

Generations of STEM: Alexa Canady

Neurosurgeon

One of only two black African-American students in her Michigan grammar school (the other her brother), Alexa worked hard and graduated high school with honors. She took some time to discover her passion, first enrolling as a mathematics major, then changing to a degree in zoology. Ultimately, a summer program in

genetics inspired her love of medicine. She was the first woman and first African American to be accepted as a surgical intern at Yale-New Haven Hospital and went on to become Chief of Neurosurgery at Children's Hospital in Michigan. She is the first African-American woman to be board certified as a neurosurgeon.

Throughout her career, Alexa let gender and racial bias fuel her desire to achieve. She faced prejudice and discriminatory comments throughout her schooling and early career, but she persevered. As a ground breaking woman, and African-American woman in her field, she was an advocate for diversity in medicine. She enjoyed her career, and upon retirement to Florida quickly resumed work when she learned there were no pediatric neurosurgeons in the area. Officially retired now, she continues to encourage young women to pursue careers in medicine.



Image Source: [NIH, Alexa Canady](#) Information Sources: [U.S. National Library of Medicine](#), [Indiana University](#), [The History Makers](#)