African-Americans at IIT

See list at the end of this document. This is not a complete list. Additions are welcome; please send information to Catherine Bruck, University Archivist, bruck@iit.edu

Re Early African-Americans Graduates of Armour, Lewis, IIT, and Chicago-Kent, see text below:

One issue to be taken under consideration when discussing "early" or "first" African-Americans is to ask how to determine that the person was African-American? Both of IIT's predecessor colleges -- Lewis Institute founded in 1896 and Armour Institute founded in 1892 -- accepted blacks from the time they opened and awarded degrees to them. But short of looking at yearbooks and trying to determine by photo, name, address, or former high school or college, it's not possible to know if the person was African-American or not. Some early registration materials may have identified a student as black, but those files are not comprehensive, and it is uncertain who was completing the information and what determinants they were using. At some point (in the 1960s ?) it became more common/required to track racial and ethnic make-up of student bodies, but still later, requiring a student to provide that information became illegal. Now it is common that race and ethnicity be self-selected with some individuals opting not to answer or to select more than one category.

That said, the IIT Archives does have evidence of several early African-American graduates of Lewis, Armour, and Chicago-Kent College of Law. As there were numerous African-Americans enrolled in Lewis and Armour when they merged in 1940 to create IIT, IIT has always had blacks in its student body. As early as 1950, IIT held an integrated formal junior prom (held at the Congress Hotel in Chicago's Loop), and the 1977 Homecoming event hosted an integrated court.

The list below includes people who MAY BE the earliest African-American graduates of Illinois Institute of Technology (Chicago) and its various predecessors. Note that this does not necessarily make them the earliest graduate "of color" however (e.g., I found an earlier graduate of Lewis who was a native of Calcutta, India).

Re Lewis Institute, Chicago, 1896–1940:
Photos of African-Americans appear frequently in the school's yearbooks. Graduates' photos (Lewis awarded an Associate's degree after two years of study and a Bachelor's degree after four years) are usually included each year, though frequently with lists of "graduates without photos" at the end. As many Lewis Institute students transferred credits from historically black colleges or attended Chicago's black high schools (Wendell Phillips and Dunbar served the African-American community prior to 1940), these identifiers were used in determining racial identity for the purpose of this paper. Lewis Institute accepted students without regard to race, religion, or ethnicity and had numerous international students of color – Philippine, East Indian, Caribbean Island, etc. – in addition to African-Americans.

Re Armour Institute of Technology, Chicago, 1896–1940:
Armour Institute also accepted students without regard to race, religion, or ethnicity. Primarily an engineering and architecture school (Armour dropped its women's programs in 1901) offering only a full four-year technical program, minority students may have had more difficulty meeting minimum entrance requirements (than either their white counterparts at Armour or their racial and ethnic peers at Lewis Institute). According to an article in *Technology News* (see http://archives.iit.edu/technews/), Armour's honorary musical fraternity pledged five black men in 1933. Charles Warner Pierce (see below) may be the

first black graduate of Armour, but he is shown in group class photos prior to 1901 with at least one other black classmate.

Re Kent College and Chicago College of Law:
These two schools, both started in the mid- to late-1800s, merged with each other ca. 1902 to become Chicago-Kent College of Law. In 1968, they merged with Illinois Institute of Technology to become IIT's law school. Note that while both Robert Abbott and Ida Platt were awarded law degrees from these schools as noted below, they could not receive a license to practice law in the State of Illinois.

What follows is a very random list and is not intended as a representative sample or a comprehensive listing. Individuals, as shown here, should not be considered to be "the first…" or "the only…" unless so identified. Note that Institute of Design, Stuart School of Business, College of Architecture, and Institute of Psychology (all of which are current graduate schools of IIT) were not researched for this paper. Additional information on the individuals listed here may be available in the IIT Archives. Please send additions and corrections for this list to bruck@iit.edu.

Catherine Bruck, University Archivist
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Last Name	First Name	Date	Date/Degree	School	Notes
Abbott	Robert Sengstacke	1900	1900	Kent College	Founded *The Chicago Defender* newspaper
Albright	Arthur C.	1924	A.A. degree in 1924 (per Lewis Annual, 1924, p. 35)	Lewis Institute	Attended Wendell Phillips High School
Booth	Teresa	1977	Class of 1977 ?	IIT	Homecoming court attendant per photo in *IIT News & Views*, Vol. 4, # 3, April 1977
Boykin	Otis	1946	Attended IIT graduate school, 1946 – 1947		African-American inventor of electronic devises, including a control unit for the artificial pacemaker; died 1982.
Brown	Dorothy	1996	LAW – 1996		First African American To be elected clerk of the Circuit Court of Cook County
Burks	Stephen	1992	ID – 1992	IIT	
Carroll	Jeff	1994	ME – 1994	IIT	
Colter	Cyrus	1936	Ca. 1936 (graduated?)	"attended" Chicago-Kent	
Crawford	Irma Eloise	1927	A.A. degree in 1927 (per Lewis Annual, 1927, p. 22)	Lewis Institute	Transferred from Campbell College, Jackson, Wis. [or Jackson, Miss.?] and West Kentucky Industrial College
Creed	Danny	1979	BS - EE, 1979	IIT	Member of IIT's National Society of Black Engineers chapter; serves on the Alumni Board as the vice President for Alumni Services

Last Name	First Name	Date	Date/Degree	School	Notes
Crossley	Frank A.	1945	B.S., 1945; M.S., 1947; PhD, 1950;	IIT	May be the first African-American to graduate from IIT who wasn't a continuing student from either Armour or Lewis. Naval ROTC student & ship commander.
Friedman	Edward	1917	B.S. in Chem. Eng., 1917 (per The Cycle, 1917, p. 50)	Armour Institute of Technology	Attended Wendell Phillips High School
Frost	Wilson	1958	JD, 1958	Chicago-Kent	Former Chicago alderman
Hartsfield	Lori	1986	BA – Bus. Admin., 1986	IIT	Organized 1996 reunion of African-American alumni. Others in attendance included those listed below:
Hartsfield reunion attendees: Denise Allen-Brazil, BA, 1988; Deneen Avery; Shelia Anderson-Green; Tanger Dunn; John German, EE, 1988; Natasha Mitchum; Oneida Pate, CRP, 1985; Kwame Raoul, LAW, 1993; Kevin Smith, CS, 1989; Peggy Strong, CS, 1981; Darryl Taylor; Chris Winston, ME, 1982; Michael Duncan, CS, 1988; Harold Morrow, ME, 1985; Marguerite Chapman; Felanice Duncan; Mechell Boynes					
Hilliard	LeRoy	1933	1933 B.A. in Architecture	(?) Armour Institute of Technology	
Holly	Tim	1960	1960s	IIT	
Hubbard	Christian	2008 (?)	Architecture	IIT	
Irmer	Perri	1981	BA- Architecture, 1981	IIT	CEO of Illinois Sports Facilities Authority
Jones	Floyd	1924	A.A. in 1924 (per Lewis Annual, 1924, p. 42)	Lewis Institute	Transferred from Arkansas Baptist College and Howard University
Karlmark	Gloria Ray	1965		IIT	One of the "Little Rock Nine"
Leach	Hattie	1929	B.S. in Arts & Sciences in 1929 (per Lewis Annual, 1929, p. 20)	Lewis Institute	May be the first African-American female to get a bachelor's degree from Lewis Institute. No photo is included in the yearbook, but she had attended Wendell Phillips High School and Howard University.
Lucas	James William	1923	A. A. degree in 1923 (per Lewis Annual, 1923, p. 27), and a B.S. – Mechanical Engineering in 1924 (per Lewis Annual, 1924, p. 29)	Lewis Institute	May be the first African-American male to graduate from Lewis Institute. Transfer student from Tuskegee Institute
McGee	Henry W.	1949	1949; degree in Public Administration	IIT	Chicago's first black postmaster; delivered IIT commencement address "The Mounting Crisis in Black-White Relationships," 1970
Peters, II	James S.	1952	MS – Psych.	IIT	
Pierce	Charles	1901	1901 B.S. – Chem. Eng.	Armour Institute of Technology	May be the first African-American to graduate from Armour Institute of Technology. Believed to be the first African-American chemical engineer in the USA

Last Name	First Name	Date	Date/Degree	School	Notes
Platt	Ida	1894	1894	Chicago College of Law	First African-American to pass the Bar in Illinois
Sharpe	David	1960	BS – Architecture, 1960; MS, 1962	IIT	Student of Ludwig Mies van der Rohe; IIT College of Architecture faculty member (as of 2007).
Templeton	Lester	1949	BS – Chem Eng., 1949	IIT	Served as VP of the class of 1949; graduated in Jan. 1949. Info. given to C. Bruck by Bob Guthrie (ME, 1949) who was Templeton's classmate.
Threatt	Tyrone	1978	BS – EE, 1978	IIT	Homecoming court attendant per photo in *IIT News & Views*, Vol. 4, # 3, April 1977
Weather	Armada T.	1919	B. S. – Chem. Eng., 1919; (per The Cycle, 1919, p. 58)	Armour Institute of Technology	Attended Wendell Phillips High School
Wilkerson	Gregory	1981	BS – EE, 1981	IIT	Participated in the Minorities in Engineering program in 1970s
Zimmerman	Arnold	1917	B.S. in Elec. Eng., 1917; (per The Cycle, 1917, p. 44)	Armour Institute of Technology	Attended Wendell Phillips High School

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