

# The FIRST EIGHT

A PERSONAL HISTORY OF THE  
PIONEERING BLACK CONGRESSMEN  
WHO SHAPED A NATION

# JIM CLYBURN

the NINTH



## The First Eight: A Personal History of the Pioneering Black Congressmen Who Shaped a Nation

### Rep. James E. Clyburn

U.S. Congressman representing South Carolina's 6th Congressional District in the U.S. House of Representatives.

### Natalie Y. Moore

Award-winning journalist and author. Senior lecturer and director of audio programming at NU's Medill School of Journalism.

**Tuesday, March 10, 2026, 7:00 PM CT**  
**Evanston Township High School Auditorium**  
**1600 Dodge Ave., Door 6, Evanston, IL 60201**

**BONUS BOOK GIVEAWAY of *The First Eight* at the event, while supplies last.**



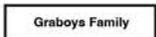
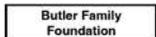
This event is #freeandopentothepublic and will be recorded.  
No registration required. Suitable for youth 12+

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: REP. JAMES E. CLYBURN – IN PERSON**

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**Tuesday, March 10, 2026 | 7:00 PM CT**

**The First Eight: A Personal History of the Pioneering Black Congressmen Who Shaped a Nation**

**A FAN in-person featuring Rep. James E. Clyburn, in conversation with Natalie Y. Moore.**

**Evanston Township High School Auditorium, 1600 Dodge Ave., Door 6, Evanston, IL 60201**

***No registration required.***

**Bonus Book Giveaway:** FAN is giving away copies of *The First Eight* to attendees, while supplies last.

Today, South Carolina Congressman **James E. Clyburn** (SC-06) is renowned as a Democratic kingmaker and one of the most distinguished Black political leaders in American history. But behind him stand eight other remarkable men: the first Black politicians elected to Congress from his home state, who blazed the path for his own ascent. Since arriving in Congress in the early nineties, Congressman Clyburn has been guided by their wisdom and example — and sobered by their struggles, particularly against the enduring demon of American racism.

South Carolina's first eight Black congressmen all rose to office in the wake of the Civil War and emancipation — only to see their gains extinguished as the dark veil of Jim Crow fell across the South. It would take nearly a century before the ninth Black representative from the state, Clyburn himself, was elected.

In *The First Eight: A Personal History of the Pioneering Black Congressmen Who Shaped a Nation*, Rep. Clyburn brings these men's stories — and their message of liberty — to the nation they served. Among them: Joseph Rainey, born enslaved in 1832, who became the first Black politician elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in American history; Robert Smalls, celebrated for his extraordinary Civil War heroism, when he commandeered a Confederate vessel and delivered it — and his freedom — to the Union; and Richard Cain, editor of a widely read newspaper for Black South Carolinians and a figure deeply associated with Emanuel AME Church, one of the oldest and most distinguished Black churches in America, and where nine Black congregants were murdered in a racist mass shooting in 2015.

Through the trials, tribulations, triumphs, and setbacks all nine men faced, Rep. Clyburn illuminates a whole new way of understanding the arc from the Civil War to the present day.

*The First Eight* is a singular blend of history and memoir — at once a monument to eight trailblazing Americans, a meditation on progress, and a clear-eyed reckoning with how far we have yet to go in our nation's ongoing struggle for true democracy.

Rep. Clyburn will be in conversation with **Natalie Y. Moore**, an award-winning journalist and author and senior lecturer and director of audio programming at the Medill School of Journalism at Northwestern University.

This event is suitable for youth ages 12 and up. It will be recorded but not live streamed and available on FAN's website and YouTube channel.

Sponsored by **FAN**, in partnership with The Avery Coonley School, Avoca D37, Baker Demonstration School, Beacon Academy, Bennett Day School, Bernard Zell Anshe Emet Day School, Brickton Montessori School, British International School of Chicago, Catherine Cook School, Compass Health Center, Countryside Day School, Evanston Scholars, Evanston Township HS D202, Family Service Center, Foundation 65, The Frances Xavier Warde School, Francis W. Parker School, Glenview Public Library, Gorton Center, Hyde Park Day School, Illinois Student Assistance Commission, Kenilworth D38, Lake Bluff D65, Latin School of Chicago, Leo Catholic High School, Libertyville D70, Lycée Français de Chicago, Near North Montessori School, North Shore Country Day, Northwestern University Office of Neighborhood and Community Relations, Northwestern University School of Education and Social Policy, Pope John XXIII School, Regina Dominican High School, Resurrection College Prep High School, Rogers Park Montessori School, Roycemore School, Santa Clara University School of Law, Science & Arts Academy, The Sonia Shankman Orthogenic School, Stevenson High School D125, Township High School D113, Township High School D214, TrueNorth Educational Cooperative #804, Wilmette Public Library, Woodlands Academy, Youth & Opportunity United.