



Rosa Louise Parks, an African American, after her day of work as a seamstress at a local department store, boarded a city bus and refused to give up her bus seat to a white man. Her subsequent arrest occurred December 1, 1955. Today, historians mark this date as the beginning of the modern-day Civil Rights Movement in the United States.

Rosa McCauley was born on February 4, 1913, in Tuskegee, Alabama. Although, December 1<sup>st</sup> is the day for National Celebration of the Civil Rights Movement, some states remember Rosa Parks on her birthday. Rosa Parks day is observed to honor the civil rights in the USA and to pay a tribute to the activist Rosa.

In 1932, Rosa married Raymond Parks and with his encouragement earned a high school diploma. The couple was active in the Montgomery Chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). While working as a seamstress, Mrs. Parks served as chapter secretary and, for a time, as advisor to the NAACP Youth Council. Denied the right to vote on at least two occasions because of her race, Rosa Parks also worked with the Voters League in preparing blacks to register.

On the evening of December 1, 1955, Rosa Parks was arrested for disobeying an Alabama law requiring black passengers to relinquish seats to white passengers when the bus was full. Blacks also were required to sit at the back of the bus. Her arrest sparked a 381-day boycott of the Montgomery bus system and led to a 1956 Supreme Court decision banning segregation on public transportation.

Parks' act of defiance and the Montgomery bus boycott became important symbols of the movement. She became an international icon of resistance to racial segregation. She organized and collaborated with civil rights leaders, including Martin Luther King Jr.. At the time, Parks was employed as a seamstress at a local department store and was secretary of the Montgomery chapter of the NAACP. She had recently attended the Highlander Folk School, a Tennessee center for training activists for workers' rights and racial equality. Although widely honored in later years, she also suffered for her act; she was fired from her job, and received death threats for years afterwards. Shortly after the boycott, she moved to Detroit, where she briefly found similar work. From 1965 to 1988, she served as secretary and receptionist to John Conyers, an African-American US Representative. She was also active in the Black Power movement and the support of political prisoners in the US.



After retirement, Parks wrote her autobiography and continued to insist that there was more work to be done in the struggle for justice. Parks received national recognition, including the NAACP's 1979 Spingarn Medal, the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the Congressional Gold Medal, and a posthumous statue in the United States Capitol's National Statuary Hall. Upon her death in 2005, she was the first woman to lie in honor in the Capitol Rotunda.