

## Rosa Parks

Civil rights worker (1913 - 2005)

“To this day I believe we are here on the planet earth to live, grow up and do what we can to make this world a better place for all people to enjoy freedom.”

Mrs. Rosa Parks

Rosa Parks, born on February 4, 1913, has been called the “mother of the civil rights movement” and one of the most important citizens of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

On December 1, 1955, Mrs. Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat near the front of a Montgomery, Alabama city bus to a white passenger. The bus driver had her arrested for violating the law.

By “sitting down” for what she believed in, and refusing to give up her bus seat, Rosa Parks made history. The following night, fifty leaders of the African-American community (among them was the young minister, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.) met to discuss the issue.

The leaders organized the Montgomery Bus Boycott, urging African-Americans of Montgomery to refuse to ride the buses until the bus segregation laws were changed.

“I felt just resigned to give what I could to protect against the way I was being treated.”



In December of 1956, the Supreme Court decided that bus segregation violated the Constitution. This ruling helped propel the Civil Rights Movement into motion, a movement which led to many positive changes, including the

Civil Rights Act of 1964. Today all Americans, whatever their race, nationality, or religion, must be given equal treatment under the law.

After the death of her husband in 1987, Rosa Parks founded the Rosa and Raymond Parks Institute for Self-Development, which offers guidance to young Blacks and sponsors an annual summer program, called Pathways to Freedom.

Mrs. Rosa Parks’ courage, determination, and her continued efforts to make Americans aware of the history of the Civil Rights Movement serve as important reminders that the struggle for equality is not yet over. Although we have come a long way, Rosa Parks’ inner strength and leadership against all odds remind us –and inspire us–that there is still much progress to be made.

Where to learn about joining in the effort to achieve Rosa Parks' vision:

The Rosa & Raymond Parks  
Institute for Self Development  
65 Cadillac Square, Suite 2200  
Detroit, MI 48226  
(313) 965-0606  
<http://www.rosaparks.org>

If you are interested in learning more about Rosa Parks check these out:

*Rosa Parks: Civil Rights Leader*  
*Rosa Parks: My Story*  
*The Year They Walked*  
*I Am Rosa*  
*Rosa Parks and the Montgomery Bus Boycott*  
*Rosa Parks: The Movement Organizes*  
*Civil Rights Museum-Memphis TN*

Other thoughts from Rosa Parks:

“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.”

“All I was doing was trying to get home from work.”

"Differences of race, nationality or religion should not be used to deny any human being citizenship rights or privileges."

Whole Woman's Health  
Women's History Project

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“I didn’t have any special fear. It was more of a relief to know that I wasn’t alone.”

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