

A courageous leader rosa parks



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Parks was a well-known and courageous leader who contributed to the Civil Rights Movement in the late 1900s. She earned the title, Mother of the Civil Rights Movement, after actively participating in several resistance movements throughout the country. One of the many nonviolent movements includes the incident on the City Lines bus in Montgomery, Alabama. Parks famously refused to obey a bus driver's order to move to the back of the bus for a white passenger. Her refusal created a great deal of conversation about racial equality, but how much did it actually benefit the cause?

Rosa Louise McCauley was born on February 4, 1913 in the small town of Tuskegee, Alabama. Due to many illnesses and deaths in her family, Parks graduated from high school when she was twenty-one years old. By then, she was already married to Raymond Parks — a self educated activist. Raymond and Rosa collaborated in a collection of programs under the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. Before her arrest in 1955, Parks worked vigorously as the secretary and youth leader of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

The 1896 United States Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of the separate but equal teaching with the case of Plessy v. Ferguson. In this case, Homer Plessy " an African American train passenger " refused to sit in a train car specifically for African Americans. As a result, the usage of Jim Crow laws became popular in the south. Jim Crow laws led to mistreatment and a segregated life for African Americans. On this subject, Rosa Parks commented, This thing called segregation here is a complete and solid pattern as a way of life. We are conditioned to it and make the best of a bad

situation. (dailymail. co. uk/wired/ap/article-2937437/Excerpts-Rosa-Parks-writings-Jim-Crow-segregation. html.)

In the case of Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, the 1954 United States Supreme Court ruled that racial segregation in public schools denied African Americans equal rights and was, therefore, unconstitutional. Due to other Supreme Court rulings " such as Plessy v. Ferguson in 1896" Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka was considered a turning point in the Civil Rights Movement. Even though this ruling alone did not succeed in school desegregation, it inspired others to take a stand against segregation in, not only schools, but in all public places. Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King Jr., and Booker T. Washington are just a few of the people that changed the world forever.

One year after the case of Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Rosa Parks denied giving up her seat on a City Lines bus in Montgomery, Alabama. On December 1, 1955, Parks was riding back home from a hard day at work as a seamstress. She sat in the first row of the colored section. When the bus became full, the bus driver " James Blake " demanded that she move further back so that white passengers could sit down. She did not comply and was immediately arrested for civil disobedience. This action created an uproar and a demand for change in the world. In response to her arrest, Rosa said, Who would have thought that little Rosa McCauley would ever become a convicted criminal, much less a subversive worthy of police apprehension, in the eyes of the state of Alabama? (beaconbroadside. com/broadside/2014/12the-arrest-of-rosa-parks. html.)

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On December 5, 1955, two men ” Martin Luther King Jr. and Ralph Abernathy ” organized a boycott of Montgomery’s buses under the Montgomery Improvement Association. They demanded that African American passengers should be treated with the same dignity and respect as the white passengers. Along with this, they proposed that the bus seating should be appointed on a first-come-first-serve basis and African American drivers should drive routes that served African Americans specifically. During this boycott, King and Abernathy were arrested. The homes of King and Abernathy were also bombed along with four churches. Still, the boycott relentlessly continued. Consequently, African Americans walked or rode bikes to work and the bus company lost thousands of dollars.

After almost a year of boycotting the bus services, the Supreme Court ruled in favor of the Montgomery Improvement Association. The Supreme Court declared that segregation on buses was unconstitutional. The Montgomery bus boycott was one of the major resistance movements that encouraged African Americans to continue protesting and demanding for equal rights. Martin Luther King Jr. became one of the most recognized leaders of the Civil Rights Movement. He formed the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. Under the organization, African Americans peacefully protested and fought Jim Crow segregation. When Rosa Parks sat down on the bus, she unintentionally started a revolution.

Parks moved to Detroit, Michigan in 1957. There, she co-founded the Rosa and Raymond Parks Institute for Self-Development. This program encouraged and motivated the youth to achieve their highest potential. The Institute’s, Pathways to Freedom program, traces the underground railroad

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into the civil rights movement and beyond. Youth, ages 11 through 17, meet and talk with Mrs. Parks and other national leaders as they participate in educational and historical research throughout the world. They journey primarily by bus as freedom riders did in the 1960s, the theme: Where have we been? Where are we going? ([rosaparks.org/biography/.](http://rosaparks.org/biography/))

Rosa Parks was an inspiration and model for the youth. For example, she took part in several Civil Rights programs and also served on the staff of U. S Representative John Conyers. As a dedication, the Southern Christian Leadership Council created an annual Rosa Parks Freedom Award. Parks strived for positivity and equality in the world. She courageously spent her life to better the lives of others. She also received a multitude of honorary certificates, medals, awards, and keys to many cities. Among these, she received the Martin Luther King, Jr. Nonviolent Peace Prize.

The death of her husband, Raymond Parks occurred in 1977. After that, Rosa Parks spent the rest of her life living in retirement. When asked if she was happy in what she accomplished, Rosa Parks said, I do the very best I can to look upon life with optimism and hope and looking forward to a better day, but I don't think there is any such thing as complete happiness. It pains me that there is still a lot of Klan activity and racism. I think when you say you're happy, you have everything that you need and everything that you want, and nothing more to wish for. I haven't reached that stage yet.

([achievement.org/achiever/rosa-parks/.](http://achievement.org/achiever/rosa-parks/))

Rosa Parks died on October 24, 2005 at the age of ninety-two. Her casket was placed in the United States Capitol for two days. She is the first African

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American woman to lie at the Capitol. This is considered an honor because it is usually reserved for former United States Presidents. Rosa Parks lived a life full of dignity, selflessness, and courageousness. Her legacy and memories against racial injustice will live on.