

Unsung Heroes of the Civil Rights Movement



During the Civil Rights Movement (1954 – 1968), hundreds of thousands of people joined prominent civil rights leaders like Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and John Lewis to protest against racial discrimination, injustice, violence, inequality, racial segregation, and Jim Crow Laws.

From boycotts, sit-ins, demonstrations, public admonishments, personal and social resistance, many nameless people are responsible for helping to reform unjust American institutions. Their courageous and selfless actions put pressure on leaders to pass the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which banned discrimination in public facilities including private companies offering services like lunch counters, hotels, medical treatment, and theaters. The ACT also provided for the integration of schools; it made it illegal for employers to discriminate against people based on their color, race, religion, or national origin.

Below is a list of people whose names you might not find in your textbook. Some might consider them “unsung heroes”. Each of you will be conducting research and writing a short biography on one person for your PBL assignment. More details about what to do and how are forthcoming.

1. Ralph David Abernathy, Sr. & Juanita Abernathy
2. Ella Jo Baker
3. Maude Ballou
4. Charlotta Bass
5. Harry Belafonte
6. James Bevel
7. Ruby Bridges
8. Nannie Helen Burroughs
9. Septima Ponsette Clark
10. John Henrik Clarke
11. Xernona Clayton
12. Claudette Colvin
13. Dorothy Cotton
14. Gloria Richardson Dandridge
15. Ruby Dee & Ossie Davis
16. Medgar Evers
17. Walter Fauntroy
18. *Aretha Franklin
19. Georgia Gilmore
20. Dick Gregory
21. Fannie Lou Hamer
22. Fred Hampton
23. Dorothy Height
24. Norris Herndon
25. Jesse Hill
26. Donald L. Hollowell
27. Lena Horne
28. Mahalia Jackson
29. Sullivan & Richie Jackson
30. Vernon Johns (April 22, 1892 – June 11, 1965)
31. Vernon Jones
32. Alfred Daniel King
33. Coretta Scott King
34. John Lewis
35. Little Rock Nine
36. Joseph & Evelyn Lowery
37. Benjamin E. Mays
38. James Meredith
39. Mamie Till Mobley
40. Robert (Bob) Parris Moses

41. Otis Moss, Jr.
42. Rev. Dr. Pauli Murray
43. Diane Nash
44. James Orange
45. Gordon Parks
46. Edwin Pratt
47. A. Philip Randolph
48. Jackie Robinson
49. Bayard Rustin
50. David Satcher, MD
51. Fred Shuttlesworth
52. **Mary Church Terrell
53. Kwame Ture
54. Albert Turner
55. C. T. Vivian
56. Wyatt Tee Walker
57. Hosea Williams
58. Andrew Young
59. Whitney M. Young, Jr.

**Precedes the Civil Rights Movement