Wilberforce University,

private, coeducational institution of higher learning in Wilberforce, Ohio, U.S. It is affiliated with the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Wilberforce is a liberal arts university offering undergraduate programs in business, engineering, sciences, humanities, and other areas. All students must participate in the cooperative education program, a program that complements traditional campus study with work experience. Total enrollment, which is predominantly African-American, is approximately 850.

Wilberforce University, founded in 1856 by members of the Methodist Episcopal church, is the oldest historically black private college in the United States. Hardships resulting from the American Civil War caused the university to close in 1862, but the next year it was bought by the African Methodist Episcopal Church and reopened. The state of Ohio established a normal (teacher-training) and industrial department at the university in 1887. Educator Hallie Quinn Brown and composer William Grant Still were alumni of Wilberforce University.