

Ben Carson

Benjamin Carson was born in Detroit, Michigan, in 1951. His mother had dropped out of school in the third grade and got married at age 13. Sometime after Ben was born the father left the family and the mother had to take care of her two boys alone.

The family was very poor and to make ends meet Ben's mother sometimes worked two or three jobs at the same time. Still, she taught her boys that anything was possible. Ben dreamed of a career in medicine. When Ben or his brother needed to go to the doctor, he would watch doctors and nurses working. He dreamed that one day they would be calling him "Dr. Carson."

But in school Ben had one of the lowest grades in his class and was teased by his classmates for being stupid. His mom tried to help by not letting the boys watch too much TV and they couldn't go outside to play until they had finished their homework.

She made them read two library books a week and give her written reports, even though she barely knew how to read them. At first Ben hated this, but after several weeks he started to enjoy reading. He learned he could go anywhere, be anybody and do anything when he was reading.

This love for reading soon made him want to learn more. He started reading about all types of subjects, seeing himself as the central character of what he was reading, even if it was a technical book or an encyclopedia.

Ben soon began to view himself differently. He knew he could become the scientist or physician he had dreamed about. A fifth grade science teacher was one of the first to encourage Ben's interests in lab work after he was the only student able to identify an obsidian rock sample brought to school.

Soon Ben was amazing his teachers and classmates with his improvement. He was able to recall facts and examples from his books at home and relate them to what he was learning in school.

Eventually Ben enrolled in the School of Medicine at the University of Michigan, choosing to become a brain surgeon. He then became an intern at Johns Hopkins University in 1977. His excellent eye-hand coordination and three-dimensional reasoning skills made him a superior surgeon early on.

He eventually gained international attention by performing operations to separate twins who were joined at the head.

To help others, Ben began traveling to schools, businesses and hospitals across the country telling his story and sharing his wisdom with students. Out of this dedication to education and helping young people, Ben and his wife founded the Carson Scholars Fund in 1994. The foundation provides money to students and promotes reading.

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