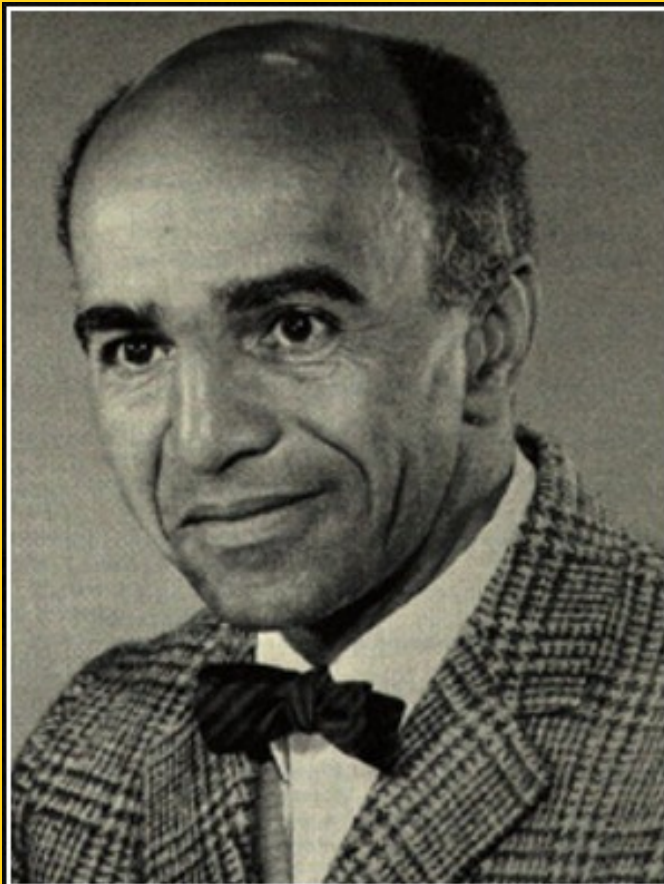


Black history month: DAVID BLACKWELL



Basically, I'm not interested in doing research and I never have been... I'm interested in understanding, which is quite a different thing. And often to understand something you have to work it out yourself because no one else has done it.

— *David Blackwell* —

AZ QUOTES

David Blackwell was an African-American statistician and mathematician, famous for discoveries such as the Rao-Blackwell theorem, which he worked out together with the Indian-American mathematician C R Rao.

Blackwell came from a low-income family background, but got to university and then in 1941 to a one-year fellowship at the Institute of Advanced Study at Princeton, where mathematical exiles from Nazi-dominated Europe such as Einstein, Gödel, and von Neumann were working. Nearby Princeton University banned him from attending lectures because of his skin colour.

A few years later, he became a lecturer at the University of California Berkeley and stayed there for the rest of his working life.

He was the first African-American to be made a member of the National Academy of Sciences.