

The Women of Alzheimer's Series – Rosa Parks



Rosa Parks
from
Wikipedia

She was just plain tired that day and only wanted to get home. She sat in her usual section of the bus, but when a white man demanded her seat she refused. Her refusal led to her **arrest**, the **381 day Montgomery Bus Boycott** and being known as the **“mother of the freedom movement.”**

The Montgomery, Alabama public bus system had segregated seating even though 75% of its ridership was black. The rules were that white passengers could sit in the designated white section. However, if those seats were full the bus driver could arbitrarily move the “colored” sign back and black riders would have to give up their seats. When a white passenger demanded her seat Rosa Parks refused to move that day in December of 1955.

Many thought at the time that Rosa Parks was this feisty old woman who had had enough, when in fact she was 42 years old. **Her courage and dignity** would continue to play a prominent role in the civil rights movement and as a promoter of World peace. In her lifetime she was the recipient of numerous awards and citations including:

- Forty-three honorary doctorate degrees
- The Presidential Medal of Freedom from President Bill Clinton
- Voted one of the 100 most influential people of the 20th century by Time Magazine
- Congressional Gold Metal of Honor
- StanfordUniversity– Institute for Research on Women and Gender first Lifetime Achievement Award

In 1957 due to harassment and no longer being able to find employment, she and her husband would leave Montgomery and would eventually relocate to Detroit, MI. However, **forty-five years later The Rosa Park Library and Museum opened on the spot of her original arrest on December 1, 1955.**

In 1994 the Ku Klux Klan petitioned to sponsor a clean-up section of US Interstate 55 near St. Louis, MO. In response the Missouri legislature could not deny them their road sign, but they did rename that section of road the **“Rosa Parks Highway.”** When asked about it, Rosa Parks commented **“It is always nice to be thought of.”**

During the 1970's there were number family illnesses and she nursed her mother who would die of cancer and dementia/Alzheimer's. As her own health declined so did her mental abilities.

A law suit was file in 1999 on behalf of her against OutKast and LaFace Records for illegally using her name as the song title in the album Aquemini. Legal proceedings indicated at the time Mrs. Parks could not participate due to a mental decline. Others commented that she was not the type to pursue this type of action and was being taken advantage of because of her mental condition. There were other problems indicating that she could no long manage her financial affairs.

Rosa Parks died on October 24, 2005 at age 92 with dementia/Alzheimer's.

Sources: www.rosaparks.org, Wikipedia – Rosa Parks