

Generations of STEM: Dr. Shirley Jackson

Caller ID and Call Waiting

Dr. Jackson is the first African-American to earn a PhD from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. She brought about change during her time at MIT by establishing a Black Student Union and helping the University recruit black students as a beginning step to changing its demographic makeup.



After her initial time in academia, Shirley worked at Bell Labs researching in theoretical physics. Her work there led her to invent Caller ID and Call Waiting. Her research also led to the portable fax and the touch tone phone! We can thank her for letting us know who is calling as well as not missing a call when we are on the line.

Dr. Jackson is currently serving as President of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, the first African American woman to head a top ranked research institute. As a theoretical physicist, she was appointed chair of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission under Bill Clinton.

Image Source: [Wikipedia / Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute](#) Information Sources: [Medium.com](#), [Famous Black Inventors](#), [Legit](#)