

Honoring Black History Month: A Spotlight on Lucille Venture, PhD, ATR

AATA

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Recipient of the Multicultural Legacy Award

Dr. Lucille Durham Venture, ATR, (1919-2006) was an outstanding clinician, educator, mentor, and advocate for multiculturalism and social activism within the field of art therapy. Born in Pittsburg, PA, her education began in the Pittsburg public schools. She earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from Morgan State University and a Master's degree in Art Education from New York University. Dr. Venture earned a Doctorate in Art Therapy and

Program Administration from Union Institute & University. Grounded in humanistic inquiry, Dr. Venture advanced her understanding of ethics, the creative process, and the possibilities of institutional and social change. She has the distinction of being the first person within the profession to earn a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph. D) degree in Art Therapy. Her Doctoral dissertation is titled, "The Black Beat in Art Therapy Experiences." Dr. Venture worked in communities characterized by racial and economic oppression and raised the standard of the profession through her awareness of and responsiveness to the needs of culturally diverse client populations.

Dr. Venture was a member of the AATA as well as an original founder of her chapter, the Maryland Art Therapy Association. She was a strong advocate for both the black community among art therapists and multiculturalism in the profession as a whole. In 1976, when Venture was the first and only black art therapist registered in the state of Maryland, she said in a *Baltimore Afro-American* [interview](#) that art therapy is "a relatively new health science profession that black people should become interested in and knowledgeable about in order that they may get into art therapy on the ground floor, not wait until it is an old and established profession like other health science organizations."

She refused to be sidelined and lived her life as an advocate for those who were. As she wrote in her dissertation, a crucial role of art therapists of color and their allies is “constantly bringing to the larger body’s attention the needs and concerns of and for minorities.” Dr. Venture’s words are just as meaningful today as they were when she wrote them in 1977.

If you are interested in reading more about Venture’s contribution to the history of the AATA, check out this [article](#) by Jordan Potash, Ph.D., ATR-BC “Rekindling the Multicultural History of the American Art Therapy Association, Inc” in the *Journal of the American Art Therapy Association* (2005).

