

LAW & JUSTICE

Ship Christened USNS Medgar Evers

Navy honors slain NAACP activist

BY DEREK TURNER

In an honor bestowed on only a handful of individuals, the Navy selected NAACP civil and voting rights icon Medgar Evers as the namesake of their newest ship.

Christened in San Diego, Calif. on Nov. 12 by his widow Myrlie Evers-Williams, the USNS Medgar Evers (T-AKE 13) will serve as a supply ship for the Navy.

"I am just so honored for Medgar and all of the other people who gave their lives in the civil rights movement, particularly those in Mississippi. In my humble estimation, very few of them have received rightful acknowledgment of their contributions," remarked Evers-Williams. "He was a man who did believe in this country, and he believed in his people. He wanted things to be just and fair, and he was willing to work for that."

Evers, an Army veteran, was born and raised in Mississippi, where, after completing his military service in 1946, he returned to earn his degree from Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College (now Alcorn State University). After graduation, he began working on behalf of the NAACP in the fight to end segregation. In 1954, Evers became the first NAACP state field secretary in Mississippi.

As field secretary, Evers organized boycotts and demonstrations to bring attention to the pervasive discrimination and urge an end to racial injustice. He also led the investigation into the murder of Emmitt Till, who, at the age of 14, was killed for talking to a white woman.

Evers may be best remembered for his fight to secure voting rights for all Americans. He helped lead the charge for voting rights in Mississippi, organizing voter registration efforts across the state.

After returning from an NAACP meeting on June 12, 1963, he was assassinated outside his home by



Medgar Evers

a member of the White Citizens' Council. Just two months before his murder, Evers anticipated that his work for civil rights would bring about his demise, when he said, "I expect to be shot anytime I step out of my car... if I die, it will be in a good cause."

Evers' murder served as one of the catalysts for President John F. Kennedy to request that Congress create a national civil rights bill.

"This is a truly special occasion," said NAACP president and CEO Benjamin Todd Jealous. "Medgar Evers has been an inspiration to so many in the civil rights community and across the country. This honor by our Navy is befitting of his legacy."



The U.S. Navy's newest supply ship, the USNS Medgar Evers, sits docked after its christening last month in San Diego. Myrlie Evers-Williams, widow of African-American activist Medgar Evers, christened the ship. (AP Photo)

Lloyd Center DMV to Close

The limited service DMV office at the Lloyd Center Mall will close its doors permanently with the New Year.

The Oregon Department of Transportation said the Jan. 13 closure will save approximately \$275,000 in the next two-year state budget cycle in rent, utilities and maintenance. Three staff members will be reassigned to two other DMV offices.

In the 80s, DMV launched several limited-service offices. Since

then, however, the ways people do business with DMVs have changed, catalyzing both businesses and government agencies to look for ways to streamline services and become more efficient.

"Because there are other DMV offices within a few miles from the Lloyd Center, we believe there is a more cost-effective way to provide services in the metro area," DMV Administrator Tom McClellan said.

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