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PRESS RELEASE

Pioneering ophthalmologist Dr. Patricia Bath makes history as one of the first Black women to be inducted into the National Inventors Hall of Fame

Dr. **Patricia Era Bath** (1942-2019) – the groundbreaking ophthalmologist who invented one of the most important surgical tools in history, will be honored in the newly announced Inductee Class of 2022 by the [National Inventors Hall of Fame](#) (NIHF). Along with inductee **Marian Croak**, Dr. Bath will be one of two Black women inventors inducted on Thursday - May 5, 2022. Bath and Croak will be the first Black female inventors inducted by NIHF in its nearly 50-year history.

“To know that my mother is part of the 2022 class of National Inventors Hall of Fame Inductees is an unbelievable honor,” says Dr. Eraka Bath. “Her incredible career path – and her contributions to the study of ophthalmology, cannot be understated. The NIHF distinction is an overdue recognition of her accomplishments.”

In 1986, Dr. Bath invented the Laserphaco Probe for cataract treatment - one of the most important surgical tools in the history of ophthalmology. Dr. Bath used the Excimer Laser to develop a device and method for minimally invasive cataract surgery. Bath’s method employed a faster technique and established the foundation for eye surgeons to use lasers to restore or improve vision for millions of patients suffering from cataracts worldwide.

To celebrate her historic achievement, official Dr. **Patricia Bath** merchandise is now available for purchase at <https://werstem.com>. The new online store offers branded items inspired by Dr. Bath’s life and work, including t-shirts, tote bags, mugs and much more. Store purchase proceeds will fund scholarships for under-represented students in STEM across the academic spectrum.

“Today is truly a special day, and I wish my mother could be here,” Bath added. “Launching the **WERSTEM** store allows us to celebrate her life, honor her achievements and inspire future generations.”

Dr. Bath’s career is full of trailblazing firsts. In 1988, Bath became the first known Black woman to receive a medical patent [U.S. Patent No. 4,744,360] - the first of eight patents in her distinguished career. She was also the first Black person to complete an Ophthalmology residency at New York University in 1973, and the first Black American woman appointed to the UCLA Medical Center surgical staff in 1974.

At UCLA, she was the first woman to lead a post-graduate training program in Ophthalmology. A humanitarian, she established the [American Institute for the Prevention of Blindness](#) as part of her lifelong passion in championing for the eradication of preventable blindness for racially minoritized populations. She coined the term, “Community Ophthalmology” to emphasize that “eyesight is a basic human right” and advocated for public health approaches to address visual inequities so that eyecare would become part of primary medical care.

Dr. Bath will be recognized at two ceremonies in 2022: an “Illumination Ceremony” at the National Inventors Hall of Fame Museum in Alexandria, VA on May 4th, and the 2022 National Inventors Hall of Fame “Induction Ceremony” in Washington, D.C. on May 5th. As part of the Class of 2022, seven additional Inductees will join the 22 NIHF Inductees previously announced in 2020. All 29 will be honored at the May ceremonies.

For more information about **Dr. Patricia Bath**, please visit <https://drpatriciabath.com> or follow her official social media accounts on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#).

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