



Profile: Rosa Parks
Pioneer of Civil Rights

[Back to Rosa Parks Profile](#)

Rosa Parks, the "mother of the civil rights movement" was one of the most important citizens of the 20th century. Mrs. Parks was a seamstress in Montgomery, Alabama when, in December of 1955, she refused to give up her seat on a city bus to a white passenger. The bus driver had her arrested. She was tried and convicted of violating a local ordinance.

Her act sparked a citywide boycott of the bus system by blacks that lasted more than a year. The boycott raised an unknown clergyman named Martin Luther King, Jr., to national prominence and resulted in the U.S. Supreme Court decision outlawing segregation on city buses. Over the next four decades, she helped make her fellow Americans aware of the history of the civil rights struggle. This pioneer in the struggle for racial equality was the recipient of innumerable honors, including the Martin Luther King Jr. Nonviolent Peace Prize and the Presidential Medal of Freedom. Her example remains an inspiration to freedom-loving people everywhere.

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