



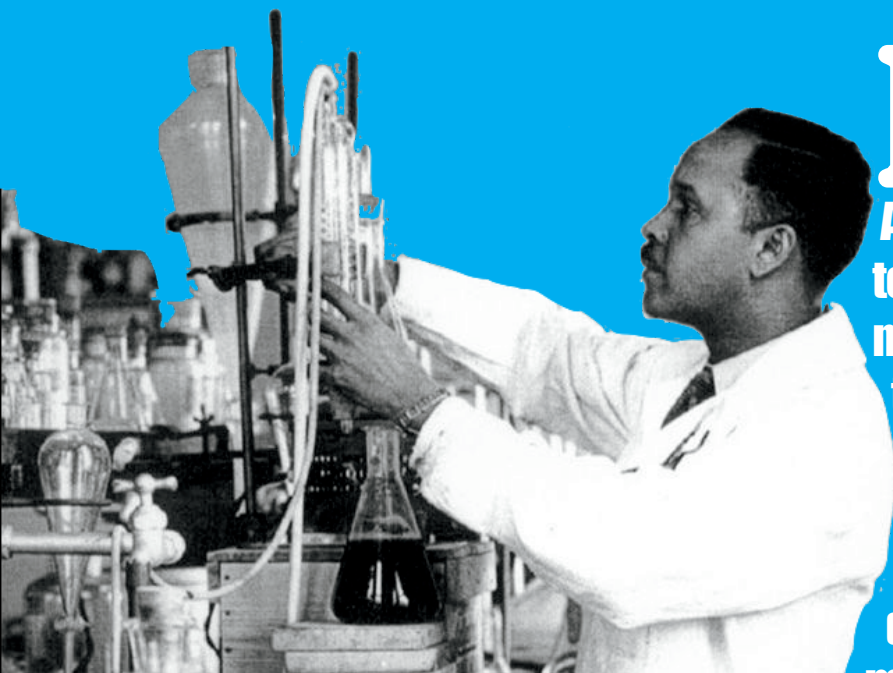
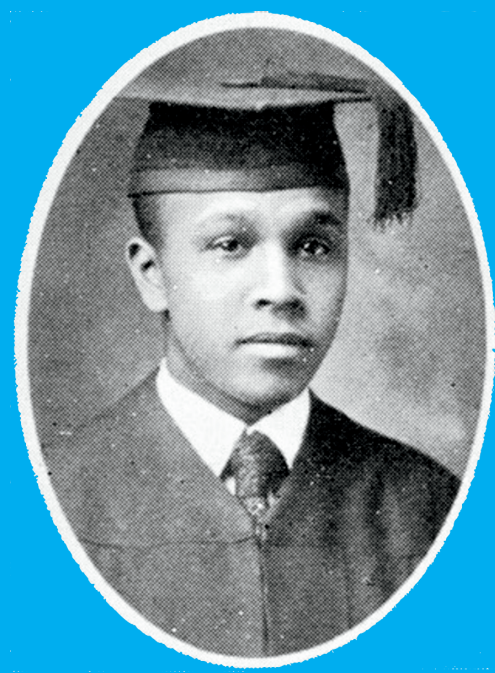
PERCY JULIAN

THE FORGOTTEN GENIUS

By Michal Ruprecht

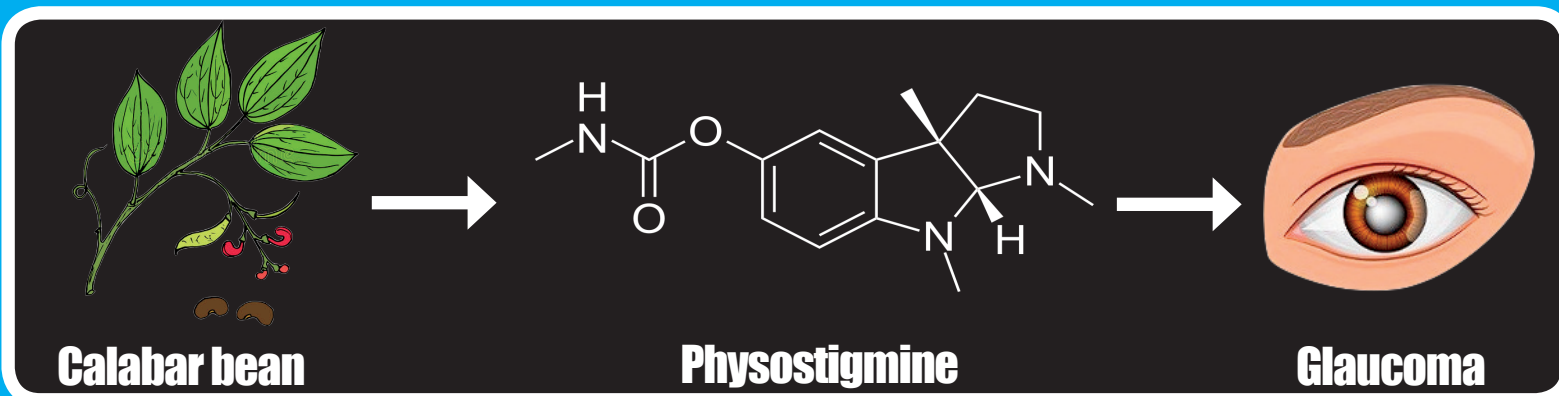
EARLY LIFE

Percy Lavon Julian was born on April 11, 1899 in Montgomery, Alabama. Julian only went to school through eighth grade, however, because there weren't any high schools open to black students. Julian wasn't satisfied with his level of education, so he applied to DePauw University in Greencastle, Indiana. During his undergraduate studies, he attended a local high school in the evening to reach the academic level of his peers. Although he had to take high school-level classes, graduated first in his class with Phi Beta Kappa honors.



EARLY CAREER

After college, Julian taught at Fisk University. He left in 1923 after he received a stipend from Harvard University to finish his master's degree. Harvard wouldn't let him pursue his doctorate, though. After teaching at black colleges for several years, he received his Ph.D. in 1931 at the University of Vienna in Austria. He returned to DePauw to continue his research and in 1935 he synthesized physostigmine from the calabar bean to create a drug treatment for glaucoma. The university, however, refused to make him a professor because of his race.



LATER CAREER

Julian was repeatedly rejected when he applied for jobs because of his race. He ended up receiving a job at Glidden Company as the lab director. He invented Aero-Foam, a product that puts out oil and gas fires. It was used during World War II. Julian continued his research and discovered how to remove sterols from soybean oil and synthesize the hormones progesterone and testosterone. He also synthesized cortisone, which was used in the treatment of rheumatoid arthritis. In 1954 he established his own laboratory, Julian Laboratories. He sold his company in 1961 and became one of the first black millionaires. For the rest of his life, he ran Julian Research Institute, a nonprofit organization. He has been recognized by many chemical organizations, including the American Chemical Society.

