

## **Rosa Parks (1913-2005): A Woman With Moxie**

By Alexandra Timbas

In December 1955, Rosa Parks made headlines when she refused to give up her seat on a Montgomery, Alabama bus to a white man. In addition to being arrested for violating the segregation laws, convicted of the same, and ordered to pay a fine, Mrs. Parks' actions that day started something far greater. Her refusal to adhere to the vastly unfair segregation laws started the legendary bus boycott in Montgomery, one of the most important events at the start of the civil rights movement in the United States in the 1950s and the 1960s. Rosa Parks lived her life with moxie, and as a result, impacted the world.

“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.” --Rosa Parks.

The soft-spoken and eloquent Parks was long hailed as the “mother of the civil rights movement”. Born February 4, 1913 in Tuskegee, Alabama, Mrs. Parks was the daughter of James McCauley, a carpenter, and Leona McCauley, a teacher. She actively worked for the voter registration movement and briefly with the NAACP as a secretary, but on that fateful day in 1955, she was returning home from work as a seamstress at a department store. Not intending to become a figurehead for the civil rights movement in any way, Parks simply was tired from a long day at work, and even more tired of being treated like a second-class citizen in her own country. Her arrest, but more so her demeanor, have inspired millions of people to stand up for themselves and for equality.

“As long as there is unemployment, war, crime and all things that go to the infliction of man's inhumanity to man, regardless -- there is much to be done, and people need to work together.” --Rosa Parks.

Later in her life Parks worked in the office of Congressman John Conyers, Jr. in Detroit. She and her husband, Raymond Parks, remained active in the NAACP. After Raymond's death in 1987, Rosa established the Rosa and Raymond Parks Institute for Self-Development to provide guidance for young African-Americans. She also remained active in civil rights, publicly speaking whenever she could.

Rosa Parks exemplifies a strong woman who lived her life with moxie. Smart, well-spoken, tough, and caring, Parks lived to help others with a definite self-awareness that made others take notice. Her motto: Perseverance, the most important quality a woman with moxie should have in order to be successful but also respected and well-regarded. On Monday, October 24, 2005, Rosa Parks died in her home in Michigan at the age of 92. LifeMoxie! salutes Rosa Parks, 1913-2005, a true role model for all women..

Resources We Used:

“Civil Rights Icon Rosa Parks dies at 92”. CNN.com. 25 October 2005.  
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<<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/10/25/national/25parks.html?ei=5087&en=4b6bd4603f35dfef&ex=1145851200&examp=GGGNrosaparks&pagewanted=print>>.

“Spotlight on Mrs. Rosa Parks, Mother of the Civil Rights Movement”. Girl Power!  
<<http://www.girlpower.gov/girlarea/gpguests/RosaParks.htm>>.