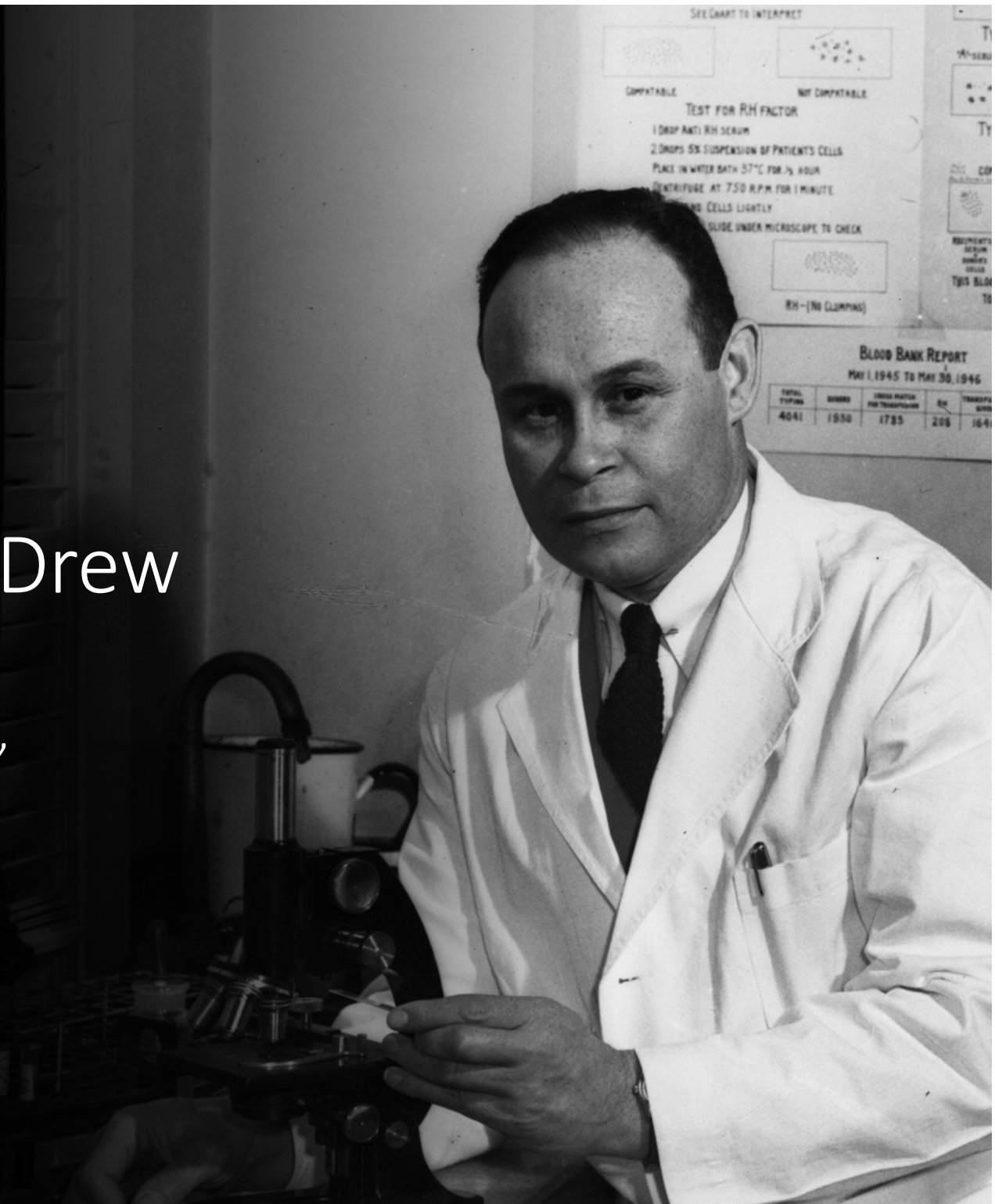




# Charles Richard Drew

“Father of the Blood Bank”



- ❖ Born in 1904, Washington D. C.
- ❖ An athlete since young age, attend Amherst College on a scholarship for football and track and field.
- ❖ Faced racism and segregation both in athletics and academics.
- ❖ Medical studies at McGill University.
  - Winning the annual scholarship prize in neuroanatomy;
  - Elected to the medical honor society Alpha Omega Alpha;
  - J. Francis Williams Prize in medicine;
  - Received his MD and CM degrees, graduating second in a class of 137.
- ❖ Interested in transfusion medicine during his internship at Montreal Hospital
- ❖ Barred from pursuing his interest in blood transfusions at Mayo Clinic, he began work at Howard University School of Medicine.
- ❖ Enrolled at Columbia University to pursue a doctorate degree.
  - Won a fellowship to train at Presbyterian Hospital with Allen Whipple.
  - Whipple assigned Drew to work under John Scudder to set up experimental blood bank.

❖ Research:

- Diagnosing and controlling shock, fluid balance, blood chemistry, preservation and transfusion.
- Dissertation - “Banked Blood: A study in Blood Preservation”
- First African American to earn a medical doctorate from Columbia.

❖ WWII broke out, Britain called on him for his expertise.

- Appointed as head of Blood for Britain Project (BFB)
- Ensuring the process of safely collecting, processing and storing large amounts of contamination-free plasma & procedures for extracting plasma;
- 14,556 blood donations, over 5000, liters of plasma saline solution.

❖ BFB became a model for the Red Cross pilot program to mass-produce dried plasma;

❖ Innovations: “Bloodmobiles” - mobile blood donation trucks with refrigerators.

- ❖ Ironically, the Red Cross excluded African Americans from donating blood, making Drew himself ineligible to participate in the very program he established.
- ❖ Later policy was modified to accept donations from blacks. But the institution still upheld the racial segregation of blood which has no scientific merit.
  
- ❖ Drew fought against the policy and eventually resigned in protest.
  - “unscientific and insulting to African Americans.”
  
- ❖ Returning to Howard University
  - Head of the Department of Surgery and Chief of Surgery at Freedmen’s Hospital
  - “train young African American surgeons who would meet the most rigorous standards in any surgical specialty”
  - “place them in strategic positions throughout the country where they could, in turn, nurture the tradition of excellence.”
  - “greatest and most lasting contribution to medicine.”
  - campaigned against the exclusion of black physicians from local medical societies, medical specialty organizations, and the American Medical Association.
  
- ❖ On April 1, 1950, at the age of 45, Drew overturned his car while driving through North Carolina to a medical conference. He was rushed to a segregated White hospital, and despite receiving a blood transfusion, died of his severe wounds. Mere months after his death, the Red Cross ended its segregated blood donation program.