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THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

June 16, 2023, 4:00 p.m.



Agriculture, Life &  
Veterinary Sciences &  
Cooperative Extension

## Dear Colleagues,

Happy Juneteenth!

Monday marks UA's first formal observance of a day that has been a meaningful one for Black communities for many years. On Monday night, we welcome to campus **Dr. Bernice King** and **Prof. Ilyasah Shabazz** for a **fireside chat** at Centennial Hall on social justice and civic action. CALS and Cooperative Extension partnered with the **Beyond Juneteenth Committee** to make Monday evening's event possible, and I am proud that we together have played a small role in making this happen.

## Remembering our Past

In advance of this important day, I want to share a story with you about one of the first Black students in our College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.

Born in Texas, **Quincy D. Powdrill** served in the armed forces during World War I. (Learn more about the experiences of Black soldiers at the **National WWI Museum and Memorial website**.) He lived for a time in Oklahoma City, where he married and may have taken some college courses. He moved to Tucson in 1923 for a homestead claim and, by Fall 1924, Quincy was enrolled at the University of Arizona. The Fall 1926 student directory tells us he was pursuing a B.S. in Agriculture. There were very few people of color among the student body at this time.

Quincy was an older student, in his early 30s. Like many of our students then and now, he was a veteran and he had other commitments in addition to his coursework. Quincy was the parent of a young daughter, and he was likely working throughout his time as a student on his poultry farm three miles northwest of campus.

He was also suffering from tuberculosis, a disease that took his life in 1938.

## A Possible Connection

A **1933 master's thesis** written by UA student **James Yancy** included a profile of two Black poultry farmers in Tucson, one of whom is almost certainly Quincy Powdrill:

*Poultryman B, a native of Oklahoma, came to Arizona in 1923, with the express intention of operating a chicken farm. To do this he realized that technical training and skill had to be obtained. So he entered the Agricultural Department at the University of Arizona and began to make himself proficient along this particular line...*

*By carefully studying market conditions, the egg production cycle of chickens, he has been able to keep an open market yearly for his produce. All of this information and study was necessary in order for his first \$1,000.00 invested in the poultry business to be safe...*

*Poultryman B has built up a high grade of patronage and he has maintained some of his customers for five years... Some of the oldest customers of Poultryman B are: the guest ranches, the sanatoriums and stores.*

A photo of “Poultryman B” can be found on p. 103 of the thesis linked above (p. 109 of the PDF).

I don't know yet if Quincy Powdrill completed his degree. He doesn't turn up in any yearbooks of the period and so we are doing some further research. I am so inspired when I reflect on the number of challenges he faced during the time he was a College of Agriculture student – and yet he continued investing in his education for at least two years so that he could better provide for his family. This must have taken an incredible amount of determination.

Quincy and **Mattie Powdrill** had two children. Both attended the university. The daughter they were raising while Quincy was a student went on to earn bachelor's and master's degrees in education from the University of Arizona.

Wishing you all a happy celebration on Monday as we remember the past and work toward a better future.

Regards,

**Shane C. Burgess**

Vice President, Division of Agriculture, Life and Veterinary Sciences, and Cooperative Extension

Charles-Sander Dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences

The University of Arizona

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*This email was sent to: ALVSCE Faculty, Staff, and Postdoctoral Research Associates*

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### **Land Acknowledgment**

*We respectfully acknowledge the University of Arizona is on the land and territories of Indigenous peoples. Today, Arizona is home to 22 federally recognized tribes, with Tucson being home to the O'odham and the Yaqui. Committed to diversity and inclusion, the University strives to build sustainable relationships with sovereign Native Nations and Indigenous communities through education offerings, partnerships, and community service.*