Theater

Details: BIFF is proud to be presenting two inspiring and engaging films as part of our popular environmental series. Please join us on Saturday, April 8 for the screening of OF FISH AND MEN and Saturday, May 6 for the screening of TO WHICH WE BELONG, both shown at 3 PM at the Bernstein Theater and Shakespeare and Company.
Mass Office of Travel and Tourism

The Massachusetts Official Travel and Tourism (MOTT) website includes a FREE business database where you can list your business! To get started, visit their website, where you can sign on as a new business or update your information if you are already registered.

Are you making the most of the #mylocalMA campaign? Submit Your Story for a chance to be featured on social media and in MOTT’s My Local MA e-newsletter. You can find more information and resources at Lovemylocalma.com.

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