



**Tech Tuesday  
Women's History  
Month  
March 26, 2024  
2:00 pm CT (Zoom)**



**The Generational Legacy of  
Jewel Prestage  
with  
Kendramia Prestage**

**[Scan QR code to log on](#) or [Click here](#)**



**ADA Accessibility Assistance, call 936-261-3585**

**Dr. Jewel Prestage**, born to Brudis and Sallie Bell Johnson Limar on August 12, 1931 in Hutton, Louisiana, was the first African American woman in the United States of America to receive a Ph.D. in Political Science. Prestage was the fourth of ten children and the oldest daughter of four. She originally enrolled in Southern University of Baton Rouge in 1948 at the age of 16 with the intention of majoring in chemistry; however, she grew interested in the field of political science after taking an American Government class and running for the position of freshman class secretary. While at Southern, she was initiated into Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., Beta Psi Chapter and met the man who would become her husband.

Dr. Prestage earned the Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science from Southern University of Baton Rouge (SUBR) and both the Master of Arts degree in Political Science (1952) and the Doctor of Philosophy degree in Political Science (1954) from the University of Iowa at the age of 22. Her research centered on the involvement of black women in the political process, a previously untouched area of political science. Upon receiving her doctorate from the University of Iowa, Dr. Prestage began her professional career teaching political science for two years at Prairie View A&M University.

After leaving Prairie View, Dr. Prestage returned to her alma mater, Southern University, to continue teaching political science. She became the department chair and later the Dean of the School of Public Policy & Urban Affairs where she would remain until her 1989 retirement, attaining the title of Distinguished Professor Emerita. Dr. Prestage returned to Prairie View A&M University to teach political science and would go on to become Dean of the Benjamin Banneker Honors College, citing the desire to motivate more African American students across all majors to pursue graduate study and become university professors. She retired in 2002. Many of the students she mentored during her time at Southern University and Prairie View A&M University would go on to receive Ph.Ds. as well as become lawyers, judges, elected officials, and commissioned military officers.

Dr. Jewel L. Prestage was extremely active in the community around her, deeply invested in the success of students, and concerned about the quality of education. She implemented programs primarily to address the poor quality of civic education in elementary and secondary schools in Louisiana. As a result, over 500 teachers in Louisiana improved their teaching methods. She was appointed by President Jimmy Carter and confirmed by the U.S. Senate to serve on the National Advisory Council on Women's Educational Programs in the U.S. Department of Education. Eventually, she was named the chair of the council, becoming the first minority woman to hold the position. In September 2003, Dr. Prestage was honored by the U.S. House of Representatives as her former student, Congressman William Jefferson (D-LA) read her contributions to the field of political science into Congressional Record. Dr. Jewel Limar Prestage passed away at the age of 82 on August 1, 2014.

Article retrieved from Prairie View A&M University website, March 19, 2024 written March 1, 2017

<https://www.pvamu.edu/blog/the-women-of-prairie-view-dr-jewel-prestage/>