

Congress of the United States

March 11, 2024

Stamp Development
Attn: Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee
475 L'Enfant Plaza SW, Room 3300
Washington, DC 20260-3501

Dear Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee,

We write to urge you to include Dr. May Edward Chinn in the U.S. Postal Service's Black Heritage Series. We believe that her work as a pioneer for Black medical professionals warrants this honor and would act as an inspiration for communities across the country.

During an era when African American women had little opportunity in the medical field, Dr. Chinn became the first Black woman to graduate from Bellevue Hospital Medical College. After breaking this glass ceiling, she continued to trailblaze going on to become the first Black woman to intern at Harlem Hospital and the first woman to ride in the hospital's emergency ambulance crew.

Dr. Chinn tirelessly advocated for the improvement of the medical treatment of non-white patients in her community and beyond. Working with other African American physicians, Chinn opened a private practice in Harlem to cater to the needs of underserved patients. Here she developed her passion for what would become her life's work in developing new methods for the early detection of cancer.

In 1944, Dr. Chinn began working at the Strang Cancer Clinic where she would spend the next 30 years until her retirement in 1974. Chinn championed research in advanced cancer screenings and helped develop the protocol for cancer probability predictions based on family medical history. During her tenure at the clinic, Chinn also contributed to research on cervical cancer screenings now known as the Pap Smear which help save countless lives.

Thanks to her impact on cancer research and detection, Dr. Chinn received a number of honors memorializing her work. In 1954 she became a member of the New York Academy of Sciences before receiving a citation from the New York City Cancer Committee of the American Cancer Society in 1957. Just before her passing in 1980, Columbia University bestowed her with an honorary doctorate of science for her contributions to the medical field.

Dr. Chinn dedicated her life to caring for her patients and improving the lives of cancer patients across the world. Uplifting her as an example of service would spur the dreams of aspiring physicians and medical professionals from marginalized communities.

Thank you for the consideration and we hope that you ultimately decide to honor Dr. May Edward Chinn with the commemorative stamp that she deserves.

Sincerely,



Charles E. Schumer



Kirsten Elizabeth Gillibrand



Jerrold Nadler



Adriano Espaillat