

# LIFT EVERY VOICE:



**60 YEARS  
SINCE THE CIVIL RIGHTS ACT**

# LIFT EVERY VOICE: 60 YEARS SINCE THE CIVIL RIGHTS ACT

Much like the original Chautauqua Movement, Oklahoma Chautauqua aims to provide lifelong learning opportunities, foster intellectual growth, and further community engagement. Each year we examine a theme designed to give us a unique experience of both meeting historical figures and interacting with the scholars who bring those figures to life. This year, we invite you to *Lift Every Voice: 60 Years Since the Civil Rights Act*.

On July 2, 1964, the United States took a historic step toward dismantling institutionalized racism with the passage of the Civil Rights Act. This legislation marked a pivotal moment in American history, signaling a commitment to equality and justice for all citizens, regardless of race, color, religion, or national origin. As we commemorate this anniversary, it is essential to reflect on the profound impact this Act had on the nation and the enduring importance of its legacy.

The 1960s were marked by social upheaval, racial tensions, and a growing demand for equality among African Americans. The Civil Rights Act emerged as a response to the burgeoning civil rights movement and aimed to eliminate discrimination in various spheres of American life.

Our historical characters this year will take us back to that turbulent time and, perhaps, show us the world through a different lens. Each of these characters played an important part in the movement, and thanks to the magic of Chautauqua, we'll meet them.

Earl Warren led the Supreme Court during a truly transformative period that significantly advanced civil rights. Rosa Parks became the "Mother of the Civil Rights Movement" when she refused to yield her seat and sparked the Montgomery Bus Boycott. While Lady Bird Johnson is perhaps more renowned for her environmental and beautification initiatives, she also used her platform to advocate for social justice and equality. Before becoming the first African American Supreme Court Justice in 1967, Marshall was a pioneering attorney and a driving force behind the legal strategy that led to the landmark decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954). Coretta Scott King tirelessly championed the rights of African Americans, women, and the disenfranchised, pushing for legislation that addressed issues ranging from economic inequality to racial justice.

This year Oklahoma Chautauqua will remind us that it is imperative to acknowledge the progress made, confront the challenges that persist, and recommit ourselves to the ideals of equality and justice for all.

*Lift every voice!*

The Chautauqua Committees of  
Altus, Enid, Lawton, and Tulsa



# LIFT EVERY VOICE: 60 YEARS SINCE THE CIVIL RIGHTS ACT

Evening Performances at 7:00 p.m. at the  
Western Oklahoma State College Pioneer Heritage Center – 2801 N. Main  
(Please park in the North parking lot and enter through the North door.)

Workshops offered daily at 11:00 a.m. at the Altus Public Library – 421 N. Hudson  
and 2:00 p.m. at the Museum of the Western Prairie – 1100 N. Hightower

For more information, please call the library: 580-477-2890

See our Facebook Page: @SPLSaltus or our webpage: spls.lib.ok.us

## SPONSORING ORGANIZATIONS:

- Southern Prairie Library System
- Shortgrass Arts and Humanities Council
- Western Trail Historical Society – Museum of the Western Prairie
- Western Oklahoma State College – Friends of the WOSC Performing Arts

## SPECIAL THANKS TO:

- |   |                   |                        |                 |                 |
|---|-------------------|------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Altus SW Area Economic Development Corp | Jennie Buchanan   | Barbara Brinkman       | Rachel Beckner  | Gary McLaughlin |
| Altus Chamber of Commerce               | Kathy Bayers      | Janice Pellam          | Clint Abernathy | Barry Mock      |
| Friends of the Library                  | Robert Guttormsen | Lillie Cary Stinchcomb | Yudell Barton   | Jim Norris      |
| KEYB Media Specialties                  | Amy Jo Cobb       | Kim Wilmes             | Sharon Duffy    | Betsy Roberts   |
| City of Altus                           | Rodger Kerr       | Candi Kirouac          | Doug Gardiner   | Dennis Vernon   |
| The Altus Times                         | Emily Smith       | Colleen Pavelschak     | Kathy Hale      | Tom Yates       |
| KWHW AM/FM Radio                        | Christie Kidder   | Jeff Hastings          | Mark Holder     |                 |
| Dr. Chad Wiginton                       | Samual Borrego    | Jenny Blaser-Kay       | Clark Huey      |                 |
|   | Nori Banda        | Michael Shive          | Guy Smith       |                 |

## WORKSHOP AND PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE

### TUESDAY, MAY 28TH

- 11:00 am:** “The Oklahoma Brown Case”  
Scholar – Vanessa Adams-Harris
- 2:00 pm:** *The Music of the Civil Rights Movement*  
Scholar – Rebecca Marks-Jimerson
- 7:00 pm:** **Earl Warren**  
Scholar – Doug A. Mishler

### THURSDAY, MAY 30TH

- 11:00 am:** “The Civil War Amendments”  
Scholar – James Armstead
- 2:00 pm:** *Unsung Heroes of the Civil Rights Movement*  
Scholar – Vanessa Adams-Harris
- 7:00 pm:** **Claudia “Lady Bird” Johnson**  
Scholar – Leslie Goddard

### FRIDAY, MAY 31ST

- 11:00 am:** *Coretta Scott King and the Freedom Concerts*  
Scholar – Rebecca Marks-Jimerson
- 2:00 pm:** *“The Lady Bird Special”*  
Scholar – Leslie Goddard
- 7:00 pm:** **Thurgood Marshall**  
Scholar – James Armstead

### WEDNESDAY, MAY 29TH

- 11:00 am:** *“Rating the First Ladies”*  
Scholar – Leslie Goddard
- 2:00 pm:** *“War and a Question of Rights”*  
Scholar - Doug A. Mishler
- 7:00 pm:** **Rosa Parks**  
Scholar – Vanessa Adams-Harris

### SATURDAY, JUNE 1ST

- 11:00 am:** *“The Supreme Court’s Role in American Life”*  
Scholar – Doug A. Mishler
- 2:00 pm:** *“Plessy vis a vis Brown”*  
Scholar - James Armstead
- 7:00 pm:** **Coretta Scott King**  
Scholar: Rebecca Marks-Jimerson





LIFT EVERY VOICE: 60 YEARS SINCE THE CIVIL RIGHTS ACT

PRESENTED BY TULSA CHAUTAUQUA

Workshops inside and Evening Performances under the tent at:

Tulsa Historical Society and Museum | 2445 So. Peoria Avenue

1st Workshop at Noon; 2nd Workshop at 5:30 p.m.

ALL VOLUNTEER BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Paula Settoon, President
- Ken Busby, Vice-President
- Jennifer Maxwell, Secretary
- Sandy Moore, Treasurer
- Rex Berry
- Harry Dandelles
- Gini Fox
- Bud Martin
- Ron Nick
- Kim Smith

Tulsa Chautauqua is a 501(c)(3) Charitable Organization, EIN 825232902. Your support is extremely important. Donations, memorials, honorariums, and other endowment contributions are greatly appreciated and should be made payable to:

**Mail to:** Tulsa Chautauqua Inc.  
 P.O. Box 52344  
 Tulsa, OK 74132  
[www.tulsachautauqua.org](http://www.tulsachautauqua.org)  
 Find us on Facebook at Tulsa Chautauqua  
 Join our email list at [tulsachautauqua@gmail.com](mailto:tulsachautauqua@gmail.com)

MAJOR DONORS

**BENEFACTOR (\$5,000 to \$9,999)**  
 The Anne and Henry Zarrow Foundation  
 Oklahoma Humanities  
 The National Endowment for the Humanities

**CHAMPION (\$2,500 to \$4,999)**  
 Gelvin Foundation  
 Magellan Midstream Partners, L.P.  
 Ed & Sandy Moore

**ADVOCATE (\$1,000 to \$2,499)**  
 All Souls Generosity Committee  
 Gini Fox  
 Paula Settoon  
 Kim Smith  
 Tulsa Community College Foundation

**FRIENDS OF CHAUTAUQUA (\$250 to \$999)**

- Anonymous
- Charlene Bassett
- Rex Berry
- Linda Broach
- Carolyn & Fred Burks
- Ken Busby
- Pamela Cecil
- Harry Dandelles
- Cheryl & Larry Chambers
- Julie & Jerry Gustafson
- Nancy & Bill Hermann
- Rebecca Holland & Ron Nick

- Marilyn Inhofe & Ralph Tucker
- Myra & Ronald Jeffris
- Mary Ellen Jones
- Ted & Nancy Kachel
- Kathleen Kastelic
- Sonja Langlee
- Dr. Lora Larson
- Mary & Mike McGraw
- Jennifer Maxwell
- Carolyn Moore
- LeLe Murphy
- Marilyn & Everett Neal
- Beth Rainey
- Barbara & Edwin Reavis
- Marcy & Bernard Robinowitz
- Joanne Sellars
- Julie Skye (Skye Advisors)
- Penny & John Tipton
- Martin Wing
- Marcia Young

**IN-KIND DONORS**  
 Tulsa Historical Society & Museum

DAILY WORKSHOPS

TUESDAY, JUNE 4TH - SATURDAY, JUNE 8TH, 2024 AT NOON & 5:30 P M

SCHOLAR PERFORMANCES START AT 7:00 P M

	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>Noon Workshops</b>	<i>"The Oklahoma Brown Case"</i> by Vanessa Adams-Harris	<i>"Rating the First Ladies"</i> by Leslie Goddard	<i>"The Civil War Amendments"</i> by Jim Armstead	<i>"Coretta Scott King and the Freedom Concerts"</i> by Rebecca Marks-Jimerson	<i>"The Supreme Court's Role in American Life"</i> by Doug A. Mishler
<b>5:30 Workshops</b>	<i>"The Music of the Civil Rights Movement"</i> by Rebecca Marks-Jimerson	<i>"Warren and a Question of Rights"</i> by Doug A. Mishler	<i>"Unsung Heros of the Civil Rights Movement"</i> by Vanessa Adams-Harris	<i>"The Lady Bird Special"</i> by Leslie Goddard	<i>"Plessy vis a vis Brown"</i> by Jim Armstead







Enid Chautauqua in the Park 2024 at the Cherokee Strip Regional Heritage Center

LIFT EVERY VOICE: 60 YEARS SINCE THE CIVIL RIGHTS ACT

Join us on the grounds of the Humphrey Heritage Village at the Cherokee Strip Regional Heritage Center. Presented in true Chautauqua style under a big top tent, the week-long program includes daily workshops (at 10:30 a.m. and 12:00 noon) and five evening performances (Tuesday through Saturday). Workshops take place in the historical church in the Humphrey Heritage Village. Evening performances kick off at 6:30 pm with local entertainment.

In case of inclement weather or excessive heat, evening performance will be moved to the Northwestern State University Campus

CHAUTAUQUA COUNCIL OF ENID BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Mary McDonald, President
Linda Pickens, Vice-President
Marsha Scott, Secretary
Kathy Gabelsberg, Treasurer
Nancy Burgett
Rick Hockmeyer
Rob Houston
Janet Jones
Larry Kiner
Melanie Outhier
Polly Maxwell
Wayne McMillin

- Mark Ray
Mary Stallings
Dane Tate

ADVISORY BOARD

- Gary Brown
John Provine
Laurel Provine
David Trojan
Sharon Trojan

PLATINUM SPONSORS

- Gary & Johnnie Atwood

GOLD SPONSORS

- Colleen Flikeid
Mary McDonald
The Proper Way Band
Paul Meyers

- Mary Evelyn Adams
Don & Tary Johnson
Rob & Mary Stallings
John & Marsha Scott

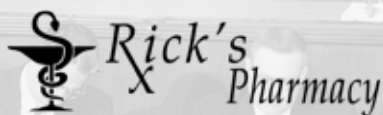
SILVER SPONSORS

- Roger & Catherine Wiles

WORKSHOP AND PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE

Workshops take place Tuesday through Saturday at 10:30 a.m. and 12:00 p.m. at the Humphrey Heritage Village Church at the Cherokee Strip Regional Heritage Center. Evening performances begin at 7:30 p.m., with special entertainment beginning at 6:30 p.m. Food trucks will be available during the evening performances.

MAJOR SPONSORS





# LAWTON CHAUTAUQUA

## LIFT EVERY VOICE: 60 YEARS SINCE THE CIVIL RIGHTS ACT

### LAWTON, OKLAHOMA

Tuesday, June 18 - Saturday, June 22, 2024

Workshops: 10-11 am and 2-3 pm

Evening Performances: 7 pm - 8:30 pm

LOCATION: All events are held at Albert Johnson Sr. Conference Center, 91 NE Maine Street, Lawton

For more information call 580-581-3450, email [libraryhelp@lawtonok.gov](mailto:libraryhelp@lawtonok.gov), or visit <https://www.lawtonok.gov/departments/library/events/chautauqua>

To donate to Lawton Chautauqua by PayPal or a credit or debit card, go to [https://www.paypal.com/donate?hosted\\_button\\_id=SY7MSGWXW52PG](https://www.paypal.com/donate?hosted_button_id=SY7MSGWXW52PG). Or send a check payable to Friends of the Lawton Public Library – Chautauqua, 110 SW 4th Street, Lawton OK 73501.

### LAWTON CHAUTAUQUA COMMITTEE

Gordon Blaker  
Jan Carroll  
Johnny Carroll  
Frantzie Couch  
Janice Fritsch  
Robbie Gillis  
Anita Hernandez

Kristin Herr  
Anaquinita Kaigler-Love  
Cheryl Monts  
Patty Neuwirth  
Tanya Organ  
Ed Peterson

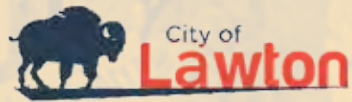
### FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY BOARD

Jenny Breeden, President  
Feremin Viruet, Vice-president  
Patty Neuwirth, Treasurer  
Frantzie Couch, Secretary

### LAWTON LIBRARY BOARD

Patty Neuwirth, Chair  
Susan Kremmer, Vice Chair  
Frantzie Couch, Member  
Fermin Viruet, Member  
Kristin Herr, Library Director

### 2024 SPONSORS





# SCHOLARS



**TUE** **EARL WARREN**  
by Doug A. Mishler ..... **6**

**WED** **Rosa Parks**  
by Vanessa Adams-Harris ..... **10**

**THUR** **CLAUDIA "LADY BIRD" JOHNSON**  
by Leslie Goddard ..... **14**

**FRI** **THURGOOD MARSHALL**  
by James Armstead ..... **18**

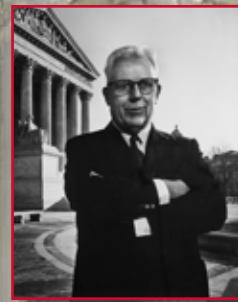
**SAT** **CORETTA SCOTT KING**  
by Rebecca Marks-Jimerson ..... **22**



# Earl Warren

*Man On a Mission*

By  
*Doug A. Mishler*





Raised in Bakersfield California to working class parents, it is safe to say that in his early years not many people would have anticipated the profound impact Earl Warren would have on America in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. A poor kid literally from the wrong side of the tracks, Earl grew up to be a serious and scrupulously honest man who felt it his mission to defend every American's natural rights. Warren would change jobs but never this mission. His quest reached its apogee as supreme court chief justice from 1953 to 1969, when he adjudicated some of the most significant rights cases in American history.

Born into a Scandinavian immigrant family, Earl was so poor that when he asked his father why he and his sister did not have middle names, Mathias Warren stated simply, "When you were born, I was too poor to give you middle names." Earl was born in Los Angeles in 1891. His railroad engineer father moved the family to the desert oasis of Bakersfield when he was five. Earl was known in school as a good athlete but only a modest scholar. He did manage to attend the University of California Berkeley, but no one there ever thought he would do much either.

After his undistinguished scholastic career, Earl graduated with a Bachelor of Law degree in 1914. As was the norm, he was admitted to the California Bar without examination and then obtained an entry-level position with Associated Oil Company of San Francisco. By this time Earl was a devout follower of the Progressive movement. This movement of Theodore Roosevelt, Robert La Follette, and California's crusading Governor Hiram Johnson, focused Warren's passion for justice and equality into a mission.

Warren's passion, though, collided with the oil company's values, and he left within a year. He fled San Francisco as well since he felt everything there was corrupt and designed to help the rich exploit the common man. He moved to Oakland only to enlist to fight in the Great War. Though denied officer training due to hemorrhoids, after quick surgery Earl enlisted as a private and rose quickly becoming a second lieutenant in May 1918. The war ended before a disappointed Earl left the States.

In 1919 Earl became a California legislative assistant, but in 1920 jumped over to practice law as a deputy district attorney for Alameda County. By 1924 he was the senior deputy district attorney. Even though he had supported Progressive Party candidate Bob La Follette for president, Warren was appointed

Alameda County district attorney (DA) in 1925 by local Republicans to replace the Republican incumbent who had resigned. Warren was a no-nonsense DA who ruthlessly enforced prohibition against the rich as well as the poor (though he thought it a silly law, he still publicly smashed beer barrels like Eliot Ness). His sense of democratic equality compelled him to attack public corruption, even convicting the powerful Alameda sheriff of graft (an absolute rarity in 1920s America).

Though many elites soon opposed the straight-arrow Warren, his mission resonated with the people; he was elected DA in 1926 and re-elected in 1930. In 1931 his honesty and mission led the national DA association to select him as the most effective DA in the country. His time as DA was also marked by fights against two unions (convicting four union officials of murdering a sea captain in a labor dispute) and prosecuting several high-profile anti-Communist cases. As progressivism faded, though, Warren slowly became a moderate Republican and soon became a leading voice in the state Republican party in California. He even openly opposed FDR's New Deal.

Through a quirk of California law, Earl was nominated and elected by both Democrats and Republicans in 1934 to be the state attorney general. As AG he effectively went after the mob, gambling, prohibition, and, of course, public corruption. In 1942

he was easily elected governor of California and then re-elected in 1946, and 1950. As a popular governor, he became a power broker in presidential politics. He ran as vice-president with Thomas Dewey in 1948, and briefly was California's choice for presidential candidate against Dwight David Eisenhower (known familiarly as "Ike") in 1952. This when he came to increasingly loathe Richard Nixon.

In 1942 Warren's passion to protect natural rights was superseded by the threat of war and he joined a native-son organization that pressed for eugenics and for Japanese internment. He later regretted his actions, stating, "Whenever I thought of the innocent little children who were torn from home, school friends, and congenial surroundings, I was conscience-stricken. It was wrong to react so impulsively, without positive evidence of disloyalty."

Governor Warren was a stickler for honest nonpartisan policies. He expanded job programs for the people who flocked to



**"WHEN THE RIGHTS OF ANY INDIVIDUAL  
OR GROUP ARE CHIPPED AWAY, THE  
FREEDOM OF ALL ERODES."**





## DOUG A. MISHLER

Since 1993 when he accidentally became P.T. Barnum, Doug has toured the country “bringing history to life” with a rogue’s gallery of characters. Doug has made over 800 presentations of over 30 historical figures including Nikita Khrushchev, Theodore Roosevelt, Ernie Pyle, Pablo Picasso, Henry Ford, Jackson Pollock, Sir Ernest Shackleton, Chuck Yeager, Gene Roddenberry, and Earl Warren. Yes, you’re correct, Doug hears voices, but only 30 of them are actually historical characters—the others we don’t talk about. He is also the founder and managing artistic director of Restless Artists’ Theatre in Reno. He taught American cultural history for over 23 years. And no, he does not have a real job!

California during and right after the war. He campaigned for better housing, and dramatically increased funding for the state university and college system. And years ahead of Ike, he pressed to revamp the state highway system.

In 1953 to reward his efforts getting Ike elected, he was promised a cabinet job—which Ike reneged on. Yet when Supreme Court Chief Justice Fred Vinson died in early 1953, Earl was unexpectedly appointed chief justice. This move surprised everyone: Ike gave little rationale other than to later say it was his worst mistake. The legal community was stunned since Earl had no judicial experience. It even surprised Earl as he had only one week to get to Washington, find a place to live, and, oh yes, lead the court into the Brown case—one of the most important and divisive cases in American history.

As chief justice, Warren worked tirelessly to expand natural rights. He was deft at pulling the court along with his views, and his tenure from 1953 to 1969 included many ground-breaking rights decisions: from *Brown v Board of Education* to *Reynolds v Sims*; from *Miranda v Arizona*, to *Loving v Virginia*; from *Griswold v Connecticut* to *Heart of Atlanta Motel v United States*; as well as *Gideon v Wainwright*, and several cases which ended the 1950s Communist witch hunt. Whether for those accused of a crime, interracial couples, or the disenfranchised, Warren’s court upheld the rights of all. Lyndon

**“IT IS DOUBTFUL THAT CONGRESS  
WOULD PASS THE BILL OF RIGHTS  
IF IT WERE INTRODUCED TODAY.”**

Baines Johnson saw Warren as the only man the nation trusted and drafted him in 1963 to do double duty as chief justice and chairman of the commission investigating the Kennedy assassination (i.e., the Warren Commission).

Warren’s mission on the Supreme Court completely altered the face of American society and culture. When he retired in 1969, he was both revered and hated. His enemies had either wished him impeached, or openly called for him to be lynched. He noted, “Everything I did in my life that was worthwhile, I caught hell for.” Yet despite the powerful forces arrayed against him and the swing in American society to the right, few major Warren court decisions have been overturned in the last 54 years.

Historians of the Supreme Court usually rank Warren as the second most important chief justice, after John Marshall. Throughout his amazing life, Earl defended a balanced democracy, one that championed the rights and duties equally of both the powerful and the weak, of those who had everything and those who had nothing.

For Earl Warren, every American’s basic rights were not just something to espouse during campaigns, they were sacred. When the rights of any individual or group are chipped away, the freedom of all erodes.





## Bibliography

### Primary:

Warren, Earl. *The Memoirs of Earl Warren*. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday. 1977.

### Secondary:

Cray, Ed. *Chief Justice: A Biography of Earl Warren*. Simon & Schuster. 1997.

Herda, D. J. *Earl Warren: A Life of Truth and Justice*. Prometheus Books. 2019.

Horwitz, Morton J. *The Warren Court and the Pursuit of Justice*. Hill and Wang Critical Issues. 1999.

Moke, Paul. *Earl Warren and the Struggle for Justice*. Lexington Books. 2015.

Newton, Jim. *Justice For All: Earl Warren and the Nation He Made*. Penguin Books/Riverhead. 2007.

Simon, James F. *Eisenhower vs. Warren: The Battle for Civil Rights and Liberties*. Liveright Publishing. 2018.

Smith, J. Douglas. *On Democracy's Doorstep: The Inside Story of How the Supreme Court Brought "One Person, One Vote" to the United States*. Hill and Wang. 2015.

### Further Recommendation:

Duke University School of Law. "The Life and Legacy of Chief Justice Earl Warren." Recorded February 19, 2007. With transcript. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1L8rVD9a6e4>



# Mrs. Rosa Parks:

## THE JOURNEY CONTINUES

By Vanessa Adams-Harris





*"I try to keep hope alive anyway, but that's not always the easiest thing to do. I have spent over half my life teaching love and brotherhood, and I feel that it is better to continue to try to teach or live equality and love than it would be to have hatred or prejudice. Everyone living together in peace and harmony and love. . . that's the goal that we seek, and I think that the more people there are who reach that state of mind, the better we will all be."*

Mrs. Rosa Parks, *Quiet Strength: The Faith, the Hope, and the Heart of a Woman Who Changed a Nation*, 1994

The quotation above may leave the reader wondering if the patience possessed by Mrs. Rosa Parks was appropriate for a political activist. This impression might be reinforced by the myth that she had simply been a tired older woman who spontaneously refused to change seats on a bus ride one day in 1955. But present-day researchers on the Civil Rights Movement are concluding that her dignity and reserve expressed a quiet strength—not weakness.

Mrs. Parks's background suggests that there was an inevitability to her resistance to the bus driver on December 1, 1955. That background includes involvement in two important organizations. The first was the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) church, in which she was a devoted deaconess. The church had earned the nickname "The Freedom Church" during the antislavery movement, and it retained an emphasis on equal rights for all. The other organization was the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People), an organization created to combat racism. In 1955 Mrs. Parks was the secretary of the NAACP's Montgomery, Alabama, branch.

Mrs. Parks was also affected by biblical proclamations and by her own spiritual insights. One scripture that was influential for her came from Psalms 27:

*The Lord is my light and my salvation—  
whom shall I fear?*

*The Lord is the stronghold of my life—  
of whom shall I be afraid?*

This verse provides a glimpse into how and why she was able to operate with such confidence and authority.

Another important verse for Mrs. Parks was the famous "Golden Rule" found amid Jesus's teachings in two of the Gospels. It became the basis of her personal motto: treat others as you want to be treated and, even better, listen and discern how others are asking to be treated—even one's persecutors.

Mrs. Parks held a core belief that each person should be treated with dignity, starting with one's self. She would recount that back in 1943, when a bus driver had raised his hand to strike her for using the

WHITES ONLY door to enter his bus, she had stated, "Don't you hit me." And he had not (though he drove off without her).

Mrs. Rosa Parks was born Rosa Louise McCauley on February 4, 1913, in Tuskegee, Alabama. She was raised in the countryside on her maternal grandparents' farm. She credited her mother, Leona Edwards McCauley, with teaching her that strength is expressed in love and kindness.

Mrs. Parks would hold her mother and her mother's parents in the highest esteem. Her Grandmother Edwards introduced the young

Rosa to non-violence—but, sadly, first did so as a necessity for survival. A little White boy had threatened to hit Rosa with a rock. Rosa told him that if he did so, she would hit him right back. Her grandmother reprimanded her, telling her how dangerous it was to threaten a White person, even a White child. Rosa did not understand why her grandmother had not been proud of her for standing up for herself and was hurt. She did not understand until she was much older that her act of defiance could have endangered her entire family.

Mrs. Parks was also influenced by her husband, Raymond Parks (whom she affectionally called simply "Parks"). He expanded her understanding of the suffering and deprivation that many other African Americans had gone through. As a child, he had been mistreated and often beaten. As a Black male he had been allowed no education beyond the third grade. Commendably, "Parks" supported Mrs. Parks's educational ambitions and was an active participant with her in the NAACP.

A review of the collections of Mrs. Parks's papers at the Library of Congress and the Walter Reuther Library at Wayne State University in Detroit shows the broad extent of her life as an activist. The papers include materials on her civil engagements, marches, church programs, projects promoting women's independence and self-esteem, and work with children and youth. She loved children, a love that was returned. Her emphases with them included love, peace, faith, kindness towards the entire human family, and respect for one's self and others.

Mrs. Parks was an advocate of "each one teach one" education for children, with children passing along the skills in literacy they had learned to other children. She also favored "nonlinear" education, with children not required to follow a fixed path of learning. Instead, children were free to learn in ways that were based on their own skill levels, talents, and preferences.

Unfortunately, the public schools that most Black children attended, especially in the South, had few books and even fewer school libraries. Worse, segregation laws prevented African American students from using most public libraries. In an infamous situation in 1950, White librarian Ruth W. Brown of the Bartlesville Public Library in Oklahoma was fired after thirty years of service for access to the



*"I want to be remembered  
as a person who stood  
up to injustice"*





### *Vanessa Adams-Harris*

Vanessa Adams-Harris is Mvskoke (Creek) American Indian with African/Scots Irish ancestry. She is an artist, filmmaker, playwright, and human rights community activist/peacebuilder.

In award-winning solo shows, she has portrayed Big Mama in Hannibal Johnson's "Big Mama Speaks - A 1921 Tulsa Race Riot Survivor"; Lady Red in "for colored girls who have considered suicide when the rainbow was enuf" by Ntozake Shange; 103-year-old Sadie Delaney in "Having Our Say – The Delaney Sisters' First 100 Years" by Emily Mann; and Lena May Baker.

She performs programs regularly for schools, civic organizations, and the public on Oklahoma history, race, and reconciliation. Vanessa portrayed Ada Lois Sipuel-Fisher in Lawton, Oklahoma's Soulful Story program. For the 2015 Oklahoma Chautauqua, she developed the character of Lena Lowery Sawner, a master educator in Dust Bowl-era Chandler, Oklahoma. As the 2019 Enid Chautauqua in the Schools Scholar, she presented "Big Mama Speaks - A 1921 Tulsa Race Riot Survivor" to over 2,500 students and 300 community members. She has been a presenter for Enid-Emerson Middle School's Multicultural Day for the past three years.

library by both Whites and Blacks. Brown was, like Mrs. Parks, one of the first females noted for supporting equal rights and her dismissal drew the attention of the NAACP.

In 1948 Mrs. Parks accompanied the members of the Youth Division of the Montgomery NAACP branch to see the Freedom Trail exhibit as it passed through town. The exhibit was sponsored by the federal government as a lesson in the development of American democracy. Her action resulted in threatening phone calls for her having dared to introduce Black youth to their civil rights.

In 1955, Mrs. Parks was invited to the Highlander Folk School, a cultural center and social justice training school in rural Tennessee. She went in part to study under persecuted desegregation activist Septima Poinsette Clark and in part to share her own experiences in Montgomery. By the end of the year, Mrs. Parks was largely prepared for the most impactful

*"Memories of our lives, of our works, and our deeds will continue in others"*

move of her life: refusing to give up her seat to a White passenger on a Montgomery bus. Her refusal resulted in her arrest, leading to the Montgomery bus boycott of 1955-56, and in Mrs. Parks's identification as the "Mother of the Modern-Day Civil Rights Movement."

Mrs. Parks's role in the boycott brought her personal hardship. She would endure frequent threats against her life and her family, she and her husband would lose their jobs, and her mother would become ill. But Mrs. Parks's quiet question to a police officer, "Why must you all treat us this way?" was already nudging the American conscience. Her example of courage and dignity inspired others to follow in her footsteps. At the same time, the boycott created a common cause between Mrs. Parks and two of her role models, Coretta Scott King and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Mrs. Parks's activism for social justice did not end with the success of the bus boycott. Over thirty years later, she and a companion, Elaine Eason Steele, founded the Rosa and Raymond Parks Institute for Self-Development. The organization's core program, Pathways to Freedom, was designed to take youth of middle school through high school age on a virtual journey through the struggle for civil rights, from the Underground Railroad into the 1970s.

Steele would sometimes relate how students would approach Mrs. Parks to ask how they too might develop the strength to fight racism and maintain self-respect and dignity. Mrs. Parks's response was "It belongs in you. It's your heart and how you feel about yourself and how you feel about your other human brother and sister."

Mrs. Parks explained her life's direction in her 1992 autobiography: "I want to be remembered as a person who stood up to injustice, who wanted a better world for young people; and most of all I want to be remembered as a person who wanted to be free and wanted others to be free. And my fight will continue as long as people are being oppressed."

Mrs. Rosa Parks's journey toward securing equal opportunity and ensuring the vote for all citizens is an important part of the American story. It is also part of an even larger journey, the universal journey to guarantee that all persons are treated as possessing worth and dignity.





## Bibliography

### Primary:

Parks, R. and Jim Haskins. *Rosa Parks: My Story*. New York: Penguin Putnam, Inc., 1992.

Parks, R. *Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, MI. Accession Number UP000775, Rosa Parks Papers*. Retrieved February 2015. <https://reuther.wayne.edu/node/3524>

Parks, R. L. and Greory J, Reed, *Quiet Strength: The Faith, the Hope, and the Heart of a Woman Who Changed a Nation*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1994.

Parks, R. L. *Library of Congress Collections, Rosa Parks Papers*. Retrieved March 1, 2015. <https://www.loc.gov/collections/rosa-parks-papers/about-this-collection>

### Secondary:

Higginbotham, E. B.. *Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880-1920*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993.

Grillo, Trina. "The World of Coretta King: A Word with Trina Grillo." *New Lady Magazine*, Volume 1, Number 1, 1966.

Hughes, Langston. *Freedom Train by Langston Hughes from Our World*. DOCS Teach, 10/1947. <https://www.docsteach.org/documents/document/freedom-train-langston-hughes-our-world>

Mellen Charron, K. *Freedom's Teacher: The Life of Septima Clark*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2009.

Robbins, L. S. *The Dismissal of Miss Ruth Brown: Civil Rights, Censorship, and the American Library*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2001.

Theoharis, Jeanne. *The Rebellious Life of Mrs. Rosa Parks*. Boston: Beacon Press. 2013.

### Further Recommendations:

Boyle, Kevin. *Arc of Justice: A Saga of Race, Civil Rights and Murder in the Jazz Age*. Holt Paperbacks, 2001.

Du Vernay, Ava, Director. "Selma." 2015. Pathé, Harpo Films. [https://www.amazon.com/Selma-David-Oyelowo/dp/B00SOX4HK8/ref=sr\\_1\\_2](https://www.amazon.com/Selma-David-Oyelowo/dp/B00SOX4HK8/ref=sr_1_2)

Hildreth, Marilyn Luper. *Marilyn Luper Hildreth oral history interview conducted by Joseph Mosnier in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, 2011 May 24*. U.S Civil Rights History Project Collection, Archive of Folk Culture, (AFC 2010/039), American Folklife Center, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., 2011. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2015669111/>.

Jeffries, Hasan Kwame. "Listen Look and Learn: Using Primary Resources to Teach the Freedom Struggle." Teaching Hard History podcasts, Southern Poverty Law Center, Learning for Justice, no date. <https://www.learningfor-justice.org/podcasts/teaching-hard-history/civil-rights-movement/listen-look-and-learn-using-primary-sources-to-teach-the-freedom-struggle> (Podcast and transcript).

Larson, Kate Clifford. *Walk With Me: A Biography of Fannie Lou Hamer*. Oxford University Press, 2021.

Library Of Congress, and Sponsoring Body Library Of Congress. Prints And Photographs Division. *Rosa Parks: Beyond the Bus*. Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, 2015. [www.loc.gov/item/2021689637/](http://www.loc.gov/item/2021689637/). Interview with Ella McCall Haygan, Anita Peek, and Elaine Steele.

London, Martha. *Amazing Young People: Claudette Colvin*. North Star Editions, 2019. Children's, Young Adult.

Ramsey, Calvin Alexander, and Gwen Strauss. *Ruth and the Green Book*. Carolrhoda Books, 2010. Children's.

Robson, Wanda. *Sister to Courage: Stories from the World of Viola Desmond, Canada's Rosa Parks*. Breton Books, 2010.

Sullivan, Patricia. *Lift Every Voice: The NAACP and the Making of the Civil Rights Movement*. The New Press, 2010.

Theoharis, Jeanne. *A More Beautiful and Terrible History: The Uses and Misuses of Civil Rights History*. Beacon Press, 2019.

Williams-Garcia, Rita. *One Crazy Summer*. Quill Tree Books, 2011. Young Adult.



# CLAUDIA "Lady Bird" JOHNSON:

## COURAGE AND GRACE UNDER PRESSURE

by Leslie Goddard





An angry crowd greeted First Lady Claudia “Lady Bird” Johnson on October 7, 1964, as she stepped onstage in Columbia, South Carolina. She was in the midst of a whistle-stop tour of eight Southern states, promoting Lyndon Johnson’s presidential campaign. The crowd, fiercely opposed to the recently passed Civil Rights Act, was determined to prevent her from speaking. Hecklers yelled. Protestors held up signs that read “Black Bird, go home.”

Lady Bird calmly held up her hand. “This is a country of many viewpoints,” she said. “I respect your right to express your own. Now it is my turn to express mine.” As the audience quieted, she calmly delivered a speech expressing her joy in being back in the South and the respect the President of the United States had for the region.

In the world of civil rights activism, Lady Bird Johnson was an unlikely but surprisingly influential ally. Born in the deep South, she understood the seismic changes that Southerners felt as their lives were upturned by far-away politicians. Lady Bird hoped to soothe Southerners’ anger by showing them how Johnson’s agenda would improve their region economically and ease it into the modern world.

Her background gave her a unique understanding of twentieth-century Southern race relations. As a white woman of privilege raised in a small town in east Texas, Claudia Taylor Johnson grew up with African-American maids whose husbands worked for her father and whose children were her playmates (two of them gave her the lifelong nickname “Lady Bird”).

After marrying Lyndon Johnson in 1934, she emerged as a successful businesswoman. Her savvy investments and business acumen made her the first president’s wife to become a millionaire in her own right, even before her husband assumed office. She frequently drove back and forth between Washington D.C. and the Johnsons’ Texas ranch, often accompanied by the family’s cook, Zephyr Wright. It infuriated Lady Bird when hotel keepers denied Wright lodging because she was African American.

After Lyndon Johnson was sworn in as president in 1963, Lady Bird became an energetic and involved First Lady. She transformed the office of First Lady, becoming the first to

have a large staff, complete with a press secretary, and the first to launch a comprehensive program in her own name. Her signature project aimed at protecting natural areas, encouraging the planting of wildflowers, and improving scenic beauty along federally-aided highways, all in the benign name of “beautification.” She also traveled more than 100,000 miles during forty “Discover America” trips to promote interest in America’s National Parks.

Lady Bird Johnson was sitting in the front row, one of the few women present, on July 2, 1964, when Lyndon Johnson signed into law the modern era Civil Rights Act. The Act outlawed segregation in publicly-accessible accommodations, mandating desegregation of public facilities, and ended unequal application of voter registration laws.

The Civil Rights Act was a risky move politically, and many Democrats feared Southerners would flee the party as a bloc.

As expected, Lyndon Johnson’s reputation among Southern Democrats plummeted. During the 1964 presidential election campaign, his aides considered it unsafe for him even to visit the region. Lady Bird courageously stepped in. She and her aides put together a historic railroad trip, dubbed the Lady Bird Special, covering eight Southern states. “I knew the Civil Rights Act was right and I didn’t mind saying so,” she later said. “But I also loved the South and didn’t want it used as the whipping boy of the Democratic party.”

She worked tirelessly on that trip, making speech after speech from the back of the train and encouraging Southerners to vote the Democratic ticket. She gave at least 47 speeches and shook hands with more than a thousand

Democratic leaders. It was the first time a First Lady had campaigned alone, without her spouse.

Her press secretary, Liz Carpenter, wrote that Lady Bird urged her team not to send her to the easy towns: “In 1964, anybody could go to Atlanta and speak out for civil rights and still get out with their hides on. She told us to give her the tough towns.” Conditions on the trip were sometimes perilous. Catcalls and hecklers often greeted her. When Secret Service agents received tips about bomb threats, they sent out decoy engines and bomb-sniffing dogs to protect the train.



**“WHERE FLOWERS BLOOM,  
SO DOES HOPE.”**





## LESLIE GODDARD

Leslie Goddard, Ph.D., is an award-winning scholar and actress who has been portraying great women in history for more than twenty years. Before launching her full-time business as a historical interpreter and lecturer, she worked for more than a decade at Chicago-area history museums. With a calendar that now includes thousands of lectures and performances, Leslie is known for her engaging programs that blend memorable stories with historical insight. Her roster of characters includes Amelia Earhart, Jackie Kennedy, Julia Child, Lady Bird Johnson, Rachel Carson, Lucille Ball, and Georgia O’Keeffe.

Leslie is also the author of three books on Chicago history and appears regularly in the popular press discussing her research on midcentury popular culture and American women’s history. In addition to both a B.A. and an M.A. in theater, Leslie holds an interdisciplinary Ph.D. from Northwestern University, as well as an M.A. in museum studies. Her website is [www.lesliegoddard.info](http://www.lesliegoddard.info).

In her first speech on that trip, Lady Bird told onlookers, “I know that many of you do not agree with the civil rights bill or the president’s support of it. . . .It would be a bottomless tragedy for our country to be racially divided and here I want to say emphatically, this is not a challenge only in the South. It is a national challenge – in the big cities of the North as in the South.”

Observers later credited Lady Bird’s trip with helping garner Southern support for LBJ, who carried several solidly Southern states in the 1964 election. According to one news report, more than one million people heard her message. Thanks to widespread television coverage she elevated dialogue on civil rights during the campaign.

Until recently, chroniclers of Lyndon Johnson’s presidency and its key policies have overlooked her contributions to his administration, due in no small part to her own self-effacing gentility. That is changing as historians have begun reassessing

**“THE CLASH OF IDEAS  
IS THE  
SOUND OF FREEDOM.”**

her legacy. Julia Sweig’s acclaimed 2021 biography *Hidden in Plain Sight* argues that the First Lady flew under the radar as a quiet champion of civil rights and environmental conservation. She might have wielded power quietly, but she shaped the Johnson years in profound ways.

In a broader context, Lyndon Johnson himself is being reassessed less harshly. The Johnson years encompassed the assassinations of John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King Jr., and Robert F. Kennedy, riots in major cities, and the spread of the unpopular Vietnam War. These intense challenges kept Johnson’s progressive agenda of civil rights, voting rights, Medicare and Medicaid from earning him the credit he deserved. However, that is changing. A recent C-SPAN poll ranked him as the nation’s eleventh-greatest president, and he has been applauded in the last decade as second only to Abraham Lincoln in advancing the lives of African Americans.

Through it all, Lady Bird was a calming influence on her husband and a thoughtful observer of the times. Her front-row experiences permit us to see the convulsive era of the Johnson years – and to understand the decisions made – through a very personal viewpoint.

Perhaps the most striking thing to emerge from an exploration of Lady Bird and her influence during these years is her example of courage and grace under pressure. Lady Bird Johnson reminds us that change does not come easily but that the best of us follow our hearts and continue to meet the ongoing challenge.





## Bibliography

### Primary Sources:

Johnson, Lady Bird. *A White House Diary*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970.

Johnson, Lady Bird and Carlton B. Lees. *Wildflowers Across America*. Artabras: 2000.

Johnson, Lady Bird. Speech in Columbia, South Carolina. 7 October 1964. LBJ Library via Soundcloud. <https://soundcloud.com/utaustin/lady-bird-johnson-in-columbia-sc-1964-from-lbj-library>.

Johnson, Lady Bird. Lady Bird Johnson Audio Diary Tapes and Annotated Transcripts: 1963-1969. LBJ Library, Austin, TX. <https://www.lbjlibrary.org/life-and-legacy/lady-bird-johnson/lady-bird-johnson-audio-recordings>.

### Secondary Sources:

Anderson, Kate Brower. *First Women: The Grace and Power of America's Modern First Ladies*. New York: HarperCollins, 2016.

Anthony, Carl Sferazza. *First Ladies: The Saga of the Presidents' Wives and Their Power: Volume I, 1789-1961*. New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1990.

----- *First Ladies: The Saga of the Presidents' Wives and Their Power: Volume II, 1961-1990*. New York: Harper, 1993.

Caroli, Betty Boyd. *Lady Bird and Lyndon: The Hidden Story of a Marriage That Made a President*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2015.

C-SPAN, "Presidential Historians Survey 2021," 30

June 2021, visited 11 November 2022, <https://www.c-span.org/presidentsurvey2021/>

----- *First Ladies: Influence and Image*. Thirty-five-episode series hosted by Susan Swain, Mark Farkas, Producer. 2013-2014. <https://firstladies.c-span.org/>; <https://firstladies.c-span.org/FirstLady/38/Lady-Bird-Johnson.aspx>

Gillette, Michael L. *Lady Bird Johnson: An Oral History (Oxford Oral History Series)*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.

Goodwin Doris Kearns. *Lyndon Johnson and the American Dream*. New York: Harper & Row: 1976.

Gould, Lewis L., Editor. *American First Ladies: Their Lives and Their Legacy*. New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1996.

----- *Lady Bird Johnson: Our Environmental First Lady*. Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1999.

Hindley, Meredith. "Lady Bird Special". *Humanities*. 34(3): May-June 2013. <https://www.neh.gov/humanities/2013/mayjune/feature/lady-bird-special>

Holden, Linda J. "The Lady Bird Special: The Power of a Whistle-Stop Campaign." *White House History*, #45 (Spring 2017).

Hunter, Marjorie. "Public Servant Without Pay." *New York Times*, 15 December 1963.

LBJ Presidential Library. "50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Lady Bird Johnson's Whistle-Stop Tour of the South." 1 October 2014. Visited 19 June 2021. <https://web.archive.org/web/20210410015417/http://www.lbjlibrary.org/>

[press/50th-anniversary-of-lady-bird-johnsons-1964-whistle-stop-tour](https://www.lbjlibrary.org/press/50th-anniversary-of-lady-bird-johnsons-1964-whistle-stop-tour) .

New York Times, "FIRST LADY TO GO WHISTLE-STOPPING: 8-State Swing Across South to Begin Oct. 6." 13 September 1964.

Russell, Jan Jarboe. *Lady Bird: A Biography of Mrs. Johnson*. New York: Scribner: 1999.

Sweig, Julia. *Lady Bird Johnson: Hiding in Plain Sight*. New York: Random House, 2021.

Time Magazine, "The White House: The First Lady Bird." 28 August 1964. Archived from the original on 24 January 2016. <https://content.time.com/time/subscriber/article/0,33009,876083-1,00.html>

Truman, Margaret. *First Ladies: An Intimate Group Portrait of White House Wives*. New York: Random House, 1995.

West, J. B. and Mary Lynn Kotz. *Upstairs at the White House: My Life with the First Ladies*. New York: Penguin, 1973.

### Recommended for Further Reading:

Anderson, Kate Brower. *First Women: The Grace and Power of America's Modern First Ladies*. Harper, 2016

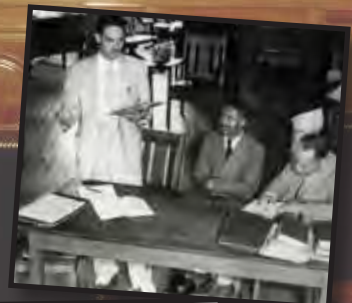
Caroli, Betty Boyd. *Lady Bird and Lyndon: The Hidden Story of a Marriage That Made a President*. Simon & Schuster, 2015.

Sweig, Julia. *Lady Bird Johnson: Hiding in Plain Sight*. Random House, 2021.



# THURGOOD MARSHALL: A LIFE WELL LIVED

*By James Armstead*





Few Americans today have reason to grasp what the American South was like for its Black citizens when Thurgood Marshall was born in 1908. To understand the man, it's necessary to understand the times, and the times were not good for most African Americans.

The Black community did not for the most part participate in the political life of America, particularly in the southern states where Black disenfranchisement was the general rule. It was rigidly enforced by poll taxes, literacy tests, economic requirements, property ownership, and finally by the violence of frequent lynchings when lesser restrictions failed. Terror-

violence was the law of the land to keep the Black population in check, subservient, docile, and unrepresented in the halls of government.

Between 1882 and 1968, 4,743 violent attacks occurred in the United States. The resort to mob rule went almost entirely unprosecuted when

Blacks were the victims. While most of the violence centered in the South, few places were exempt; records show that 40 States saw lynchings during this 86-year period. Marshall was urged during his advanced higher education to seek ways to use the law for social change and justice. His professional life was a response to that urging.

Thurgood Marshall (née Thorogood, as he was named to honor his grandfather) was born the second son of a middle-class family in Baltimore. His father James was a Pullman Porter, his mother Norma was a public school teacher.

Marshall grew up with his parents instilling strong values, demanding hard work, and requiring their sons to seek and appreciate education. At times as he was growing up, young Thurgood was overcome by his boyish eagerness to enjoy life and his famously exaggerated sense of humor. He once misbehaved in high school (playing a prank on a friend) and was assigned by a far-seeing teacher to memorize a section of the United States Constitution. His continued (mis)behavior prompted repeated sessions until he was able to recite the entire document with aplomb, relish, and perhaps the beginnings of some understanding of the profound power held in the words of our Founders. He came to love and appreciate the document and even thought of becoming a lawyer despite his mother's all-consuming ambition for both of her sons to become medical doctors. She was partially successful, as

Aubrey, her older son, proved rather more serious about his pre-med studies.

Young Thurgood was a well-known bon vivant around campus from his first arrival at Lincoln University in Pennsylvania, the oldest college for Black Americans in the United States. He enjoyed a host of extracurricular activities of college men of his age, including dancing, jazz music, and playing cards. He had always been a storyteller and enjoyed an active social life, unlike his more serious brother. During his sophomore year at Lincoln University, he met and befriended a vivacious young University of Pennsylvania coed, Vivian Burey, nicknamed

"Buster." She was a very serious young

woman from a Philadelphia family and shied away from the carefree Marshall. He began to take his studies more seriously; she began to take him more seriously. He soon began to study in earnest, and he ended up graduating with honors. Marshall and Vivian were married

before their respective graduations from Lincoln. They were a close couple during his career; she would tragically die of lung cancer in 1955.

After graduating from Lincoln, Marshall decided to apply to law school at the University of Maryland where he was promptly denied acceptance as "colored applicants" were not permitted. Marshall then applied to the Howard University Law School which conducted an evening program dedicated to working students who needed to support themselves. Marshall studied while he worked as a bartender, a waiter, and a Pullman porter to pay his tuition and living expenses. His strong work ethic and exemplary grades brought him to the attention of a new mentor, Professor Charles Hamilton Huston. Professor Huston was an exacting taskmaster and pushed Marshall relentlessly, helping him to become a *magna cum laude* graduate ready and eager to practice law rather than accept an opportunity to go on to Harvard for a Ph.D.

Marshall hung out his new shingle in private practice but soon received a call from his former law school mentor Charles Hamilton Huston, who had moved on from teaching to lead the NAACP legal team. Once he got that call from New York, his life's work was set: he would seek to make the law the aegis of freedom and sword of justice for oppressed, disenfranchised Negroes suffering from segregation and denial of rights with every fiber of his being.



**"NOW IS THE TIME FOR THE CONSTITUTION  
TO BE APPLIED EQUALLY AND TO ALL  
SECTORS OF THE COUNTRY."**





## JIM ARMSTEAD

Jim Armstead is a familiar face in Oklahoma Chautauqua, having performed two of his 34 characters for us: Ralph Bunche and Thaddeus Dunkley. In between Chautauqua performances he has been a professor of international law and public policy at 19 universities on three continents, served on the Hill as chief of staff to a member of Congress, served as an Army officer and aide to the secretary of the Army, worked for the UN Secretariat, done research at the Rand Corp and practiced law with three federal agencies, prosecuted criminals in Chicago, served as an international election observer for the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and negotiated Treaties for the US, UN, and NATO.

Jim is a graduate of the University of Illinois, earned a law degree (1975) from De Paul University, and earned a Ph.D. (1981) in public policy from Pacific Western University. Jim continues to lecture, publish, and present radio commentary on international affairs and international law.

From 1937 until 1961, Thurgood Marshall led litigation teams defending the falsely accused, expanding the constitutional rights of forlorn citizens abandoned by their country, and helping to create “a more perfect Union.” His most famous case, *Brown v Board of Education of Topeka* (1954), reversed *Plessy v Ferguson* (1896). The *Brown* case overturned the “separate but equal” doctrine of the *Plessy* case, which had distorted the application of rights for Americans for half a century and given legal succor to White supremacists wishing to overcome the emancipation won by the Civil War and the gains made during Reconstruction. The significance of that case cannot be overstated as it made for an entire class of case law that set the tone for the civil rights revolution during the following decades. Marshall’s strategy to begin a campaign for equal protection with education being the first target was brilliant and effective and has changed America.

“STOP TALKING ABOUT HOW FAR WE’VE COME AND TALK ABOUT HOW CLOSE WE ARE”

Marshall traveled widely seeking justice and attacking onerous restrictions of rights supported by state legislation. The struggle for racial equality brought him to Oklahoma to challenge its prevailing statutory restrictions regarding race. In 1948, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Sipuel v Board of Regents of Univ. of Okla* that the state must provide instruction for Blacks equal to that of Whites. Marshall acted as the head NAACP lawyer for this case, which is considered a precursor for *Brown v. Board of Education*.

In 1961 Marshall was appointed a federal judge on the 2nd Circuit in New York and served until appointed solicitor general in the Johnson Administration. In 1967 he was confirmed as associate justice of the United States Supreme Court where he served until 1991, when he stepped down due to ill health.

In his career as an appellate litigator, he tried 32 cases before the Supreme Court, winning 29. As solicitor general Marshall was called to defend the United States 19 times, winning 14 of those cases. Altogether it was an impressive record garnered over a long and enviable career. But he was more attached to the watchword often heard amongst poor, small-town Southern Blacks, when the news that “Thurgood is coming” would be flashed around in hope after a false charge had been issued by a bigoted sheriff.

Marshall is in many ways the man who made America live up to its promise. His was a life well lived.







# CORETTA SCOTT KING:

THE FIRST LADY OF  
THE CIVIL RIGHTS  
MOVEMENT

BY REBECCA  
MARKS-JIMERSON





Coretta Scott King was Dr. Martin Luther King's partner in the fight for justice. Throughout the world, she is as well-known by her own name as her husband is by his own name, but not necessarily for her accomplishments in the years 1954-1968. Though Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was the bold leader who organized, preached, and participated in the various events held in the name of justice and freedom, it was Coretta's support that encouraged his dedication to the cause. Coretta was a fearless partner in the progressive work that would define an era. She was the protector of their family when King's work took him away from the home and their four children. She was a devoted activist committed to social justice and peace.

It was never easy. From an early age, she stood strongly against white violence toward her family in the South, and against discrimination as a music student in the North. Coretta found her voice as a classical singer. In the fall of 1963, she used her velvety voice to render a touching version of the hymn, "A Balm in Gilead," at the funeral of four Black girls murdered in the terrorist bombing of the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama. But she did not become a professional opera singer as she had originally intended. Instead she struggled mightily to speak out as an activist despite the opposition of men who thought she should be seen and not heard. And she never wavered.

In her published memoir *My Life, My Love, My Legacy*, Coretta wrote that when Martin pulled up in his green Chevy one cold Thursday in January 1952, she felt he was a man of substance: the admiration was mutual. As he was driving her home, Martin turned to Coretta and told her, "You have everything I have ever wanted in a wife. There are only four things, and you have them all." What were those things? Character, intelligence, personality, and beauty. Coretta was both taken aback and flattered by his candor—he was in love at first sight, but he was also a man on a mission. Although Coretta was uncertain about committing to marriage because of her independent spirit and plans to continue her career as a performer, she switched her major from performing arts to music education once she was engaged. On June 18, 1953, 16 months after they met, Coretta and Martin were married by Martin Luther King, Sr. (known to the movement as "Daddy" King) on the lawn of Coretta's parental home in Marion, Alabama. One year later, Martin and Coretta moved to Montgomery. King was to be the pastor of the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church. Their 15-year marriage existed against the backdrop of the most active—and, at times, most brutal—years of the Civil Rights Movement.

In a memoir written by Octavia Vivian, *Coretta: The Story of*

*Mrs. Martin Luther King, Jr.*, Coretta recounted a conversation in which she told Martin she wanted to take a more active role in the movement:

During one exchange, he told me, "You see, I am called [by God], and you aren't."

I responded, "I have always felt that I have a call on my life, too. I've been called by God, too, to do something . . ."

On December 1, 1955, Rosa Parks had refused to give up her seat on a segregated bus in Montgomery, Alabama, and was arrested, sparking a bus boycott that would last 381 days. Eight weeks into the 381-day boycott, on January 30, 1956, a terrorist bombed the King home in Montgomery. Coretta was inside with their infant daughter Yolanda but escaped uninjured. Terrified by the violence,

Coretta's father and father-in-law urged the family—or at least her and the baby—to leave. She refused. "I realized how important it was for me to stand with Martin," Her husband told her, "Coretta, you have been a real soldier. You were the only one who stood with me."

Living in Montgomery, the heart of the deep South and the first capital of the Confederacy, she was well acquainted with the lengths to which detractors were willing to go to stop the progressive movement stirring throughout the city's streets. And yet, Coretta, with a steadfast dedication to both her husband and their shared purpose, remained faithful to the cause. As her husband's involvement with civil rights activism

grew, Coretta became the first lady of both the congregation of her husband's church and the movement.

Coretta's musical background informed her work as an advocate for racial justice; she kept music at the forefront of the Civil Rights Movement. On December 5, 1956, she held a benefit concert at the Manhattan Center in New York City to raise money for the Montgomery Improvement Association in support of the bus boycott. The concert, titled "Salute to Montgomery," was held on the first anniversary of the start of the Montgomery bus boycott. Coretta sang classical pieces, spirituals, and freedom songs and told the story of Montgomery, the Civil Rights Movement, and the long history of oppression suffered by various groups throughout history. She performed in a packed house alongside superstar musicians Harry Belafonte and Duke Ellington.

During a 1965 television interview conducted at his home, King was asked if he had educated his wife on matters of activism. "Well, it may have been the other way around," he said. "I think at many points she educated me. When I met her, she was very concerned about all the things we are trying to do now. . . . I wish I could say to satisfy my masculine ego that I led her down this



**"I DIDN'T JUST EMERGE AFTER MARTIN DIED; I WAS ALWAYS THERE AND INVOLVED"**





**REBECCA MARKS JIMERSON**

Rebecca Marks Jimerson is an educator, community engager, cultural storyteller, and performer. She graduated from the University of Oklahoma (B.A.), and attended Oklahoma State University post-graduation (M.S.).

Rebecca is the former chair of Historic Greenwood Chamber of Commerce Black Wall Street, Tulsa Oklahoma, one of the oldest African American chambers of commerce. Rebecca co-wrote the play “Resurrecting Black Wall Street,” based on the 1921 race massacre; it was premiered at the Tulsa Performing Arts Center, February 2019.

Currently, Rebecca is adjunct communications instructor and curriculum developer, Southern Nazarene University, and provides community engagement for the Tulsa County sheriff’s office. She serves on the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Commemoration Society, Tulsa Arts Council, Arts Alliance Tulsa, and the Booker T. Washington Foundation for Excellence.

path, but I must say we went down together, because she was as actively involved when we met as she is now.”

Had she faltered, the trajectory of the bus boycott and the emerging civil-rights movement might have been different. But she stayed on, fielding hundreds of hate calls and helping her husband brave death threats, public condemnation, city officials’ harassment, and dissent among the protesters about how to proceed. When the Atlanta-based Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) African American civil rights organization first met, Coretta gave a speech, standing in for her husband. She could see where the movement was going because she compiled all his speeches. When he was giving a speech, he would always come to her and rehearse it with her. The early days of the movement were planned right there at Coretta’s kitchen table.

Coretta had always envisioned a career as a classical singer. Instead of seeing her dreams completely fade away, she found a way to combine the life she had created with her husband with her passion for music. She devised a series of concerts as a fundraising effort for the SCLC. She

**STRUGGLE IS A NEVER-ENDING PROCESS.  
FREEDOM IS NEVER REALLY WON. YOU EARN IT  
AND WIN IT IN EVERY GENERATION.**

produced the format of the Freedom Concerts, combining poetry, dramatic storytelling, and music to tell the story of the Civil Rights Movement. On November 15, 1964, she mounted the first Freedom Concert at Town Hall in New York City. She went on to give more than thirty Freedom Concerts across the country over the course of the next three years. The proceeds from these concerts were critical to the movement, allowing the SCLC to hire staff, pay travel expenses, and cover protestors’ legal fees.

Coretta wrote in her memoirs, “Women have made it possible for the movement to be a mass movement.” It was a simple fact, but nevertheless an overlooked one. The women of the SCLC saw Coretta and Dr. King as powerful partners. Like Martin, she was strong and came out of the South. She understood the FBI wanted to break them up, but she was fearless and had steel. The late Congressman John Lewis stated in his memoir, *Walking with the Wind*: “Coretta had a sense of movement. You could not have done that without a real sense of movement. She was the power behind the throne.”

Four days after her husband was murdered in Memphis, where he had been protesting on behalf of Black sanitation workers, she flew to Memphis and led a march in his stead. After Dr. King died, Coretta took up his mantle in the fight for civil rights and social justice. Her husband had been working to protect the rights of garbage men and trash collectors so they would have safe working conditions and better pay to take care of their families. Coretta led more than 40,000 people in a silent march with the sanitation workers.

On that long walk to freedom, Coretta sang the songs that lifted Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. up when the cross he carried seemed too heavy to bear. She gave the nation a model of dignity and caring amid grief and became both a leader and a symbol of the movement for peace and justice.





## Bibliography

### Primary:

- King, Coretta and Rev. Dr. Barbara Reynolds. *My Life, My Love, My Legacy*. New York: Henry Holt and Co, 2017.
- King, Coretta Scott. *My Life with Martin Luther King, Jr.* New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1969.
- King, Coretta Scott and Martin Luther King, III. *The Words of Martin Luther King, Jr.* Newmarket Press, 1984
- King, Coretta Scott. *Coretta's Personal Story*. The King Center.

### Secondary:

- Cose, Ellis. *Coretta Scott King, 1927-2006: "The First Lady of the Movement."* Newsweek, February 12, 2006. <https://www.newsweek.com/coretta-scott-king-1927-2006-first-lady-movement-112961>
- Ebony. "Coretta King: in her Husband's Footsteps." September 1968.
- Hampton, Henry, and Steve Fayer. *Voices of Freedom: An Oral History of the Civil Rights Movement from the 1950s Through the 1980s*. New York: Bantam Books, 1990.
- Life. "How Many Men Must Die?" April 19, 1968.
- Lisker, David. *1961 Freedom Riders 60<sup>th</sup> Reunion*. Freedom Riders Foundation, 2001. <https://www.freedomridersfoundation.org/about-freedom-riders.html>
- Lumet, Sidney and Joseph L. Mankiewicz. "King: A Filmed Record ... Montgomery to Memphis." 1970. <https://www.amazon.com/King-Filmed-Record-Montgomery-Memphis/dp/B0B8M5QW3Z>
- Medearis, Angela. *Dare to Dream: Coretta Scott King and the Civil Rights Move-*

*ment*. Lodestar Books, 1994

- New York Amsterdam News, The. "Coretta King: Remarkable Woman." April 13, 1968.
- Vivian, Octavia. *Coretta: The Story of Mrs. Martin Luther King, Jr.* Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1970.
- Wiegiers, Mary. "Coretta King Stresses Women Power," The Washington Post and Times Herald, June 20, 1968.

### Further Recommendations:

- A&E Networks Television. "Coretta Scott King Biography." Biography.com, 27 Feb. 2018, [www.biography.com/people/coretta-scott-king-9542067](http://www.biography.com/people/coretta-scott-king-9542067)
- Garrow, David. *Bearing the Cross: Martin Luther King Jr., and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference*. William Morrow & Co., 1986.
- Lee, Spike.. "4 Little Girls." 1997. New York: HBO Home Video <https://www.hbo.com/movies/4-little-girls>
- Leventhal, Willy S. *The Children Coming On: A Retrospective of the Montgomery Bus Boycott*. Black Belt Press, 1998.
- Lewis, John. *Walking with the Wind: A Memoir of the Movement*. Mariner Books. 1999.
- Olson, Lynn. *Freedom's Daughters: The Unsung Heroines of the Civil Rights Movement from 1830 to 1970*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001.
- Williams, Juan. *Eyes on the Prize: America's Civil Rights Years, 1954-1965*. New York: Viking, 1987.





*PRESENTED BY 2024 OKLAHOMA CHAUTAUQUA*