

ROSA PARKS

The Mother of the Civil Rights Movement



On Dec. 1, 1955, Rosa Parks, a 42-year-old seamstress and secretary of the Montgomery chapter of the NAACP, refused to give up her seat to a white passenger on a segregated bus in Montgomery, Ala. Parks was arrested for this quiet act of peaceful defiance that became a catalyst for the Civil Rights Movement.

Recalling this seminal moment, Parks later said, “People always say that I didn’t give up my seat because I was tired, but that isn’t true. I was not tired physically ... No, the only tired I was, was tired of giving in.” The Montgomery Bus Boycott, organized by the Montgomery Improvement Association and led by a young pastor named Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., demonstrated the power of sustained, peaceful protest. African Americans, who comprised 75 percent of Montgomery’s bus ridership,

walked, carpooled and organized alternative transportation for 381 days, nearly bankrupting the city transit system.

On Nov. 13, 1956, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that segregation on public buses was unconstitutional, marking a pivotal victory win the fight for civil rights. Parks’ courage inspired nationwide protests of segregation and helped establish nonviolent resistance as a powerful tool for social change.

70 Years Later: The Legacy Lives On

Dec. 1, 2025, marks seven decades since Rosa Parks’ historic stand. Her legacy reminds us that ordinary people can create extraordinary change through courage, dignity and determination.