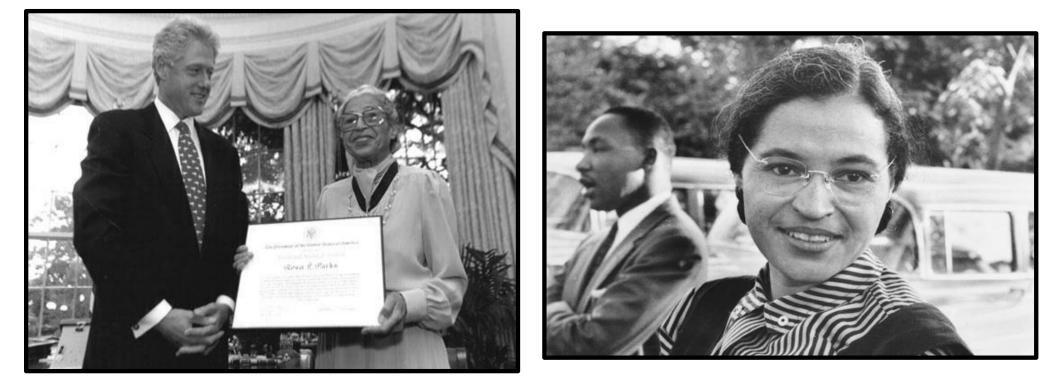


Rosa Parks





Rosa Parks



In Tuskegee, Alabama, Rosa Parks was born on February 4, 1913. Her full name was Rosa Louise McCauley. Her mother was a teacher and her father was a carpenter. Rosa lived with her mother and her younger brother on her grandparent's farm. She attended the school where her mother taught, along with other black children. After the early grades, Rosa wanted to get her high school diploma, but she had to leave school to care for her sick mother.

Rosa later married Raymond Parks in 1932. He was a barber and she worked part time jobs in Montgomery, Alabama where she rode the bus to work. She was determined to go back to school to earn her diploma, something she would later be very proud of. During her life, Rosa experienced segregation and racism. She could only visit schools, churches and stores for black people. There were different drinking fountains and different elevators. She often saw signs that said, "For Colored Only" or "For Whites Only."

Even the bus that Rosa rode to work had a section at the back where black people had to sit. If there were seats available at the front of the bus, and the back was full, she had to stand rather than take one of those seats. Rosa thought the segregation rules in the south were unfair and she resolved to do something.

She wanted to take a stand and show that all people should be treated the same.

On December I, 1955 Rosa rode the bus home after a long day at work. She sat down in her seat in the back. Once all the seats had filled, a white man asked Rosa to give up her seat for him. She bravely refused and stayed seated even when the bus driver threatened to call the police. When officers showed up, Rosa was arrested. Later she said, "Each person must live their life as a model for others."

Several black leaders, including Martin Luther King Jr., heard about this event and decided to boycott the city buses. This was difficult for many people because it was the transportation they had always used to get to work. Rosa and others defended their rights by participating in the Montgomery Bus Boycott, which lasted for just over one year.



Congressional Gold Medal

The laws were eventually changed, but Rosa's life wasn't much easier. She was threatened so many times that in 1957 she and her husband decided to move to Detroit, Michigan. Rosa wrote an autobiography about her experiences called, *Rosa Parks: My Story.* Though Rosa passed away on October 24, 2005, she continues to be remembered and recognized for her courage. She was awarded both the Congressional Gold Medal and the Presidential Medal of Freedom.





Name

