




ROSA LOUISE PARKS
WAS NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED AS THE "MOTHER OF THE MODERN DAY CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT" IN AMERICA. HER REFUSAL TO SURRENDER HER SEAT TO A WHITE PASSENGER ON A MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA BUS, DECEMBER 1, 1955, TRIGGERED A WAVE OF PROTEST DECEMBER 5, 1955 THAT REVERBERATED THROUGHOUT THE UNITED STATES. HER QUIET COURAGEOUS ACT CHANGED AMERICA, ITS VIEW OF BLACK PEOPLE AND REDIRECTED THE COURSE OF HISTORY.

A stylized, black and white illustration of Frederick Douglass standing, wearing a long coat and a hat. The statue is mounted on a brick wall with a green leafy pattern in the background.

FREDRICK DOUGLAS

A stylized, black and white illustration of Rosa Parks standing, wearing a light-colored dress and a dark belt. The statue is mounted on a brick wall with a green leafy pattern in the background.

ROSA PARKS

A stylized, black and white illustration of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. standing, wearing a long coat and a hat. The statue is mounted on a brick wall with a green leafy pattern in the background.

DR. MARTIN
LUTHER KING, JR.

AFTER THE ABOLITION OF SLAVERY AMENDMENTS WERE PASSED THAT ABOLISHED SLAVERY, PROVIDED CITIZENSHIP, AND GUARANTEED THE RIGHT TO VOTE. IN SPITE OF THESE AMENDMENTS THE SUPREME COURT HANDED DOWN A SERIES OF DECISIONS THAT VIRTUALLY NULLIFIED THE WORK OF CONGRESS DURING RECONSTRUCTION. REGARDED BY MANY AS SECOND-CLASS CITIZENS, BLACKS WERE SEPARATED FROM WHITES IN TRANSPORTATION, PUBLIC ACCOMMODATIONS, RECREATIONAL FACILITIES, PRISONS, ARMED FORCES, AND SCHOOLS IN BOTH NORTH AND SOUTH.





ROSA PARKS HAS FINALLY HAD ENOUGH OF BEING TREATED AS A SECOND-CLASS CITIZEN. AS AN AFRICAN AMERICAN, SHE HAS PUT UP WITH TERRIBLE TREATMENT ON CITY BUSES, AS WELL AS IN STORES, RESTAURANTS, MOVIE THEATERS, AND OTHER PLACES FOR YEARS. SHE IS TIRED OF IT. IN FACT, SHE REMEMBERS THAT TWELVE YEARS EARLIER THIS VERY SAME BUS DRIVER MADE HER GET OFF THE BUS AND ENTER THE BUS THROUGH THE REAR DOOR.

THE BUS DRIVER TELLS THE BLACK FOLKS TO GIVE THEIR SEATS TO WHITE PASSENGERS. ROSA PARKS DECIDES NOT TO TAKE IT ANYMORE. SHE SIMPLY SAYS NO, AND REFUSES TO GET UP FROM HER SEAT.

THE ANGRY BUS DRIVER MARCHES OVER TO MRS. PARKS AND DEMANDS THAT SHE MOVE TO THE BACK OF THE BUS. WHEN SHE DOESN'T, HE LEAVES THE BUS AND RETURNS WITH A POLICEMAN. MRS. PARKS IS PROMPTLY ARRESTED FOR VIOLATING SEGREGATION LAWS.





AND WE ARE NOT WRONG,
WE ARE NOT WRONG IN
WHAT WE ARE DOING. IF
WE ARE WRONG, THE SU-
PREME COURT OF THIS
NATION IS WRONG. IF WE
ARE WRONG, THE CONSTI-
TUTION OF THE UNITED
STATES IS WRONG. IF WE
ARE WRONG, GOD AL-
MIGHTY IS WRONG.
IF WE ARE WRONG, JUSTI-
TICE IS A LIE: LOVE HAS
NO MEANING. AND WE
ARE DETERMINED HERE IN
MONTGOMERY TO WORK
AND FIGHT UNTIL JUSTICE
RUNS DOWN LIKE WATER
AND RIGHTEOUSNESS LIKE
A MIGHTY STREAM.
FROM MLK'S SPEECH IN
MONTGOMERY, 1955

A MEETING WAS CALLED
AND AN OVERFLOWING
CROWD CAME TO THE
CHURCH TO HEAR HIS
WORDS. DR. KING TOLD
THE CROWD THAT THE
ONLY WAY THEY COULD
FIGHT BACK WOULD BE
TO BOYCOTT THE BUS
COMPANY.

ON THE MORNING OF
DEC. 5, THE AFRICAN-
AMERICANS OF THE CITY
REFUSED TO USE THE
BUSES. MOST WALKED,
THOSE FEW WITH CARS
ARRANGED RIDES FOR
FRIENDS AND STRANG-
ERS, SOME EVEN RODE
MULES. ONLY A SMALL
NUMBER OF AFRICAN-
AMERICANS RODE THE
BUS THAT DAY.





THE BOYCOTT CONTINUED FOR OVER A YEAR. ON NOVEMBER 13, 1956 THE SUPREME COURT DECLARED THAT ALABAMA'S STATE AND LOCAL LAWS REQUIRING SEGREGATION ON BUSES ILLEGAL. ON DECEMBER 20TH FEDERAL INJUNCTIONS FORCED ALL THE BUS COMPANYS TO FOLLOW THE COURT'S RULING.

THE FOLLOWING MORNING, DECEMBER 21, 1956, ROSA PARKS TOOK A FRONT SEAT ON A PUBLIC BUS. THE BOYCOTT WAS A SUCCESS.

I HAVE A DREAM THAT ONE DAY THIS NATION WILL RISE UP AND LIVE OUT THE TRUE MEANING OF ITS CREED: "WE HOLD THESE TRUTHS TO BE SELF-EVIDENT, THAT ALL MEN ARE CREATED EQUAL."

I HAVE A DREAM THAT ONE DAY ON THE RED HILLS OF GEORGIA THE SONS OF FORMER SLAVES AND THE SONS OF FORMER SLAVE OWNERS WILL BE ABLE TO SIT DOWN TOGETHER AT THE TABLE OF BROTHERHOOD.

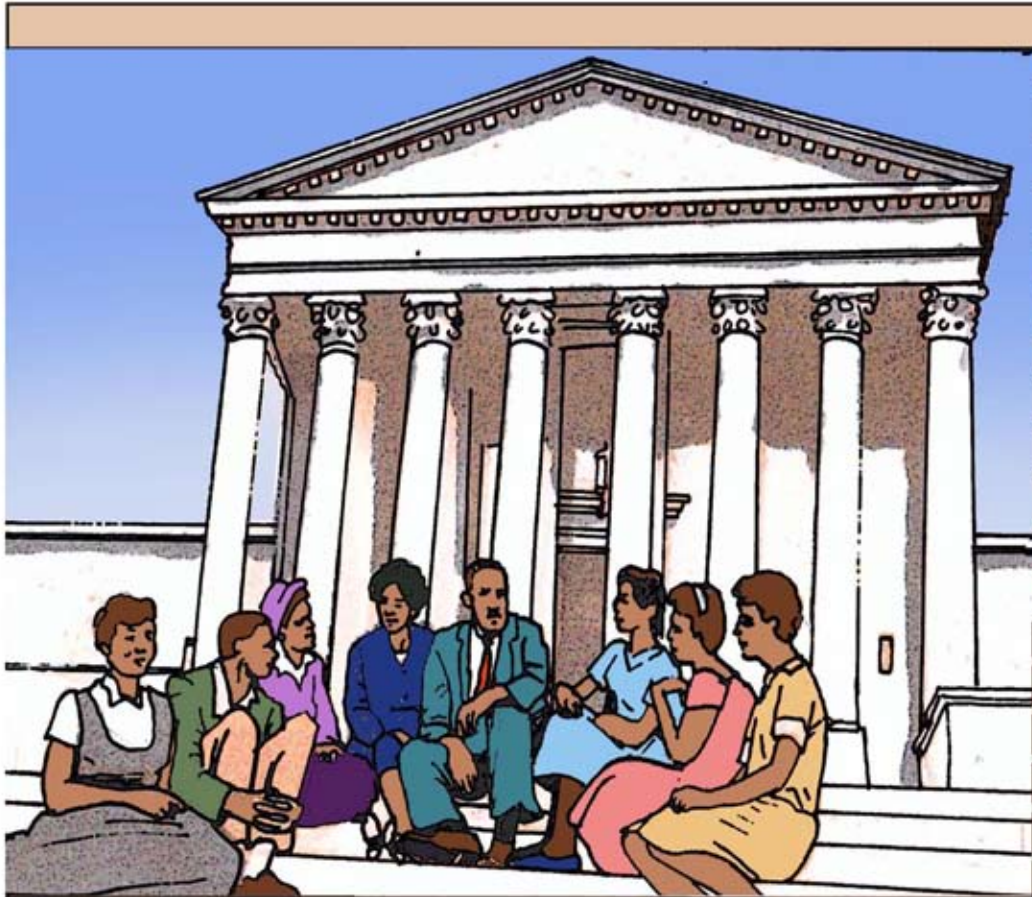
I HAVE A DREAM THAT MY FOUR LITTLE CHILDREN WILL ONE DAY LIVE IN A NATION WHERE THEY WILL NOT BE JUDGED BY THE COLOR OF THEIR SKIN BUT BY THE CONTENT OF THEIR CHARACTER.

FROM MLK'S SPEECH AT THE MARCH ON WASHINGTON, D.C.

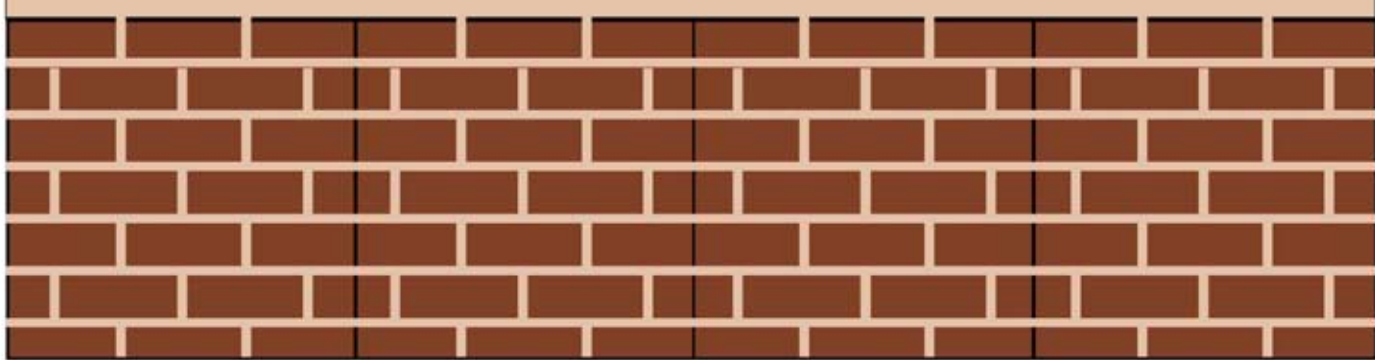


AFTER DECADES OF SILENTLY ENDURING 2ND-CLASS CITIZENSHIP, BLACKS IN THE LATE 1940S AND EARLY 1950S BEGAN TO CHALLENGE THE INJUSTICES THEY FACED ON A DAILY BASIS. THE EARLIEST SCHOOL SEGREGATION CASES DEMANDED THAT THE SUPREME COURT RE-EXAMINE THE "SEPARATE BUT EQUAL" DOCTRINE OF PLESSY V. FERGUSON. ALTHOUGH SEGREGATION IN PUBLIC FACILITIES OTHER THAN SCHOOLS WAS RARELY QUESTIONED DURING THIS TIME PERIOD, BLACKS WERE SLOWLY GAINING THE RESOLVE TO STAND UP TO JIM-CROW.





IN 1954, THE SUPREME COURT STRUCK DOWN THE "SEPARATE BUT EQUAL" DOCTRINE IN ITS BROWN V. BOARD OF EDUCATION DECISION, WHICH RULED THAT SEPARATE EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES WERE INHERENTLY UNEQUAL. SOME READILY EMBRACED INTEGRATION AND OTHERS SUBMITTED ONLY AFTER FURTHER PRODDING FROM THE COURTS. DESPITE ITS PROBLEMS, INTEGRATION OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF AMERICA WAS AN IMPORTANT STEP TOWARDS EQUALITY AMONG ALL THE RACES.





CHILDREN ARE MY PASSION AND I BELIEVE THAT EVERYONE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THEIR LIVES. OUR YOUNG PEOPLE ARE CURIOUS, EAGER TO LEARN, AND NEED THE GUIDANCE OF MENTORS WHO CARE ABOUT THEIR DEVELOPMENT. AFTER ALL, THEY ARE OUR FUTURE AND WE MUST SOMEDAY DEPEND ON THEIR LEADERSHIP. WE HOPE TO ENCOURAGE AN ENVIRONMENT OF DIGNITY, RESPONSIBILITY, AND A COMMITMENT TO TREAT OTHERS AS WE WISH TO BE TREATED.
--ROSA PARKS,

