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MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.
and ROSA PARKS *special edition*

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Twin Pillars for Civil Rights



Bus boycott fused MLK to Rosa Parks

The Martin Luther King Jr. holiday and the recent death of Rosa Parks has renewed interest in two pillars in America's pursuit of justice.

While Parks is remembered for helping start the modern civil rights movement by refusing to give up her bus seat to a white man on Dec. 1, 1955, it took Rev. King and some 40,000 blacks in Montgomery to back her with their own defiance.

Led by the Montgomery Improvement Association and King, its president, people used car pools and church vehicles during a yearlong boycott of the city's segregated buses. The boycott ended when the U.S. Supreme Court ruled the segregation was unconstitutional.

Parks died Oct. 24 at the age of 92. King was assassinated April 4, 1968.

◀ Rosa Parks in 1995, still showing the inner strength and positive force of personality that motivated her in standing up to oppression.



Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in 1955.

Rosa Parks, the Spark that Started the Civil Rights Fire

Rosa Parks did not intend to get arrested on the day she was told to give up her seat for a white passenger.

In fact, Parks was properly seated because there were no seats available in the black section of the bus. According to the law, the bus driver was

out of bounds for asking her to give up her seat to a male passenger.

"The back of the bus was all filled up with black people already," Parks said.

This was the last straw for Parks. Her illegal arrest was also the last straw for the black community in

Montgomery.

Bus segregation in Montgomery was a long-standing point of contention for blacks, not only because they were forced to sit at the back, but because they also had to pay their fare, then exit the front door of

the bus and reboard through the back door. Periodically the driver would pull away before the black passenger could re-enter the bus.

The segregation on buses, as in schools and elsewhere in the south, not only separated the races, but created a privi-

leged position for whites. This could not be tolerated indefinitely.

The momentum for change only required the bravery of a few ordinary people like Parks to build into the powerful civil rights movement that forever changed American politics.



These images provided by the National Archives showing Rosa Parks and her fingerprint sheet from her 1955 arrest is part of an exhibit "Mother of the Civil Rights Movement" commemorating the 50th anniversary of the arrest of Parks.

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Ending Homelessness
Strides taken towards housing equity

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Dr. King's Unfulfilled Dreams
Pastor sees wide gaps between haves and have-nots

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Dr. King's 'Beloved Community'
Local leaders see progress

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