## Who Was Rosa Parks? Inspiring Biography of an American Icon

Who Was Rosa Parks? (Who Was?) by Yona Zeldis McDonough

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#### : The Legacy of Rosa Parks

Who Was

Rosa Parks (1913-2005) is an American icon who played a pivotal role in the African American civil rights movement. Her simple act of defiance on a Montgomery, Alabama bus in 1955 sparked a year-long bus boycott and became one of the most significant events in the fight for racial equality in the United States.

Parks' legacy extends far beyond that one act of courage. She dedicated her life to fighting for social justice and equality, and she became a symbol of the Montgomery Bus Boycott and the broader civil rights movement.

#### **Early Life and Education**

Rosa Parks was born Rosa Louise McCauley in Tuskegee, Alabama, on February 4, 1913. Her parents were James McCauley, a carpenter, and Leona McCauley, a teacher. Parks had a close relationship with her grandparents, who instilled in her a strong sense of racial pride and dignity.

Parks attended a segregated school in Tuskegee and later moved to Montgomery, Alabama, where she worked as a seamstress and a maid. She also took classes at the Alabama State Teachers College for Negroes (now Alabama State University).

#### The Montgomery Bus Boycott

On December 1, 1955, Parks was sitting in the "colored" section of a Montgomery city bus when a white man boarded the bus and demanded that she give up her seat. Parks refused, and she was arrested and charged with violating the city's segregation laws.

Parks' arrest sparked outrage in the African American community in Montgomery. The Montgomery Improvement Association (MIA),led by Martin Luther King, Jr., organized a year-long bus boycott in protest. The boycott was a success, and it led to the desegregation of Montgomery's buses.

#### Later Life and Activism

After the Montgomery Bus Boycott, Parks continued to work for civil rights. She moved to Detroit, Michigan, where she worked as a receptionist and a clerk. She also became a spokesperson for the civil rights movement and traveled the country speaking about her experiences.

In 1987, Parks founded the Rosa and Raymond Parks Institute for Self Development, a nonprofit organization that provides leadership training and educational programs for young people. She also served on the board of the NAACP and was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1996.

#### **Death and Legacy**

Rosa Parks died on October 24, 2005, at the age of 92. She is buried in the Detroit Memorial Park East Cemetery.

Parks' legacy is one of courage, determination, and resilience. She is remembered as one of the most important figures in the American civil rights movement, and her story continues to inspire people around the world.

Rosa Parks was a remarkable woman who made a significant contribution to the fight for racial equality. Her legacy will continue to inspire people for generations to come.

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