

Unmatched Legacy

continued ▲ from Front

blacks across the nation. After she died Monday at age 92, Parks was remembered as a quiet woman of steely resolve, whose simple act helped spark the biggest movement for social change in American history. "But that was 50 years ago," said Bruce Gordon, president of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. "A lot has changed in 50 years."

And now with the median age of African-Americans at 30, according to the Census Bureau, more than half of the nation's black community was born after the end of legally sanctioned racial discrimination. Parents who were active in the movement say they sense a disconnect when speaking with their children. "I remember my son once said

to me, 'Why did you sit in the back of the bus? Why didn't you just go up front?' I said 'I didn't want to get killed,'" said Earl G. Graves Sr., 70, publisher of Black Enterprise Magazine. "He looked at me and blinked."

"Young people have to be re-ignited," he added. Said Gordon: "It ought to renew in people the recognition that individual actions make a difference."

Lewis lamented that, in the last three weeks, several women civil rights pioneers have died: C. Delores Tucker, the first black woman to be Pennsylvania's secretary of state; Constance Baker Motley, the first black and the first woman to serve as a federal judge in the southern district of New York; and Vivian Malone, who defied Alabama Gov. George Wallace as one of the first black

students to enroll at the University of Alabama in 1963. "And now Rosa Parks," he said. "It's so important for people to tell their stories over and over again." Johnson, who teaches black history to teenagers in the Washington, D.C. area, agreed. "We use history as our guide to help young people make better choices and better decisions," she said.

Parks Stood with Courage, Dignity

When Rosa Parks died Monday at the age of 92, the nation looked back with great fondness at her legacy:

"Rosa Parks was a woman of great courage, grace and dignity. Her refusal to be treated as a second class citizen on a Montgomery bus in 1955 struck a blow to racial segregation and sparked a movement that broke the back of Jim Crow. ... She was an inspiration to me and to all who work for the day when we will be one America. May God bless her soul and may she rest in peace." — **Former President Clinton.**

"She must be looked upon as not just the mother of the modern civil rights movement; she must be looked upon as one of the mothers of the New America, of the New South." — **Rep. John Lewis, D-Ga.**

"Rosa Parks has shown the awesome power of right over might in history's long journey for peace and freedom." — **Rev. Jesse Jackson.**

"Fifty years ago in Montgomery, Ala., this humble seamstress stood up to injustice by refusing a bus driver's order that she give up her seat for a white man. Her show of defiance was an act of personal courage that moved millions, including a young preacher named Martin Luther King." — **President George Bush.**

She loved people with a passion, and when she took that seat on that bus that day, she took a seat for all of us." — **Clara Luper, a retired teacher who led a group of teenagers in a sit-in at a downtown Oklahoma City drug store counter in 1958.**

"I remember her as an almost saint-like person. And I use that term with care. She was very humble, she was soft-spoken, but inside she had a determination that was quite fierce."



Rosa Parks smiles during a ceremony where she received the Congressional Medal of Freedom in a Nov. 28, 1999 photo. (AP photo)



Rosa Parks is fingerprinted by Dep. Sheriff D.H. Lackey in Montgomery, Ala., on Feb. 22, 1956, two months after refusing to give up her seat on a bus for a white passenger on Dec. 1, 1955. (AP photo)

"I fondly remember presenting her with the Congressional Gold Medal of Honor in June of 1999 in the United States Capital Rotunda. At the age of 86, she stood to accept the medal

and sometimes steadied herself on my arm. Rosa Parks said that her legacy of quiet strength was passing to the youth of this nation." — **U.S. House Speaker Dennis Hastert.**

"I truly believe that there's a little bit of Rosa Parks in all Americans who have the courage to say enough is enough and stand up for what they believe in. She did such a small thing, but it was so courageous for her as a humble person to do." — **Rep. Charles Rangel, D-N.Y.**



Rosa Parks in a 1950s era bus in 1995, four decades after her act of civil disobedience. (AP photo)

"The nation lost a courageous woman and a true American hero. A half century ago, Rosa Parks stood up not only for herself, but for generations upon generations of Americans. Her quiet fight for equality sounded the bells of freedom for millions." — **Sen. Edward Kennedy, D-Mass.**

"I think Rosa Parks was truly a historic figure who singularly on December 1, 1955, tore down the walls of American segregation and apartheid. One of the highlights of my life was meeting and getting to know her ... a gentle woman whose single act changed the most powerful nation in the world." — **Rev. Al Sharpton.**



A Montgomery, Ala. Sheriff's Department booking photo of Rosa Parks taken on Feb. 22, 1956.

— **Rep. John Conyers, D-Mich.**

"In her own simple way, Rosa Parks changed the history of our nation. She forced us to recognize the dignity of every person. She was a prophet — a common instrument of God inviting us and challenging us to a new vision of solidarity, equality and justice. We were blessed to have her as citizen of Detroit." — **Cardinal Adam Maida, Archbishop of Detroit.**

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