STACEY ABRAMS



1973 - PRESENT

Stacey Abrams was born in Madison, Wisconsin in 1973. Both of her parents were involved in boycotts and marches for the civil rights movement throughout her childhood. Abrams and her siblings were raised with the “you-can-do-anything” mantra, and education was of the utmost importance in the Abrams household. The family moved to Atlanta when Abrams was in high school where she ended up being awarded valedictorian. A core moment in Abrams’ life happened when they were invited to the Governor’s house for the annual valedictorian’s reception. When they arrived, a guard refused their entrance. Eventually, the mistake was fixed; however, Abrams recalls this moment as incredibly impactful and hurtful. She used these emotions as continued motivation for the civil rights movement, especially voting rights. In 2006, she was elected to the Georgia House and in 2010, she became the House Minority leader, being the first African American woman to hold that position. Abrams now serves as the face of voting advocacy around the country by founding organizations that help register and turn out voters, especially young voters and voters of color. On top of all of that, she is also an author: *Minority Leader: How to Lead from the Outside and Make Real Change* (2018) and *Our Time is Now: Power, Purpose, and the Fight for a Fair America* (2020).



ELLA BAKER



1903 - 1986

Ella Baker was born in 1903 in Norfolk, Virginia but grew up in rural North Carolina. Growing up, her grandmother would tell her stories of her experience as a slave. Baker graduated Shaw University in 1927 as valedictorian and moved to New York City where she joined the Young Negroes Cooperative League (YNCL). In 1940, she became a field secretary for the National Association for the Advancement for Colored People (NAACP) and three years later became the national director of branches. Baker also eventually became the director of the New York chapter of the NAACP in 1952. She helped found the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), ran the office in Atlanta, Georgia, and was the organizations' executive director. Baker continued to fight for social justice and equality. There is a documentary titled *Fundi: The Story of Ella Baker*; Fundi was her nickname and in Swahili, it means "a person who passes down a craft to the next generation". She passed away on her 83rd birthday in New York City.



DAISY BATES



1914 - 1999

Daisy Bates was born in 1914 in Huttig, Arkansas. Bates' suffered a traumatic childhood. She was raised by friends of her family due to her father abandoning her after her mother was sexually assaulted and murdered by three white men. She and her husband, Lucious Christopher "L.C." Bates created and operated a weekly African American newspaper in Little Rock, Arkansas titled *Arkansas State Press*. In 1952, Bates became president of the Arkansas chapter of the National Association for Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), playing an essential role in fighting segregation. Her house essentially became a safe space and headquarters for the Little Rock Nine when they were refused entry into the school. She ignored numerous threats throughout her life and eventually worked for the Democratic National Committee and on antipoverty projects for President Lyndon B. Johnson's administration. Bates was a key figure in the battle to desegregate schools. She passed away in Little Rock in 1999.



LYNDA BLACKMON LOWREY



1950 - PRESENT

Lynda Blackmon Lowrey is a civil rights activist, author, and a case manager at a mental health center. She was born in 1950 in Selma, Alabama. When she was 7, her mother was not permitted into the closest hospital since it was a “Whites only” hospital, resulting in her mother’s death. This core event in her childhood became her motivation for fighting against segregation. She first heard MLK Jr. speak when she was 13, and was inspired to take action herself. She was the youngest individual, at 15 years old, to participate in the marches in Selma fighting for voting rights. Prior to the Selma marches, she was jailed 9 times before her 15th birthday for protesting against racial inequalities. Lowrey went on to write a memoir, *Turning 15 on the Road to Freedom* in 2015, detailing her experience as an activist for desegregation and voting rights.



AMELIA BOYNTON ROBINSON



1911 - 2015

Amelia Boynton Robinson was born in Savannah, Georgia in 1911 to working-class parents. Her mother, Anna, took her with her as she when she went to suffragette events. At age 14, she attended the Georgia State Industrial College for Colored Youth and earned a degree in home economics from the Tuskegee Institute. Eventually, she settled in Selma, Alabama and worked as a home demonstration agent for the USDA, where she met and married a fellow USDA agent, Samuel Boynton. The pair used their positions to promote the ideals of landownership, education, and political inclusion to rural African Americans in the area. In the 1930s, they joined the Dallas County Voters League and served on the steering committee, the Courageous 8. She helped organize and lead the protest of Jimmie Lee Johnson's death in Selma 1965 and was brutally beaten. Months later, she was present when President Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act and remained politically active throughout her life. In 1990, she received the Martin Luther King, Jr. Freedom Medal.



JAMES CHANEY



1943 - 1964

James Chaney born in 1943 in Meridian, Mississippi, a racially segregated and economically depressed town. Despite being the captain of the football and track teams, he was suspended for a week after wearing a piece of paper on his chest that read “NAACP.” He became very involved in the struggle for human and civil rights, eventually participating in the Freedom Bus Rides and joined CORE, Congress on Racial Equality. In 1964, he had made a plan to use a local church as a training site for voting registration classes. The church was firebombed by the KKK. Chaney worked alongside Michael Schwerner and Andrew Goodman, two Jewish New Yorkers investigating the bombing. On June 21, 1964, the three went to visit a few individuals who were beaten by the KKK the night of the bombing. While en route, a county sheriff’s deputy turned them over to the KKK who murdered all three and buried them. The bodies were not found until 44 days later and Chaney’s body was mutilated. The James Early Chaney Foundation was established and now actively promotes achievements in civil rights and voter registration.



CLAUDETTE COLVIN

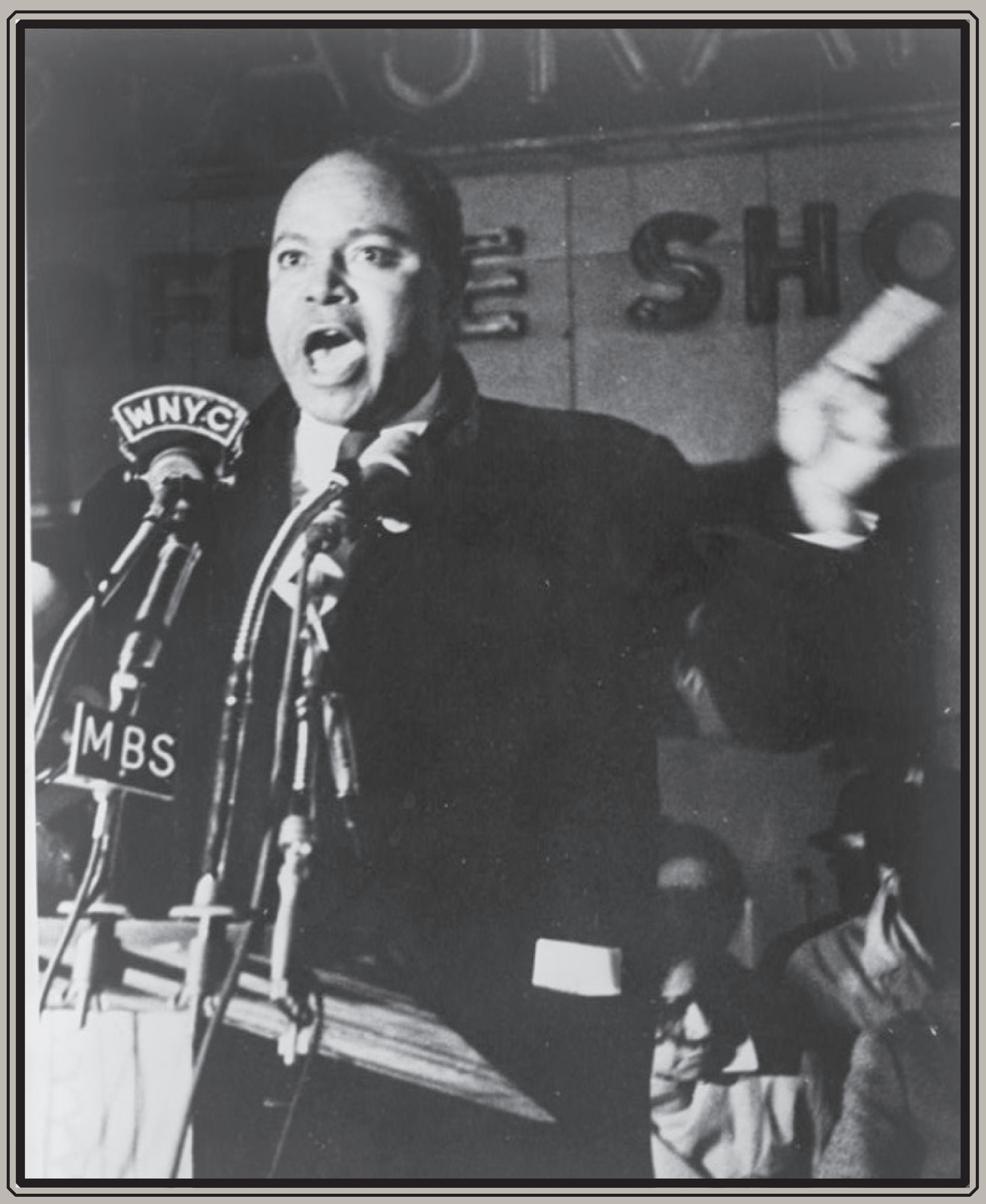


1939 - PRESENT

On March 2nd, 1955, nine months before the famous Rosa Parks arrest, 15 year-old Claudette Colvin refused to give up her seat on a Montgomery bus. As a member of the NAACP youth chapter and an aspiring attorney, she knew her constitutional right to sit anywhere on the bus since she paid her fare. An older Black woman was sitting with Colvin and also refused to move, but eventually did so when the bus driver threatened to involve the police. Colvin, however, stayed put, even when police cussed her out and beat her with a nightstick. She was ultimately taken to jail for violating segregation laws and disorderly conduct. Her mistreatment, along with three other African American women's mistreatment on city buses, were used in a 1956 court case (Browder v. Gayle) that went all the way to the Supreme Court and resulted in segregation ending in Montgomery. Colvin wasn't chosen to be the "face" of the bus boycott because she was seen as too young. She worked in New York as a nurse's aid and was cleared of her charges in 2022.



JAMES FARMER



1920 - 1999

James Farmer was born in 1920 in Marshall, Texas. His father was the first African American citizen to earn a doctorate in the state of Texas. Farmer was incredibly intelligent: skipping grades and beginning college at the young age of 14 years-old. At the age of 21, he earned a divinity degree from Howard University. Eventually, he followed Gandhi's work and felt a deep connection to his philosophies. Farmer was a co-founder of CORE, Congress of Racial Equality, eventually becoming the director of the group in 1961 and helped organize the Freedom Rides. Farmer received the Medal of Freedom along with other honors and wrote an autobiography in 1985. There is also a documentary about CORE's work (*Freedom Riders*) and a movie based on Farmer's life (*The Great Debaters*). Farmer suffered from diabetes and passed away at the age of 79 in 1999.



BETTIE MAE FIKES



1948 - PRESENT

Bettie Mae Fikes was born in Selma, Alabama in 1948. She started singing gospel music at the young age of 4 alongside her mother. She became a leader for the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) at the age of 16 and was arrested multiple times for protesting for voting rights. She came to be known as “the Voice of Selma” for her powerful and inspiring voice. Bettie Mae Fikes is alive and well at the age of 75 years old and continues to fight for equal rights.



FANNIE LOU HAMER



1917 - 1977

Fannie Lou Hamer, born on October 6, 1917, in Montgomery County, Mississippi, was a fearless and tireless champion of civil rights and voting rights during the 1960's. Born a sharecropper and the youngest of 20 children, Fannie faced extreme poverty and racial discrimination at an early age. She played a crucial role in organizing voter registration efforts in Mississippi often at great personal risk. Her impassioned speeches and testimonies, including her famous "I'm sick and tired of being sick and tired" speech at the 1964 Democratic National Convention, brought national attention to the struggles faced by Black voters in the South. She co-founded the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, which challenged the state's all-white delegation at the 1964 Democratic Convention. Fannie Lou Hamer died from breast cancer on March 14, 1977.



DOROTHY HEIGHT



1912 - 2020

Dorothy Height was born in 1912 in Richmond, Virginia. She spent her life fighting for civil and women's rights. Height grew up in Rankin, Pennsylvania and attended integrated schools. Barnard College accepted Height and later rescinded their acceptance claiming they had already reached their quota for Black students. Unphased, she received two degrees from New York University: bachelor's degree in education in 1930 and a master's degree in psychology two years later. She was a tireless activist and worked at the YWCA in Harlem, directing the integration of all its centers. Baker was one of the organizers of the March on Washington where she later felt dismissed due to being a woman. President Bill Clinton awarded her the Presidential Medal of Freedom and later President George W. Bush awarded her the Congressional Gold Medal. President Barack Obama also referred to her as "the godmother of the civil rights movement." She died in 2020 in Washington DC.



CHARLES HAMILTON HOUSTON



1895 - 1950

Charles Hamilton Houston was born in 1895 in Washington DC. He graduated as valedictorian from Amherst College, taught at Howard University for two years, and then enlisted in the army during World War 1. He then attended Harvard Law School and practiced law until 1950. Houston shaped Howard University law school into what it is today and made incredible strides in the battle against racial discrimination by serving on special counsel for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP); however, he was not fully recognized until after his death. He was awarded the NAACP's Spingarn Medal in 1950, following his death. Houston died in 1950 in Washington DC.



JIMMIE LEE JACKSON

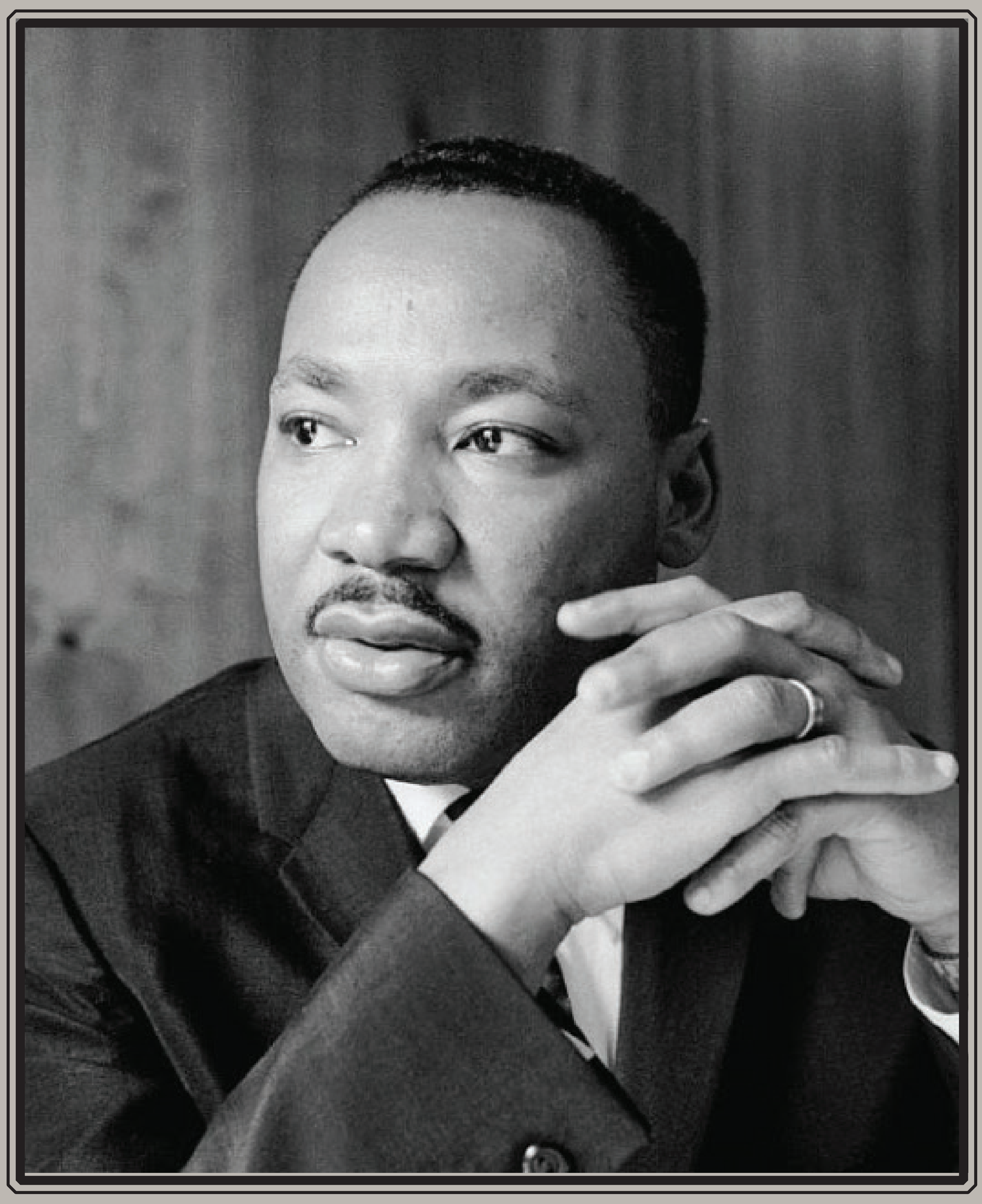


1938 - 1965

Jimmie Lee Jackson was born in Marion, Alabama. Following a Selma march, an Alabama state trooper shot Jackson in the stomach as he was trying to protect his mother from being abused at a restaurant. He died eight days later from his wounds. King referred to Jackson at his funeral as “a martyred hero of a holy crusade for freedom and human dignity.” At the time of his death, the former soldier was the youngest deacon in his church and had a young daughter. His death was a catalyst for the Bloody Sunday and Selma to Montgomery marches. James Bonard Fowler, the officer responsible for Jackson’s death, claimed the incident was self-defense, that Jackson attempted to grab his pistol; however, 40 years later, in 2007, Fowler was indicted for Jackson’s murder.



DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.



1929 - 1968

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., more famously known as MLK Jr., was born in 1929 in Atlanta, Georgia. Throughout his life, he was a Baptist minister, civil rights activist, and political philosopher. In 1957, he was elected president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), an organization formed to provide new leadership for the civil rights movement. He organized a massive protest in Birmingham, Alabama that caught the attention of the entire world and inspired his “Letter from a Birmingham Jail” manifesto. He went on to deliver his famous “I Have a Dream” speech in Washington DC in front of approximately 250,000 people. King was also the youngest man to win the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964. King traveled to Memphis to lead a protest march with striking garbage workers of the city when he was assassinated standing on the balcony of his hotel room.

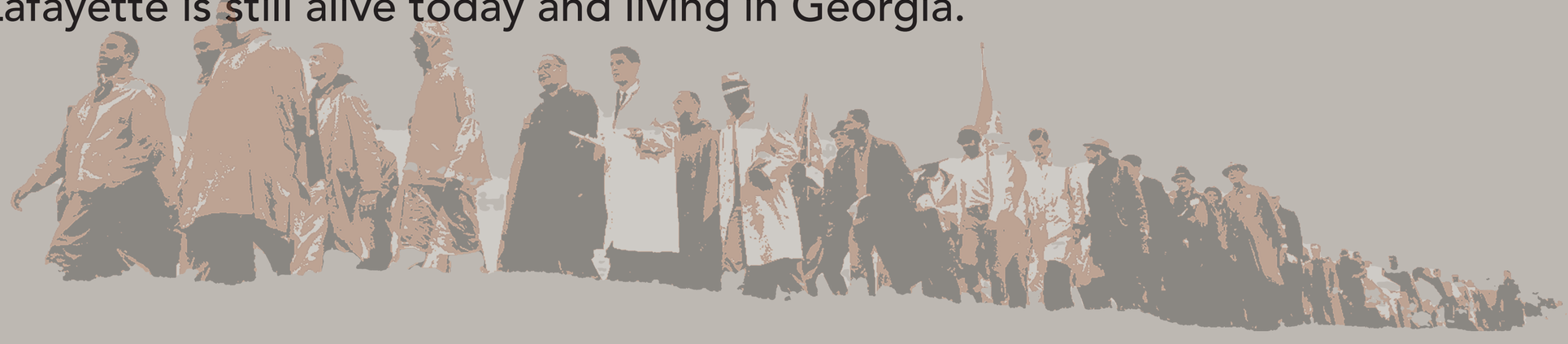


BERNARD LAFAYETTE

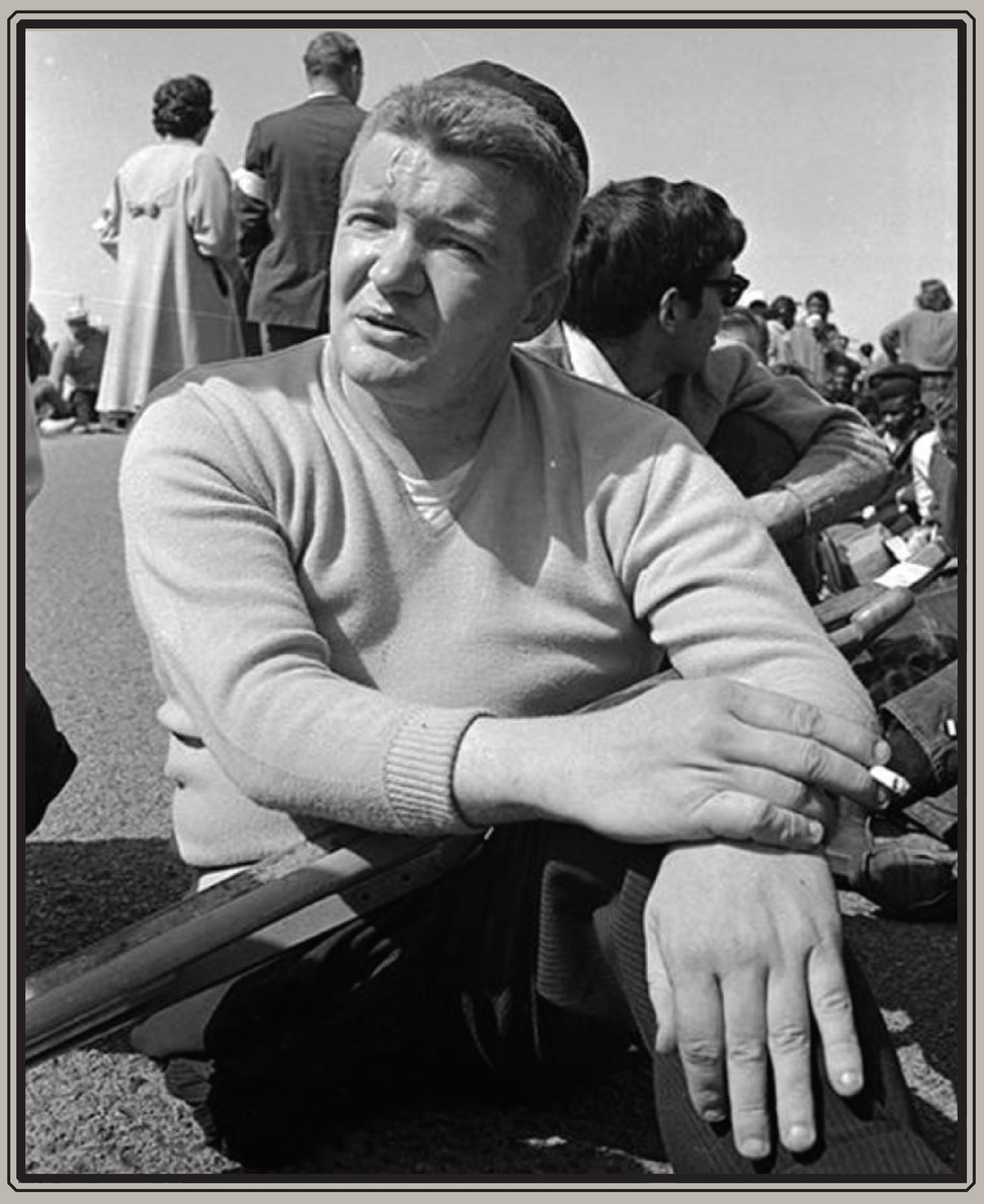


1940 - PRESENT

Bernard Lafayette was born in Tampa, Florida in 1940. He attended American Baptist Theological Seminary in Nashville. James Lawson taught nonviolence techniques to Lafayette and other Nashville students including John Lewis. In 1959, Lafayette and his friends began conducting sit-in protests at segregated restaurants and businesses and in 1962, he became the director of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee's Alabama Voter Registration Project. MLK Jr. hired Lafayette to help plan and execute SCLC's Chicago Campaign direct action program. He later went on to take responsibility for the 1968 Poor People's Campaign and receive his MEd in 1972 and doctorate in 1974 from Harvard University. In 1993, he was named the president of his alma mater, American Baptist Theological Seminary. Throughout his time as an activist for the civil rights movement, he was beaten and arrested approximately 27 times. Lafayette is still alive today and living in Georgia.



JIM LETHERER

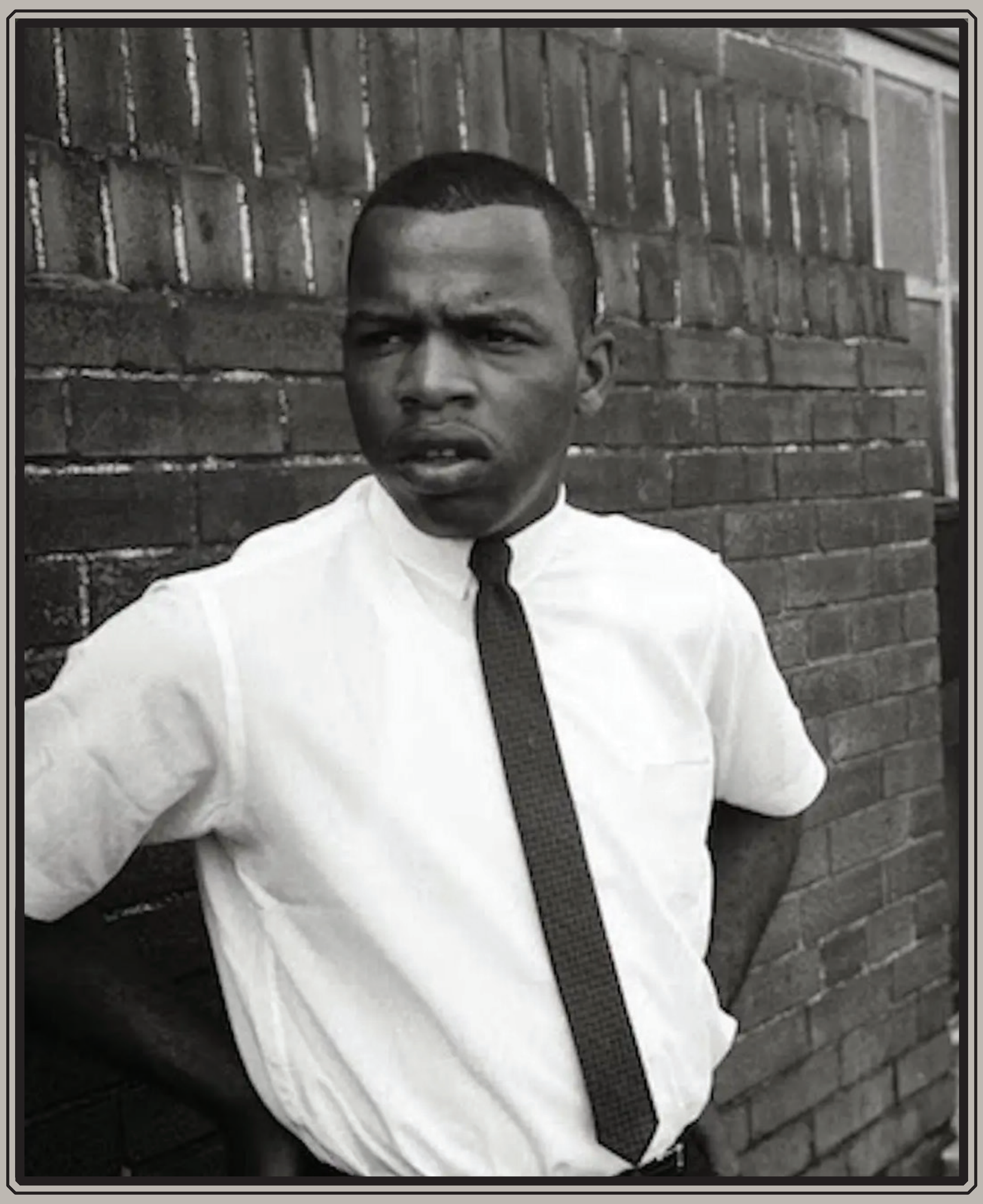


1933 - 2001

Jim Letherer, born in 1933 in Saginaw, Michigan, was a civil rights activist. Letherer's leg was amputated when a young boy due to bone cancer, and he spent the majority of his life using crutches. He is best known for his participation in the Selma marches alongside MLK Jr. Not only did he participate, he was often on the front lines, leading the march. He fought for civil rights because he could empathize; he traveled throughout the country speaking to people about treating differences with respect. He died from a heart attack in 2001.



JOHN LEWIS



1940 - 2020

John Lewis,an American civil rights leader and politician, was born in Alabama in 1940. Despite his parents encouraging him to simply accept the Jim Crow laws in the South, he was inspired by other notable civil rights leaders such as Rosa Parks and MLK Jr. Lewis played a key role in several historic events including the Freedom Rides, the March on Washington, and the Selma marches. In 1986, he was elected to the House of Representatives, representing Georgia's 5th district. He called for healthcare reforms, measures to fight poverty, and improvements in education. Most importantly, he oversaw multiple revisions of the Voting Rights Act. He advocated for peaceful, non-violent protesting, specifically "sit-ins," which he utilized in 2016 following the Pulse Nightclub shooting in Orlando, Florida. He organized a sit-in on the floor of the House consisting of approximately 40 Democratic members of the House of Representatives on June 22nd in an attempt to bring awareness to gun violence and laws. He died in Atlanta in 2020 from cancer.



VIOLA LIUZZO



1925 - 1965

Viola Liuzzo was born in 1925 in California, Pennsylvania, but spent a lot of her childhood in the rural areas of Georgia and Tennessee where she witnessed racial injustices. She settled down with her husband in Michigan and became a member of the Detroit chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. The events of Bloody Sunday drove Liuzzo to go to Selma in order to join the fight for civil rights. Not only did Liuzzo participate in the marches, she drove supporters between Selma and Montgomery. The night of MLK Jr. 's speech in Montgomery, following the March, Liuzzo was driving with Leroy Moton when a car drove beside them. Individuals in the car shot Liuzzo in the face, killing her. Her killers were identified the following day by President Lyndon B. Johnson as four members of the Ku Klux Klan. The four were acquitted by an all-white jury locally but were later convicted on federal charges. Following her death, a campaign began to tarnish her reputation claiming that she had an inappropriate relationship with Leroy Moton. Her death drove President LBJ to launch an investigation into the KKK. She has been the subject of many books and a documentary on her called *Home of the Brave* was displayed at the Sundance Film Festival. In 1991, the Women of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference put a highway marker where she was killed and in 2006, she was inducted into the Michigan Hall of Fame.



MALCOLM X

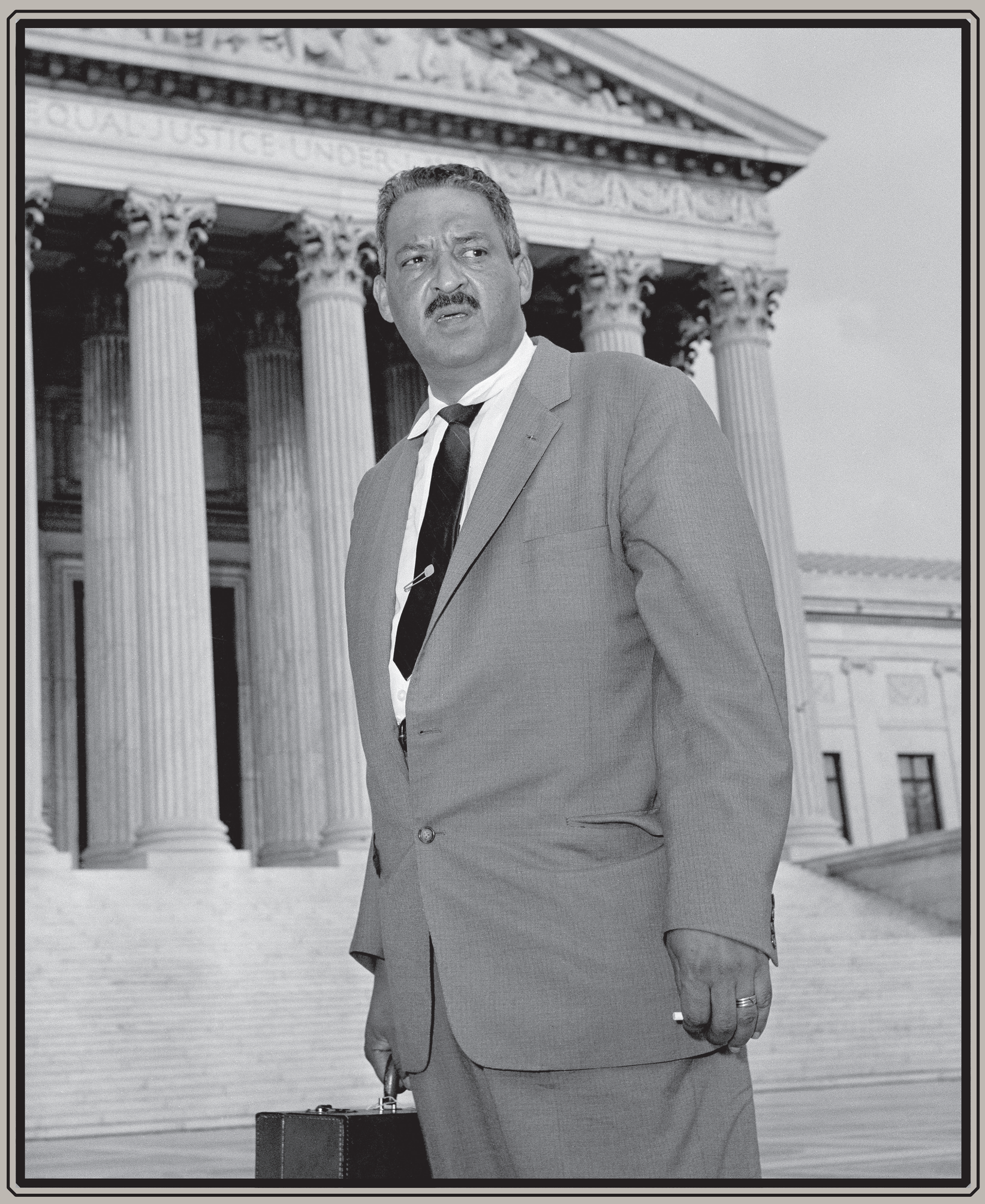


1925 - 1965

Malcolm X, born Malcolm Little on May 19, 1925 in Omaha Nebraska was an activist and spokesperson, renowned for his influential role in the Civil Rights Movement. Following a childhood of hardship, adversity, racial discrimination and violence, Malcolm X's journey towards activism began during his time in prison, where he discovered the Nation of Islam and converted to its teachings. Known for his fiery oratory and unwavering commitment to the rights of African Americans, Malcolm X's views evolved over time, leading him to embrace a more inclusive and global perspective. Tragically, he was assassinated in February 1965, but his legacy endures as a symbol of resilience and uncompromising advocacy for civil rights. Malcolm X remains an enduring and vital figure in the ongoing struggle for racial equality and justice in the United States.



THURGOOD MARSHALL

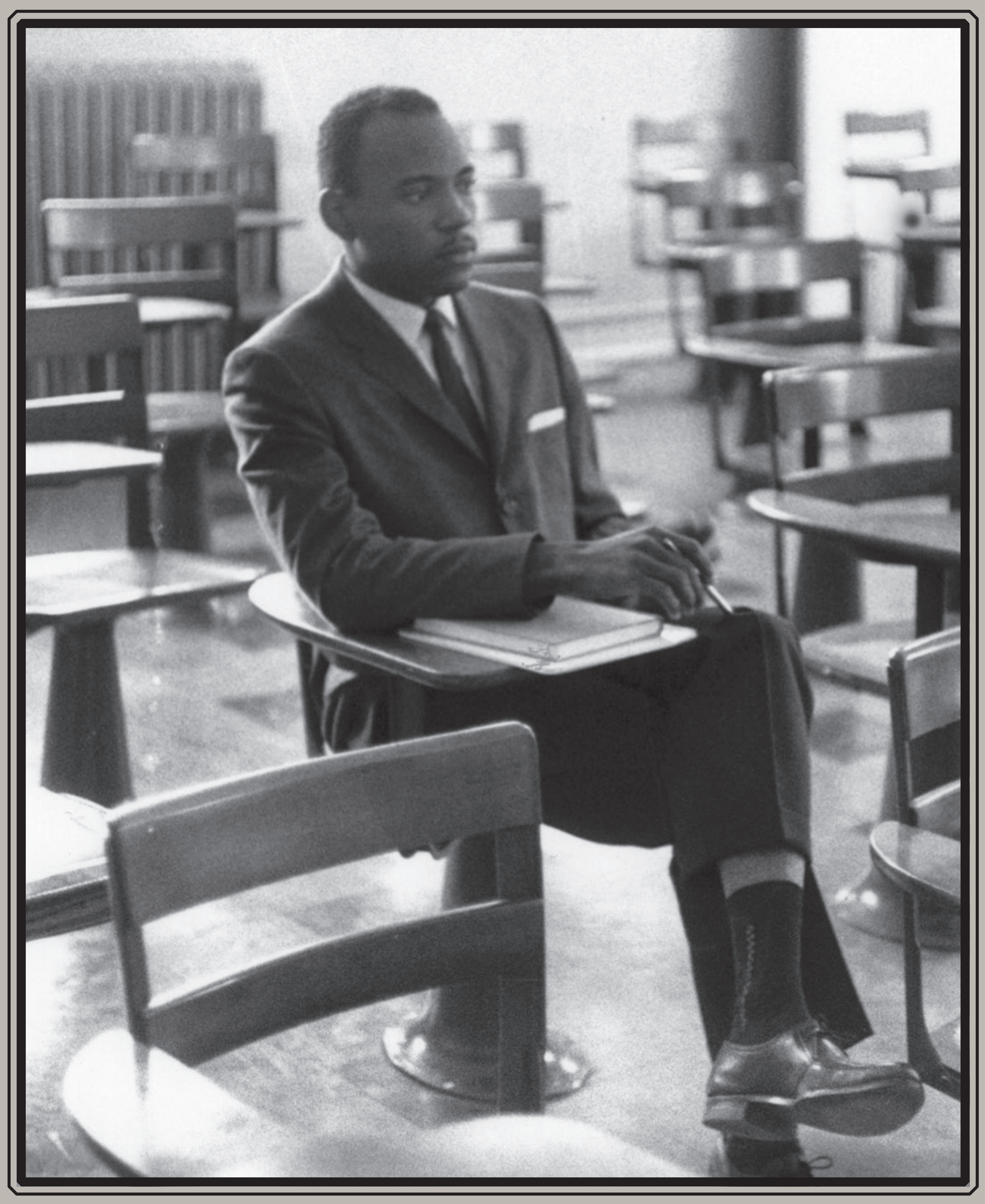


1908 - 1993

Thurgood Marshall, born July 2, 1908 in Baltimore, Maryland, was a pioneering American lawyer who made significant contributions to the civil rights movement. He was a key figure in the legal battle against racial segregation, notably as the lead attorney in the landmark case of *Brown v, Board of Education* in 1954, which led to the Supreme Court ruling that segregation in schools was unconstitutional. In 1967, Marshall made history by becoming the first African American to serve as a Supreme Court Justice, a position he held until his retirement in 1991. Throughout his time on the court, he consistently advocated for civil rights, individual liberties, and equal protection under the law. He passed away on January 24, 1993.



JAMES MEREDITH

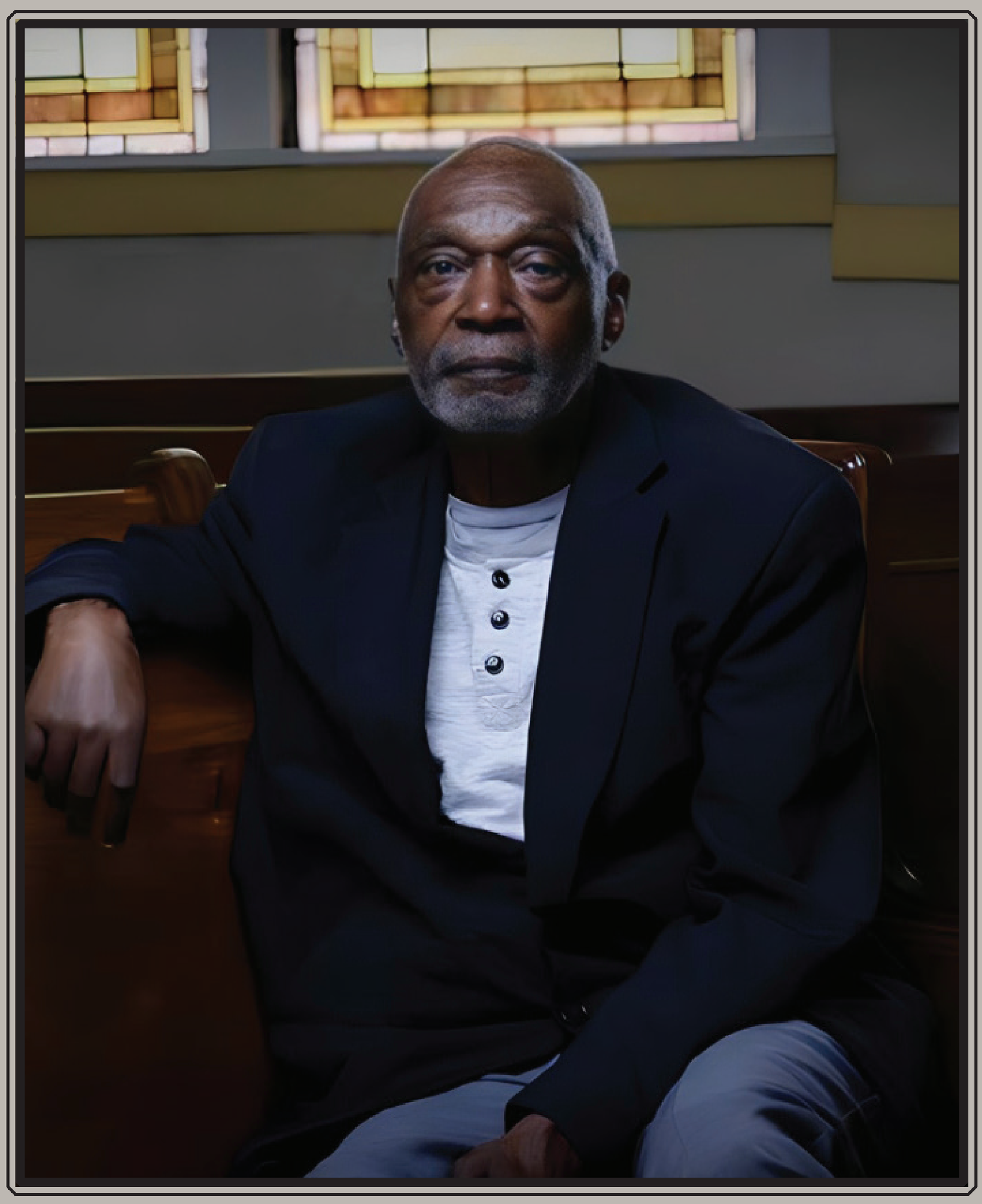


1933 - PRESENT

James Meredith was born in Mississippi in 1933. After graduating high school, he served in the Air Force from 1951-1960 and attended Jackson State College in 1960. He applied to the University of Mississippi but was denied because of his race. In 1962, he and the NAACP won their discrimination case against the state, and he became the first African American student at the university. State officials, initially refusing a U.S. Supreme Court order to integrate the school, blocked Meredith's entrance. However following large campus riots that left two people dead, he was admitted to the university under the protection of federal marshals. He graduated in 1963 with a degree in Political Science. In June 1966, he began a solitary protest march to promote Black voter registration, which he called the March Against Fear, from Memphis, Tennessee, to Jackson, Mississippi, when he was shot by a sniper. Other activists resumed the march until he was able to rejoin - with 15,000 other marchers. He became politically active in 1967 as a Republican. He faced criticism for serving as a domestic adviser to the notoriously conservative and segregationist Senator Jesse Helms though he stated he offered his services to every member of Congress and Helms' office was the only one to reply. In his later years, he has worked to promote education and literacy programs for Black men and boys across the nation.



LEROY MOTON



1946 - 2023

Leroy Moton was a young civil rights activist born in Selma, Alabama in 1946. When he was 15, he worked washing dishes at an all-white restaurant. His boss made a crude comment about how if he involved himself with MLK Jr. he would “kick [Morton’s] behind through his nose.” Following that incident, Morton decided to become more involved in the movement by organizing marches and helping African Americans register to vote. He was riding in the car with Viola Liuzzo when she was shot and killed by the KKK. After she was shot, the car fell into a ditch, and he survived. He had to “play dead” in the car when the murderers came and peered into the car. He spent the rest of his life speaking across the country to numerous schools, churches, and organizations - always determined to continue spreading awareness of the importance of voting. Moton died on September 13, 2023 after a fight with cancer.



DIANE NASH

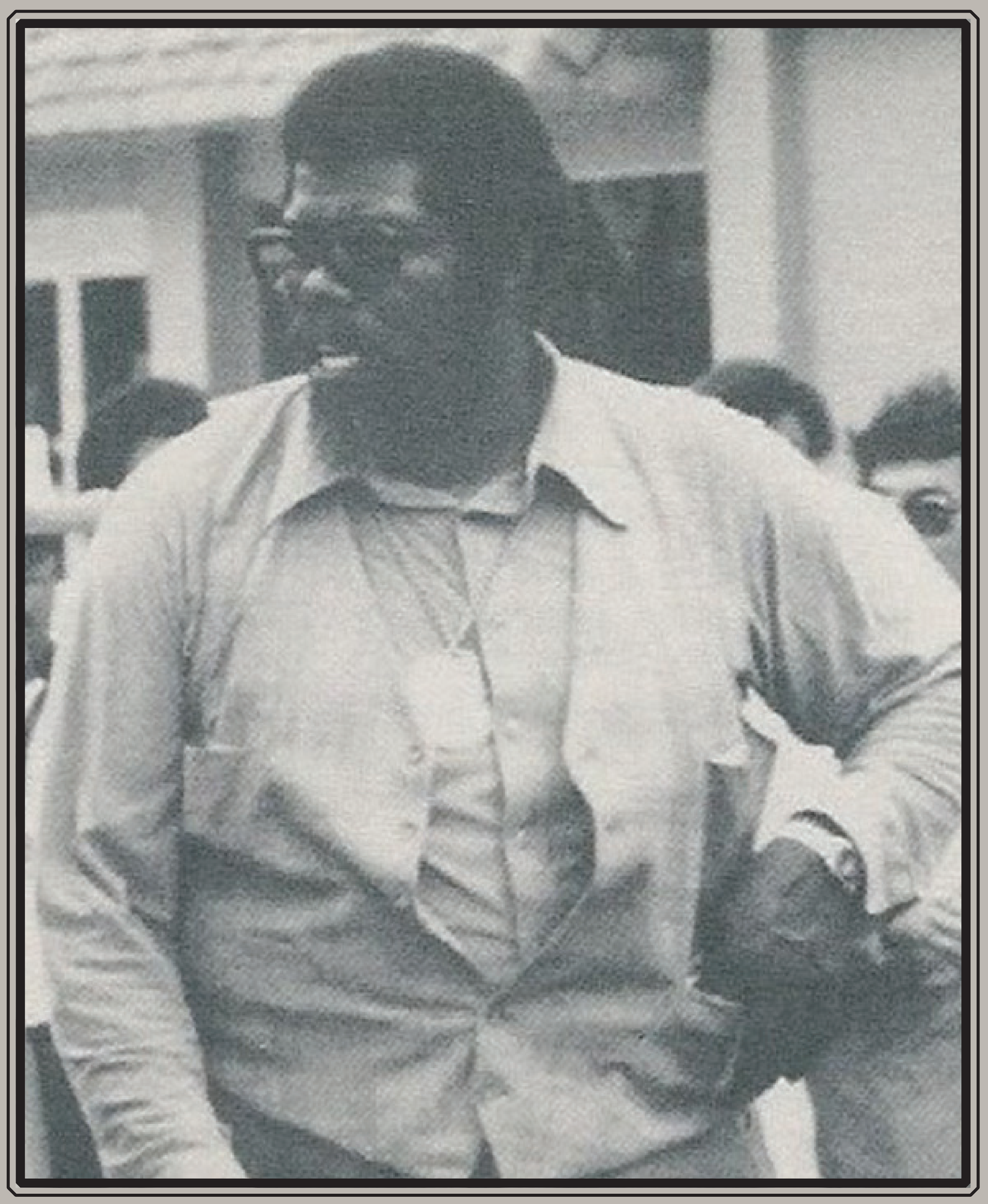


1938 - PRESENT

Diane Nash was born in Chicago in 1938 and did not encounter Jim Crow laws until she attended Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee in 1959. She met Jim Lawson, who had studied Ghandi's nonviolent protest methods and taught them at workshops in a church near the university. She became the leader of the Nashville Student Central Committee and organized and participated in restaurant sit-ins across the city. Within four months, Nashville became the first city in the South to desegregate its lunch counters. Afterwards, she helped found the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, which worked with other organizations to plan events to further their cause of civil rights. The following year, the Freedom Rides began, and riders came under attack in several cities before they were forced to stop in New Orleans. Against the advice of Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy, Nash and other students continued the Freedom Rides through the fall of 1961. She left college to work full-time as an activist for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and was appointed to a national committee by President Kennedy to promote the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. She received the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2022.



REV. JAMES ORANGE

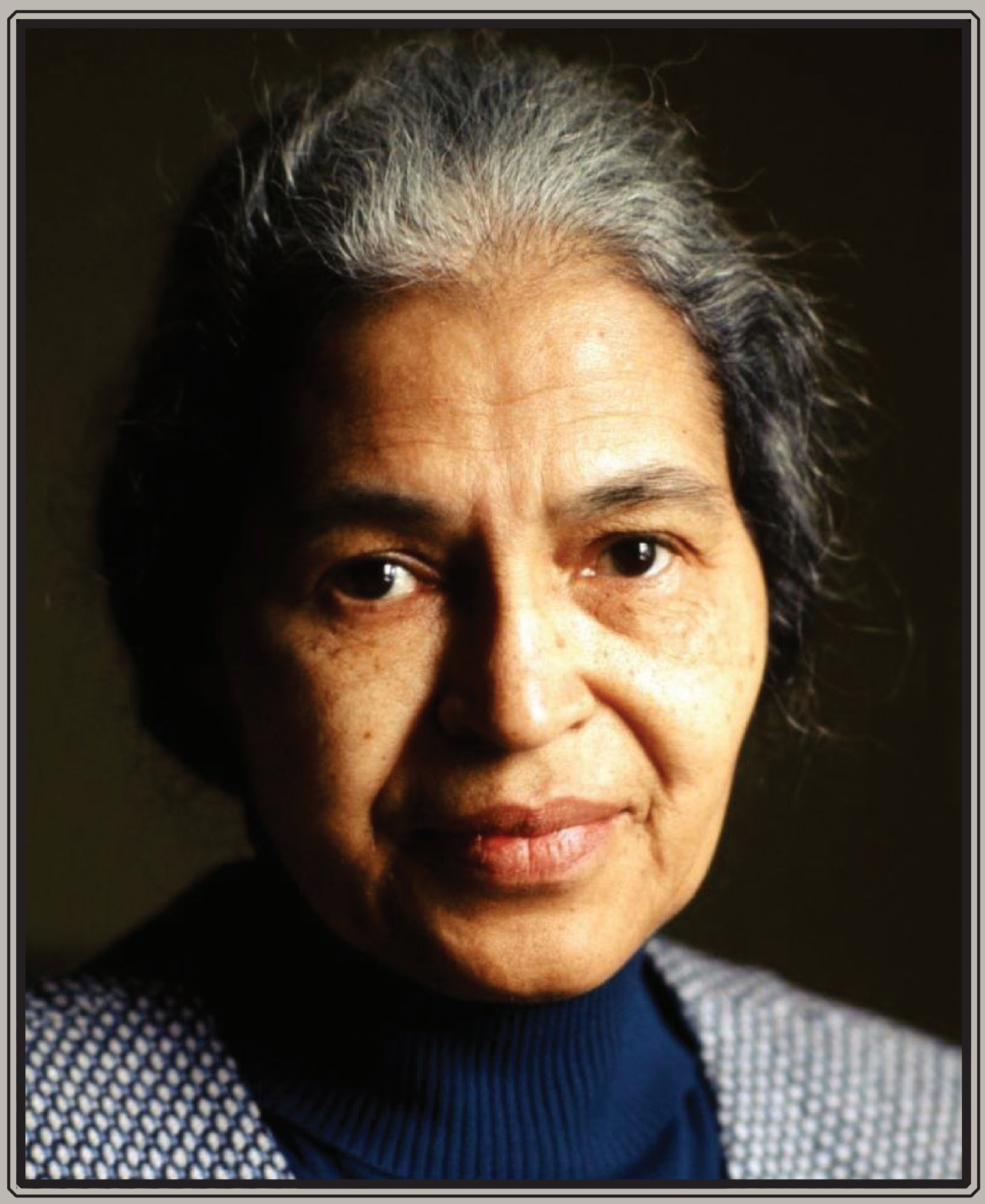


1942 - 2008

Rev. James E. Orange was born in 1942 in Birmingham, Alabama. Rev. Orange began his activism in 1963, marching with Dr. King and facing dozens of arrests; however, it was his arrest in Alabama in 1965 that is believed to have been a catalyst for the Selma to Montgomery March. Following Rev. Orange's arrest during a voter registration drive, news spread that Dr. Orange was to be lynched in prison. Many, including Jimmie Lee Jackson and his grandparents (whom he died trying to protect) organized a protest and were brutally beaten by police officers. After Jimmie Lee Jackson's murder, King and others made plans to deliver Jackson's body to the steps of the state capitol in Montgomery, marching from Selma. After King's death, Rev. Orange committed his life's work to power through nonviolence. He eventually also worked with César Chávez, Immigrant Workers Freedom Ride, and unions focused on the rights of low paid laborers before his death in 2008.



ROSA PARKS



1913 - 2005

Rosa Parks was a civil rights leader born in Tuskegee, Alabama in 1913. Her parents split up when she was 2, and she and her mother went to live with Parks' grandparents, both of whom were formerly enslaved and strong advocates for racial equality. In 1955, Parks sat in the front section of a public bus after a long day at work. As the bus started to crowd, more white people were standing, and the bus driver asked her to move. She refused and was later arrested. This impactful moment sparked the Montgomery Bus Boycott. Parks has been described as the "Mother of the Civil Rights Movement." She described the experience of being asked to move: "When that white driver stepped back toward us, when he waved his hand and ordered us up and out of our seats, I felt a determination cover my body like a quilt on a winter night." Parks died in 2005 in Detroit, Michigan at the age of 92 years old.



REV. JAMES REEB



1927 - 1965

Reverend James Reeb, born in Wichita, Kansas, was a white Unitarian minister who became known as a martyr to the civil rights cause. He became a minister after serving in World War 2. MLK Jr. put out a request for members of the clergy around the country to join him in Selma, and Reeb flew to Selma later that evening. After eating at an integrated restaurant with other white Unitarians, he was attacked by several white men and was clubbed in the head resulting in the need of brain surgery. He died two days later. His death was mourned throughout the country, and Dr. Martin Luther King gave the eulogy at his funeral. Three men were indicted for his murder but were later acquitted.



JO ANN ROBINSON

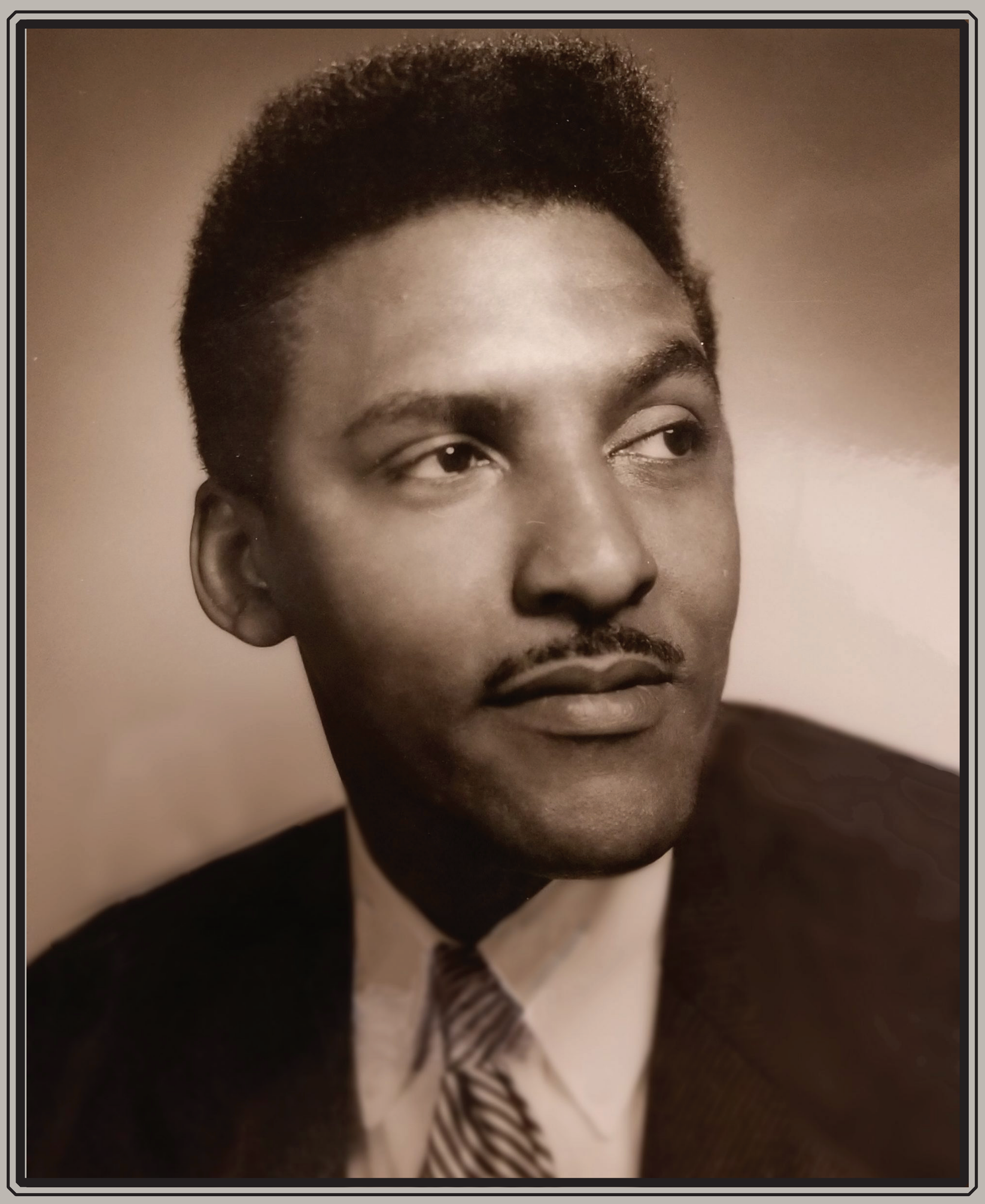


1912 - 1992

Jo Ann Robinson, born in 1912 in Culloden, Georgia, received her Master's degree in English and moved to Montgomery, Alabama to teach at Alabama State College in 1949. There, she became active in the Women's Political Council, a group of professional Black women dedicated to issues such as voter registration, civic engagement, and supporting victims of sexual assault. Following Rosa Parks' arrest, Robinson - who had previously been verbally abused by a Montgomery bus driver - organized the Montgomery Bus Boycott. She and the WPC created and distributed thousands of flyers calling for a one-day boycott, which was so successful that it was extended for over a year. During that time, she worked behind the scenes writing and editing a weekly newsletter and volunteering in the carpool system to help African Americans get to and from their jobs while also teaching English at Alabama State College. Though she strove to stay a figure out of the public spotlight, her involvement did not go unnoticed and she was the victim of several attacks or threats. She resigned her position at the college in 1960 in support of the student sit-in movement. She later taught at Grambling College and the Los Angeles public school system until she retired in 1976.



BAYARD RUSTIN

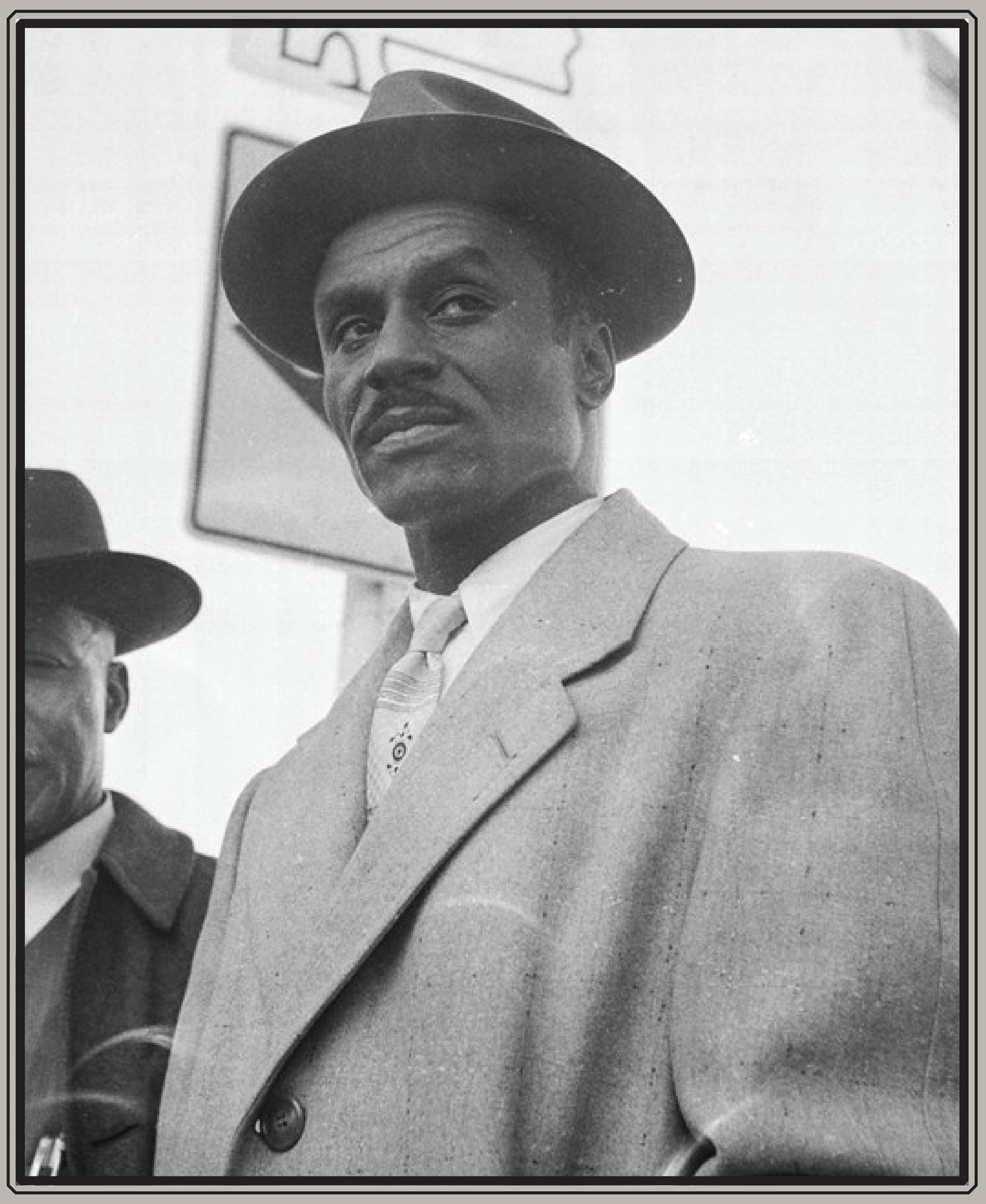


1912 - 1987

Bayard Rustin was born in 1912 in West Chester, Pennsylvania. He attended two historically Black universities, and he moved to New York City in 1937. He met MLK Jr. in the 1950s and began working with him in 1955 as an organizer and strategist. Rustin believed in Gandhi's philosophy of nonviolent resistance and suggested MLK Jr. stay on the civil disobedience path. He was also alongside MLK Jr. for the Montgomery Bus Boycott in 1956. Rustin was an essential part of the success of the March on Washington. He co-founded the A. Philip Randolph Institute, which is a labor organization for African American trade union members. Not only was he successful as a civil rights activist, he was also an author and an advocate for the LGBTQ+ community. He died in New York City in 1987 at the age of 75 from a ruptured appendix.



FRED SHUTTLESWORTH



1922 - 2011

Frederick Lee “Freddie” Shuttlesworth was a major leader in the civil rights movement. He was born in 1922 and graduated from Selma University in 1951. Two years later, he became a pastor at Bethel Baptist Church in Birmingham. He founded the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights in 1956 and served as its president until 1969. The group aimed to end segregation in Alabama by organizing boycotts and sponsoring lawsuits at the federal level. He was the secretary of the SCLC from 1958-1970 and worked with the Congress on Racial Equality to coordinate the Freedom Rides and Birmingham demonstrations. He was also active in planning the Selma to Montgomery march in 1965. Having been arrested multiple times, faced a murder attempt and bombing of his home, and was beaten numerous times, Martin Luther King, Jr. called him “the most courageous civil rights fighter in the South”. He earned the Presidential Citizens Medal in 2001. He continued fighting for civil rights until his death in 2011 at the age of 89.



FRANK SMITH, JR.



1942 - PRESENT

Frank Smith Jr. was born in 1942 in Newnan, Georgia. During college, he participated in the Rich's department store boycotts in Atlanta and co-founded the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). He was elected to the DC Board of Education in 1979 and to Council of the District of Columbia three years later focusing on housing and economic development. Smith helped to establish the African-American Civil War Memorial and Museum in Washington DC. He is currently living in Newnan, Georgia.

