

RESISTANCE 101

A Lesson for Inauguration Teach-Ins and Beyond

This lesson has been prepared by Teaching for Change staff for teachers to use for Inauguration Teach-Ins and beyond. It is an introductory lesson for students, allowing them to “meet” people from throughout U.S. history who have resisted injustice and to learn from the range of strategies they have used.

It is important to note, and to point out to students, that this list represents just a small sample of the people, time periods, struggles, and strategies we could have included. It is our hope that students not only choose to learn more about the people featured in this lesson, but that they research and create more bios. In fact, students could create a similar lesson with specific themes activists in their community, youth activists, environmental activists, and many more.

The lesson is based on the format of a Rethinking Schools lesson called [Unsung Heroes](#) and draws from lessons by Teaching for Change on [women’s history](#) and the Civil Rights Movement, including [Selma](#).

This lesson can make participants aware of how many more activists there are than just the few heroes highlighted in textbooks, children’s books, and the media. However the lesson provides only a brief introduction to the lives of the people profiled. In order to facilitate learning more, we limited our list to people whose work has been well enough documented that students can find more in books and/or online.

Materials and Preparation

Handout No. 1: Biographies – Print the handout and cut the paper into individual strips, with each strip displaying one biography. They can be folded so that as the student holds the bio, the photo is facing out and they can reread the bio during the activity. Each student or workshop participant and the instructor should receive one bio each. If there are more bios than participants, you can reduce the number of bios distributed. Here is a list of the bios: (In some cases we have linked to a recommended source to learn more.)

- [Richard Allen](#)
- Joe Angelo
- Dave Archambault II
- [Ella Baker](#)
- Dr. Rev. William Barber
- [Judy Bonds](#)
- [Anne Braden](#)
- [Septima Clark](#)
- [Shirley Chisholm](#)
- CP Ellis
- Elizabeth Gurley Flynn
- [Fannie Lou Hamer](#)
- Rafael Larraenza Hernandez
- [Barbara Rose Johns](#)
- [Mary “Mother” Jones](#)
- Henry Highland Garnet
- Colin Kaepernick
- [Helen Keller](#)
- [Yuri Kochiyama](#)
- [Fred Korematsu](#)

- Audre Lorde
- Winona LaDuke
- Xiuhtezcatl Martinez
- [Robert “Bob” Parris Moses](#)
- John O’Riley
- Paul Robeson
- Jo Ann Robinson
- [Favianna Rodriguez](#)
- [Bayard Rustin](#)
- Linda Sarsour
- Margaret Chase Smith
- Ida Tarbell
- [Emma Tenayuca](#)
- [Mary Beth Tinker](#)
- [Destiny Watford](#)
- Ida B. Wells

There are more bios than you are likely to need. Please refer to the teacher guide interview sheets when creating your shorter list and ensure that there is at least one bio for each of the questions.

Handout No. 2: Interview Sheets 1 and 2 – Each student receives one version of the interview sheet. Note there are two versions so that not all the students are asking the same questions. (There is a teacher guide version of the handouts with possible names answering each question.)

Procedures

1. [Optional] Ask students to name people who have been active in movements for social justice in U.S. history. Record those names to refer back to at the end of the lesson. Students will typically name icons such as Dr. King, Rosa Parks, or Cesar Chavez. Also, introduce vocabulary that may not be familiar to students in the questions or bios.

2. Explain to the students that there were many more people who have been involved in struggle for social justice in U.S. history and shortly you will have a chance to meet them.

3. Distribute one bio to each student. Explain that for the rest of the class, they will take on the identity of the person on the bio they received. Point out that these biographies are simply brief introductions to the lives of people whose stories could fill entire books.

4. Ask them to take a few minutes to read their bio and to let you know if they have any questions. Have each student write or underline key points from their bio. High school teacher Barrie Moorman noted “in addition to marking the key details in the text, I had students write on the back a short overview of who they are, what issues they care about and what strategies they used to protest/resist. This made students feel more confident in their identity before starting.” Middle school teacher Amy Trenkle posted questions for students to respond to on the back of their bio: 1. Who are you? 2. What did you do? 3. How did you do it? 4. When did you do it?

If there is enough time, students could also write, in character, a response to a question about current events.

5. Distribute one interview sheet per student or participant. There are two versions of the interview sheet so that not all students have the same questions. (This is to help keep things more interesting and also so that there is more of a chance that all the questions will be addressed.)

6. Explain to everyone that they have the rare opportunity to attend a conference social justice activists from throughout U.S. history. In order to make the most of their time at this conference, they have a questionnaire to complete. This questionnaire will help them meet and learn about

other people at the conference. As they participate in the conference, they stay in role, responding to questions from other participants, and in turn asking them questions. Each student should try to “meet” people who can help them answer questions on their interview sheet.

7. Give them a minute to see which question(s) pertains to their own character and how they might respond.

8. Invite a student to help you model the interaction. Introduce yourself, in character, and ask who they are. Then ask one of the questions.

9. Launch the activity. At the beginning, you may need to remind students to stay in role. All conversations should be in first person. Also, remind them to take their time with the conversations. It is more important to learn from their peers than to answer every question. Each question includes the person’s name and something about what they did.

10. Once you have determined that most students have had enough time to complete their questionnaire, or if you only have about 10 minutes left in class, have everyone return to their seats.

11. Ask for volunteers to share what they learned and what they found to be most surprising and/or interesting during the activity.

12. Return to the list generated at the beginning of the class. Ask for a few volunteers to share names of one or two people they could now add to the list. Are they surprised by how many activists they learned about that they could not name before? Why do they think we usually only learn about a few people?

13. In small groups, have students generate a list of all the strategies they heard about in their conversations that people have used to resist injustice. Make sure each group has participants who used versions one and two of the interview sheet. High school teacher Barrie Moorman noted that, “My students worked in small groups to make a list of all of the methods of resistance they learned about and then had to come to consensus on the five most effective ones. This led to some rich discussion. At the end of class I had everyone commit to what they want their own resistance to look like.” Middle school teacher Amy Trenkle had students write down their answers to the question “What did you learn about resistance/activism/taking a stand?” Students shared their answers, including: many people were arrested and made other sacrifices, people had to be persistent over a long period of time to make change, and young people don’t have to wait until they’re older to stand up for their beliefs.

14. This is the conclusion of this activity. There are lots of possible next steps. For example, students can:

(a) Conduct research on the person they represented in the activity. Document and share this information in the form of an essay, bulletin board display, a children’s book, or iMovie.

(b) Develop a similar activity based on people in their school and/or community.

(c) Research names and write bios of people to add this to this lesson.

Sources

Here are a few sources we used for the bios. These are also recommended for students to learn more about social justice activists. Click on the biographies under the Materials section above for specific sources on each individual featured in this lesson.

Websites

[Americans Who Tell the Truth](#): Portraits by Robert Shetterly and biographies of individuals who have taken a stand for justice.

[BlackPast](#): Online source of African American history.

[CRMvet.org](#): Resources on the Southern Freedom Movement compiled by those who lived it. Includes a bibliography, timelines, photos, primary source documents, and lists of speakers.

[SNCC Digital Gateway](#): Historical materials, profiles, timeline, map, and stories on the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee's (SNCC) voting rights organizing.

Zinn Education Project Profiles

[Asian Americans and Moments in Peoples History](#)

[Black Abolitionists](#)

[Italian Americans Who Fought for Justice](#)

[Women in Labor History](#)

Books

[101 Changemakers: Rebels and Radicals Who Changed US History](#)

[Heroes of the Environment: True Stories of People Who Are Helping to Protect Our Planet](#)

[Rad American Women A-Z: Rebels, Trailblazers, and Visionaries Who Shaped Our History and Our Future](#)

Handout Two: Interview Sheet–Version One

My name is: (your role) _____

In your role, interview other people at the conference to find the answers to these questions. This is not a race. The goal is to learn as much as you can. For each answer, include the person's name and what you learned in response to the question.

- 1) Find someone who used civil disobedience (refused to comply with certain laws or to pay taxes and fines, a peaceful form of political protest), a strike, and/or other nonviolent actions. What did they do?

- 2) Find someone who was arrested, jailed, court martialed, and/or interned for their activities, beliefs, or ethnicity. What happened?

- 3) Find someone who began their activism before the age of 20. What did they do?

- 4) Find someone who used the media and/or their own writing or art to draw attention to their issue. How did they use the media, writing, and/or art?

- 5) Find someone who worked against racism. What exactly did they do?

- 6) Find someone who organized “ordinary” people to work collectively to make change. What did they do?

Handout Two: Interview Sheet–Version Two

My name is: (your role) _____

In your role, interview other people at the conference to find the answers to these questions. This is not a race. The goal is to learn as much as you can. For each answer, include the person's name and what you learned in response to the question.

- 1) Find someone who worked on voting rights and/or ran for office. What did they do?

- 2) Find someone who was spied on or tracked by the federal government or state government. How and why?

- 3) Find someone you had never heard of before. What did they do? (Why do you think you might not have heard of them before?)

- 4) Find someone who used the legal system and the courts to challenge injustice. What did they do?

- 5) Find someone who began their activism before the age of 20. What did they do?

- 6) Find someone who is/was a school teacher or librarian. Was their activism related to this role?

Handout Two: Interview Sheet–Version One. Teacher Guide

- 1) Find someone who used civil disobedience (refused to comply with certain laws or to pay taxes and fines, a peaceful form of political protest), a strike, and/or other nonviolent actions. What did they do?

Richard Allen; Joseph Angelo, Dave Archambault II, Dr. Rev. William Barber II, Anne Braden, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, Fannie Lou Hamer, Barbara Rose Johns, Mother Jones, Colin Kaepernick, Rafael Larraenza Hernandez, Yuri Kochiyama, Fred Korematsu, Bob Moses, John O’Riley, Jo Ann Robinson, Bayard Rustin, Linda Sarsour, Emma Tenayuca, Mary Beth Tinker, Destiny Watford, Ida B. Wells

- 2) Find someone who was arrested, jailed, court martialed, and/or interned for their activities, beliefs, or ethnicity. What happened?

Dr. Rev. William Barber II, Anne Braden, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, Fannie Lou Hamer, Mother Jones, Rafael Larraenza Hernandez, Yuri Kochiyama, Fred Korematsu, Bob Moses, John O’Riley, Jo Ann Robinson, Bayard Rustin, Linda Sarsour, Emma Tenayuca, Ida B. Wells

- 3) Find someone who began their activism before the age of 20. What did they do?

Barbara Rose Johns, Henry Highland Garnet, Winona LaDuke, Xiuhtezcatl Martinez, Emma Tenayuca, Mary Beth Tinker, Destiny Watford

- 4) Find someone who used the media and/or their own writing or art to draw attention to their issue. How did they use the media, writing, and/or art?

Fannie Lou Hamer, Mother Jones, Colin Kaepernick, Audre Lorde, Favianna Rodriguez, Ida Tarbell, Ida B. Wells

- 5) Find someone who worked against racism. What exactly did they do?

Richard Allen; Ella Baker, Dr. Rev. William Barber II, Anne Braden, Septima Clark, Shirley Chisholm, CP Ellis, Fannie Lou Hamer, Barbara Rose Johns, Colin Kaepernick, Henry Highland Garnet, Yuri Kochiyama, Audre Lorde, Xiuhtezcatl Martinez, Bob Moses, Paul Robeson, Jo Ann Robinson, Bayard Rustin, Linda Sarsour, Mary Beth Tinker, Destiny Watford, Ida B. Wells

- 6) Find someone who organized “ordinary” people to work collectively to make change. What did they do?

Joseph Angelo; Ella Baker; Dr. Rev. William Barber II; Anne Braden, Septima Clark, CP Ellis, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, Fannie Lou Hamer, Barbara Rose Johns, Mother Jones, Henry Highland Garnet, Yuri Kochiyama, Xiuhtezcatl Martinez, Bob Moses, Paul Robeson, Jo Ann Robinson, Favianna Rodriguez, Bayard Rustin, Linda Sarsour, Emma Tenayuca, Mary Beth Tinker, Destiny Watford, Ida B. Wells

Handout Two: Interview Sheet–Version Two Teacher Guide

- 1) Find someone who worked on voting rights and/or ran for office. What did they do?
Ella Baker, Dr. Rev. William Barber II, Anne Braden, Shirley Chisholm, Fannie Lou Hamer, Winona LaDuke, Bob Moses, Bayard Rustin, Margaret Chase Smith
- 2) Find someone who was spied on or tracked by the federal government or state government. How and why?
Ella Baker; Anne Braden, Fannie Lou Hamer, Bob Moses, Paul Robeson, Bayard Rustin
- 3) Find someone you had never heard of before. What did they do? (Why do you think you might not have heard of them before?)
- 4) Find someone who used the legal system and the courts to challenge injustice. How?
Dr. Rev. William Barber II, Judy Bonds, Fannie Lou Hamer, Barbara Rose Johns, Fred Korematsu, Winona LaDuke, Xiuhtezcatl Martinez, Bob Moses, Jo Ann Robinson, Bayard Rustin, Linda Sarsour, Mary Beth Tinker, Ida B. Wells
- 5) Find someone who began their activism before the age of 20. What did they do?
Barbara Rose Johns, Henry Highland Garnet, Winona LaDuke, Xiuhtezcatl Martinez, Emma Tenayuca, Mary Beth Tinker, Destiny Watford
- 6) Find someone who is/was a school teacher or librarian. Was their activism related to this role?
Septima Clark, Shirley Chisholm, Mother Jones, Barbara Rose Johns, Audre Lorde, Winona LaDuke, Bob Moses, Jo Ann Robinson, Ida Tarbell, Emma Tenayuca, Ida B. Wells

Richard Allen (1760-1831)

I was born into slavery in Delaware. When I was a child, my mother and three of my siblings were sold, and my older brother and sister were left with me at the Sturgis plantation. I taught myself to read and write, and began to attend meetings of the local Methodist Society, which was welcoming to Black people. The Reverend Garrettson came to the Sturgis plantation to preach. He had emancipated the people he enslaved in 1775, and he encouraged other slaveholders to do the same. I performed extra work to earn money and purchased my freedom in 1780. I became a Methodist preacher in 1784 and moved to Philadelphia. Although my congregation was growing quickly, I was only allowed to preach the early morning service. I resented the white congregants' segregating the Blacks for worship and prayer, and decided to create independent worship for African Americans in 1787. In 1816, I united African-American congregations of the Methodist Church in four states to found the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME), the first fully independent Black denomination in the United States, and the other ministers elected me as their first bishop. I opened a day school for African American children, worked actively for abolition, and my home was a stop on the Underground Railroad. I opposed all colonization plans for African Americans in other countries.



Richard Allen (1760-1831)

Joseph Angelo (1896-1978)

I grew up in Camden, New Jersey. In 1917, I joined the U.S. Army during WWI. Overseas I was assigned to a medical detachment commanded by Colonel George S. Patton Jr., who would go on to great fame during WWII. On September 26, 1918, Patton was seriously wounded by a machine gun. I dragged Patton to safety, saving his life. He said that I was “without doubt the bravest man in the American Army.” I was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for my actions. After the war I returned to Camden and found work in a shipyard, but by 1932 I was unemployed and suffering the effects of the Great Depression. WWI veterans had been promised a monetary bonus, but it was not redeemable until 1945. I joined a group of veterans known as the Bonus Expeditionary Force, or Bonus Army, to demand that we receive the money immediately. We went to Washington, D.C. to protest. Both African American and white veterans camped in what were called “Hoovervilles,” named for President Hoover who refused to hear our pleas. On July 28, 1932, Col. Patton and his men invaded our camps to stop the protests with machine guns, tanks, and tear gas. They set fire to the tents, killing two veterans and injuring many more. After the blaze, I approached my old boss, but Patton said, “I do not know this man. Take him away and under no circumstances permit him to return.” After this incident I returned to New Jersey. The treatment of the Bonus Army did not derail Patton nor MacArthur’s careers, but many think it hurt Hoover’s presidential campaign, and he lost by a landslide to Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Our protests helped pave the way for the passing of the G.I. Bill in 1944.



Joseph Angelo (1896-1978)

Dave Archambault II (unknown–)

I was born in Denver and lived on the Pine Ridge Reservation through middle school, when my family moved to Bismarck. I earned a Master's degree and was elected Chairperson of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe in 2013. In 2014, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers decided to allow Energy Transfer Partners to build a billion-dollar oil pipeline called the Dakota Access Pipeline through our treaty and ancestral lands. They did not consult us and ignored the legally-binding treaties the U.S. government has with our Sioux tribe. "This is the third time that the Sioux Nation's lands and resources have been taken without regard for tribal interests. The Sioux peoples signed treaties in 1851 and 1868. The government broke them before the ink was dry. Whether it's gold from the Black Hills or hydropower from the Missouri or oil pipelines that threaten our ancestral inheritance, the tribes have always paid the price for America's prosperity." I was determined to not let the U.S. government continue to take away our clean water and sacred places, so I organized. In 2016, thousands of indigenous peoples and non-Native allies from all over the country and the world came to support us. We peacefully united to stop the destruction, but the state of North Dakota responded violently. I went to the U.N. Council on Human Rights. After two years of resistance, we were eventually successful—the courts told the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to stop construction of the pipeline. I continue to be vigilant to protect our water and indigenous human rights.



Dave Archambault II (unknown–)

Ella Baker (1903–1986)

My grandfather was a civil rights activist back in the 1850s, and I carried on the tradition. I taught sharecroppers and immigrant workers about world issues, and I was not afraid to teach about racism in the U.S. when few people were talking about it. In the 1940s, I became a leader in the NAACP and traveled around the country, trying to recruit new members. After the Montgomery Bus Boycott in 1955, I urged Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. to organize the Black community and build on the momentum of the Boycott. I spent two years organizing King's Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), despite my disagreement with the SCLC's policy valuing strong central leadership over grassroots organizing of ordinary people to take collective action. I was instrumental in planning many civil disobedience actions. Recognizing the importance of student voices in the fight for social justice, I also actively recruited student leaders from 56 different colleges across the United States. After the Greensboro sit-ins at Woolworth in 1960, I left SCLC and helped form the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). For years, I served SNCC as an advisor and incorporated teaching techniques into my organizing work. The FBI tracked and spied on me because of my activism. My friends and colleagues honored me with the title "*Fundi*," a Swahili word for a person who passes skills and knowledge on to the younger generation.



Ella Baker (1903–1986)

Dr. Rev. William Barber II (1963–)

I was born in Indianapolis, but my parents wanted to build a “New South” in the 20th century, so we moved back to my father’s home in North Carolina. I went to college and then earned a Master of Divinity and a Doctorate. For more than 20 years, I have served as the pastor of the Greenleaf Christian Church in Goldsboro, North Carolina. I became president of the N.C. chapter of the NAACP in 2005. As I worked to re-energize the chapter, I began working with other progressive organizations, including gay rights groups, unions, church groups, and more, to form a “fusion” coalition group. “The one thing they don’t want to see is us crossing over racial lines and class lines and gender lines and labor lines. When this coalition comes together, you’re going to see a New South.” Together we created a reform agenda with ideas such as raising the state minimum wage, ensuring health coverage for all, and expanding public financing of elections. Some of these ideas were turned into bills and introduced to the state legislature. When Republicans took over the legislature in 2013, our progress was threatened. On Monday, April 29, 2013, I organized a civil disobedience action at the state legislature with members of our progressive coalition in the first protest of the “Moral Mondays” movement. The next Monday, scores of marchers continued protesting the regressive laws being passed. In 2014, thousands of protesters gathered at the “Mass Moral March” to show their support for the Moral Mondays movement. Many of us have been arrested for our activism, myself included.



Dr. Rev. William Barber II (1963–)

Judy Bonds (1952–2011)

I was born and raised in the mountains of West Virginia. I come from a long line of coal miners and my family mined, too. But then corporations started a mining practice called Mountain Top Removal, in which they literally blow the tops of mountains off to reach the coal inside. These explosions in the mountains kill all the trees, which makes flooding in the surrounding towns more likely. The waste contaminates the water and toxic dust from the explosions covers all of the towns causing lots of respiratory and neurological problems. “In Southern West Virginia we live in a war zone. I don’t mind being poor. I mind being blasted and poisoned. There ARE no jobs on a dead planet.” I was forced to evacuate my home and town where my family had lived for generations. That’s when I decided to become the director of Coal River Mountain Watch. I did everything I could to stop the corporations from getting permits to do their unsafe work. I suffered vulgar personal insults, was slapped in the face, and was arrested for speaking out against mountaintop removal. In 2003, I received a prestigious award called the Goldman Environmental Prize, and made a documentary in 2007 called *Mountain Top Removal* to get more people involved in resisting the destruction of our environment and homes.



Judy Bonds (1952– 2011)

Anne Braden (1924–2006)

I grew up in Alabama and became a journalist after college. While covering civil rights causes for the *Louisville Courier Journal*, I met African Americans, labor organizers, Communists, and other radicals and underwent a political transformation. My husband Carl Braden and I left mainstream journalism to dedicate ourselves fully to social and racial justice activism, working as writers for a consortium of interracial union locals in Kentucky. In 1954, I helped African American Andrew Wade buy a house in an all-white neighborhood. “It would have been unthinkable to us to say no. We lived in a segregated world, but we were part of a community of Black and white people who were opposing it.” White neighbors shot out the windows of the Wades’ new home, burned a cross in front of it, and ultimately blew it up with dynamite. Instead of investigating the neighbors, the FBI began investigating our alleged Communist Party affiliations. In October 1954 I was indicted for sedition (inciting people to rebel against the government). My husband was sentenced to prison, but his conviction was later overturned. We were blacklisted from jobs, threatened, and hated by many white Southerners for what we did. We beat another sedition charge in 1967 while organizing against strip mining in Kentucky. Throughout my life I focused consistently on the responsibility of whites to work for racial justice. In 1972, I wrote the widely read “Letter to White Southern Women” urging the women’s liberation movement to fight racism. I organized across racial divides in the new environmental and antinuclear movements in the 1970s and 1980s and beyond.



Anne Braden (1924–2006)

Septima Clark (1898–1987)

From the very beginning of my life, my parents made sure that I understood the importance of education. My mother also demonstrated to me what real courage was. I remember sitting on our front porch watching my mother sternly warn a troublesome policeman to stay off of our property. “I’m a little bit of leather, but I’m well put together, so you don’t come in here.” She gave me the confidence I needed when I later found myself faced with the Ku Klux Klan. My activism focused on increasing the educational opportunities for Black citizens. I helped establish “Citizenship Schools” so African Americans could receive the education they needed in order to vote. I saw the right to vote as a key part of U.S. citizenship. I continued to struggle for civil rights even after I lost my job as a teacher because of my NAACP membership. Ironically, much later in life, I ended up serving two terms on the same Charleston County School Board that had once fired me. Despite several heart attacks, I never really retired. In 1978, a fire killed four children who had been left home alone by their working mother. I was upset by the refusal of the City of Charleston to respond by funding a daycare center, so together with other concerned women I raised money to rent a room and pay a teacher. The daycare center that grew out of that experience is named after me.



Septima Clark (1898–1987)

Shirley Chisholm (1924– 2005)

I was born in Brooklyn and raised by my grandparents in Barbados. I returned to New York to attend high school. After earning my M.A. in elementary education from Columbia University in 1952, I became a nursery school teacher and eventually became the director of the school. In 1968, I began a new career by getting myself elected to Congress. I was the first Black woman to serve in the House of Representatives. During my time in Congress, I fought hard for the rights of women, workers, and children. After three years in Congress, I decided to run for president. Although I did not win the race, I was the first Black woman to make an attempt at it. After the presidential election, I stayed in Congress for 11 more years. I retired to Williamsville, NY, and took a leadership role in the National Political Congress of Black Women. Throughout my life, I fought for civil rights. Through my work as a teacher and as a politician, I was driven to improve the rights of African Americans, women, and children. My career as an activist is memorialized in my biography, which shares its title with my personal slogan, “Unbought and Unbossed.”



Shirley Chisholm (1924– 2005)

CP Ellis (1927- 2005)

I was born in 1927 and had four children with my wife in North Carolina. We were very poor and it was very difficult to support my family. I had been working since I was in eighth grade and had dropped out of school to support my mother and sister. No matter how much overtime I worked, we continued to live in poverty. I began to be very bitter and was looking for someone to blame. My father was a member of the Ku Klux Klan and taught me to blame Black people. I saw the other poor white people at the Klan gatherings and felt like I belonged. I decided to join the KKK and soon became my chapter president. I joined a committee on school integration. My goal had been to disrupt the process, but instead I underwent a transformation. I was named co-chair along with a local Black activist named Ann Atwater. I began to realize though that the rich white people in power in the U.S. were promoting segregation and fighting between poor whites and Blacks so they could maintain control. I renounced being a member of the Klan, saying: “If schools are going to be better by me tearing up this card, I shall do so.” The Klan denounced and threatened me. I became lifelong friends with Ann Atwater, and went on to become a labor union organizer to continue fighting against the oppression of the poor and for workers’ rights. I shared my story in an [interview with Studs Terkel](#).



CP Ellis (1927- 2005)

Elizabeth Gurley Flynn (1890-1964)

Introduced to socialism by my parents, I gave my first public speech when I was 16. It was called, “What Socialism Will Do for Women.” [In those days lots of activists were openly socialist or communist. It was not as unusual.] In 1912, I was one of the leaders of the Bread and Roses strike of mostly women workers in Lawrence, Massachusetts, who were fighting for more pay and dignity. They said it couldn’t be done, but we united workers from dozens of countries to successfully defeat the bosses. Joe Hill wrote his great song “The Rebel Girl” about me. And I was a rebel. I helped found the radical labor union, the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), as well as the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU). I was also the first woman to lead the U.S. Communist Party. One of my statements is often quoted, “History has a long-range perspective. It ultimately passes stern judgment on tyrants and vindicates those who fought, suffered, were imprisoned, and died for human freedom, against political oppression and economic slavery.” In 1951, I was arrested and prosecuted under the Smith Act which prohibited advocating the overthrow of the U.S. government. I served two years in Federal Prison Camp, Alderson in West Virginia. I wrote about the experience in a memoir titled, *The Alderson Story: My Life as a Political Prisoner*.



Elizabeth Gurley Flynn (1890-1964)

Fannie Lou Hamer (1917–1977)

Born in Montgomery County, Mississippi, I was the granddaughter of enslaved people, the daughter of two sharecroppers, and the youngest of 20 children. When I was six, I began to help my parents work in the cotton fields, and when I was 12, I had to drop out of school to work full time. In 1962, I went with 17 other people to register to vote. On our way back, we were stopped by police and put in jail—the police told us that we were being arrested because our bus was the wrong color. When I finally arrived back home, the man who owned my family’s land told me that I could not stay in our house if I insisted on voting. So, I left and began working with the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) on voter registration. I was arrested multiple times and beaten by the police. The FBI surveilled my activities. I was a vocal critic of the FBI for doing very little to protect us. In 1964, I helped found the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP). When I spoke at the Democratic Convention to describe the conditions in Mississippi, President Lyndon Johnson scheduled an emergency press conference to divert media attention. But his tactic backfired. My speech was broadcast on the evening news on national television and, finally, the world knew of our struggles. In 1968, I founded Freedom Farms Corporation, a land cooperative that provided poor farmers with land they farmed and lived on, and eventually purchased themselves. In the last decade of my life, I received a lot of recognition. The National Council of Negro Women started the Fannie Lou Hamer Day Care Center in 1970, and I became the chair of the board of directors.



Fannie Lou Hamer (1917–1977)

Rafael Larraenza Hernandez (1955 -)

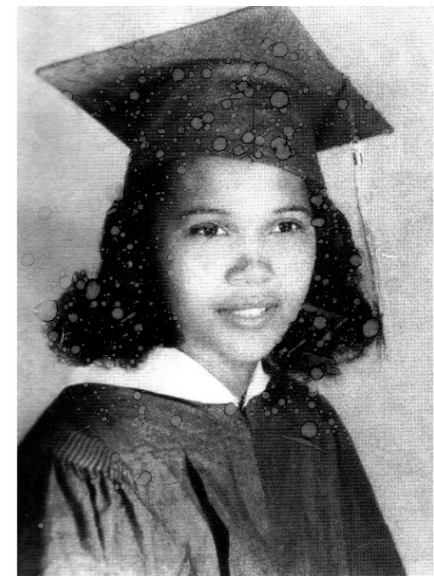
I grew up in Mexico and made the dangerous journey to the United States when I was a teenager. For three days I was lost in the desert trying crossing the border. I barely survived. When I got to the U.S., I legalized my status, became a mechanic, and started a family. Then one day, when I was in my early 40s, I was watching the news and saw that there was a Latino man crossing the border into the United States and that he was lost, just like I had been. I drove two hours to join the search to find him and make sure he survived. But when I arrived, there was no search party looking for him. I knew that if I didn't help him, no one would. So I found two men who grew up near the mountains where he was lost to help and we found the man, alive. I realized that hundreds of migrants die each year trying to reach the United States in hopes of a better life, and no one was helping them. So I decided to start an organization, Angeles del Desierto (Desert Angels), to search and rescue lost migrants. Despite being assaulted, arrested, breaking bones, tearing ligaments and losing my job and first wife, I have continued spending all my time and money for the last twenty years searching for migrants lost and dying along the border, and helping them complete their journey. Some people don't think I should be helping migrants who are coming into the U.S. without papers, but I believe no one should die for seeking a better life.



Rafael Larraenza Hernandez (1955 -)

Barbara Rose Johns (1935-1991)

I was born in New York City in 1935. During World War II, I moved to Farmville, Virginia, to live on a farm with my grandmother. I was frustrated by the segregated schools in our county, which had poor facilities, shabby equipment, and no science laboratories or gymnasium. I took my concerns to a teacher who told me to "...do something about it." Although she was being dismissive and discouraging, I began to formulate a plan. We assembled the student council members and make a plan to go on strike. On April 23, 1951, when I was 16 years old, I led the students at my school in a strike to protest the substandard conditions at Robert Russa Moton High School. We made signs, I gave a speech, and we marched out of the school. Because of my planning and persistence, NAACP lawyers met with students and the community and filed a lawsuit at the federal courthouse in Richmond, Virginia. The case was called *Davis v. Prince Edward*. In 1954, the Farmville case became one of five cases that the U.S. Supreme Court reviewed in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* when it declared school segregation unconstitutional. After the strike I received threats from local racist groups, so I went to live in Montgomery, Alabama. I graduated from college and went on to raise five children while I worked as a public school librarian in Philadelphia.



Barbara Rose Johns (1935-1991)

Mary Harris “Mother” Jones (1830–1930)

I began my life near Cork, Ireland, grew up in Ontario, Canada, and then came to the U.S., where I worked as a dressmaker and a school teacher. In 1867, my husband George Jones and my four children all died in a yellow fever epidemic in Memphis. Four years later, I lost all of my belongings in the Great Chicago Fire. I spent the second half of my life involved in the labor movement. From the 1890s through the 1920s, I worked tirelessly as a political “hell-raiser,” advancing social and political causes such as the abolition of child labor, and organizing the United Mine Workers. In 1905, I helped found the International Workers of the World (IWW). Coal miners and their families called me “the miners’ angel” and, after I began referring to the miners as “my boys,” I took on the nickname “Mother” Jones. I was a charismatic speaker, adept at staging public events to get publicity for striking workers. My physical courage was legendary. I was arrested many times, accused of sedition, libel, slander, and I was even court-martialed and accused of conspiring to commit murder. My opponents called me “the most dangerous woman in America.” When I was denounced on the floor of the U.S. Senate as the “grandmother of all agitators,” I said I hoped to live long enough to be the great-grandmother of all agitators. I lived in a time when women were not allowed to vote, but I said, “You don’t need a vote to raise hell. You need convictions and a voice.” I am perhaps best known for my saying, “Pray for the dead, and fight like hell for the living.”



“Mother” Jones (1830–1930)

Colin Kaepernick (1987–)

I was born in Wisconsin and moved to California when I was four with my parents, who adopted me when I was a baby. My lifelong dream to play professional football came true when I joined the San Francisco 49ers in the spring of 2011. You can learn about my football career online. Today I want to focus on how I followed in the footsteps of other athletes who have used their fame to bring attention to social justice issues. There is a long list of people worth learning about, including Muhammad Ali, John Carlos, Tommie Smith, Peter Norman, Mahmoud Abdul-Rauf, Toni Smith, and many more. In protest of the oppression of African Americans and other people of color, and inspired by the Movement for Black Lives, I decided not to stand for the National Anthem before a preseason game in late August 2016. It became a national news story. I used the media to draw attention to other stories that had been largely ignored or misrepresented by the mainstream press. While I got a lot of hate mail and even death threats, I was moved by the outpouring of support, including U.S. military veterans who used the hashtag #veteransforKaepernick. Recently I have created a foundation to donate money to youth organizing camps, a medical clinic at Standing Rock, and more.



Colin Kaepernick (1987–)

Henry Highland Garnet (1815–1882)

I was born enslaved in Maryland in 1815. When I was nine, my family secured our freedom via the Underground Railroad. I entered the African Free School in New York City in 1826. In 1834, some of my classmates and I formed our own club, the Garrison Literary and Benevolent Association. Because the society was named after an abolitionist, the public school where we wanted to meet insisted that the name be changed. To do otherwise would be to risk mob violence. We decided to keep the club's name, and instead changed the venue. More 150 people (most African American) under 20 came to the first meeting. I studied theology and became a minister. In 1843, I made a speech considered by many to be very radical, "An Address to the Slaves of the U.S.A." I spoke directly to those enslaved, urging them to rebel against their masters. Because of my outspoken views and national reputation, I was a prime target during the 1863 New York City Draft Riots. Rioters mobbed the street where I lived and called for me by name. Fortunately several neighbors helped to conceal myself and my family. I was also involved in the fight to desegregate streetcars. I was appointed the U.S. Minister to Liberia in 1881.



Henry Highland Garnet (1815–1882)

Helen Keller (1880-1968)

When I was only a one and a half I got a very bad fever and became deaf and blind. You have probably read about me and know that despite this, I learned to read and write Braille when I was seven, and when I was 10, I learned how to speak. I became the first deaf and blind person to earn a college degree. I became an activist for social services for the blind. Everyone praised me for this work. What children's books usually do not mention is that I also came to realize that poor people are more likely to be blind than rich people. Even though I had a lot going against me because of my physical disabilities, I acknowledged that "I owed my success partly to the advantages of my birth and environment. I have learned that the power to rise is not within the reach of everyone." This led me to visit workers and immigrants where I saw their horrendous living and working conditions. I joined the Socialist Party and became very active in the labor movement. This is when the media stopped praising me. They thought I was wrong to advocate against injustices other than blindness, but they couldn't stop me. I continued fighting for workers', immigrants' and women's rights. I was also an activist against war and nuclear bombs, supported the NAACP, was part of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) and helped found the American Civil Liberties Union. (You might want to check out the books in your school library about me. Do they mention my activism?)



Helen Keller (1880-1968)

Yuri Kochiyama (1921–2014)

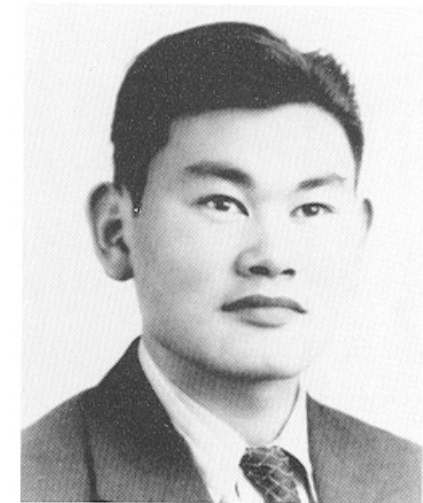
I was born in a small town on the California coast in 1921. My parents were first-generation Japanese immigrants. The bombing of Pearl Harbor, which brought the United States into World War II, changed my life. During the war, my family, as well as many other Japanese families, were forcibly removed from our homes and imprisoned in internment camps. We were held there for two years during the war. Most of the people being held in these camps were U.S. citizens, but our Japanese ancestry made us targets of racism. The time that I spent in the internment camp opened my eyes to the similarities between the discrimination that I was experiencing and the discrimination that I had seen against Blacks in the U.S. Once I was released from the camp, I dedicated my life to eliminating racism, fighting for civil rights, and protesting inequality. In 1960, I moved to Harlem, New York with my husband. I met Malcolm X and joined his group, the Organization for Afro-American Unity, which worked for racial justice and human rights. I was with Malcolm X when he was shot and killed. I continued to work for racial justice and human rights. For example, in 1977 I joined a group of Puerto Ricans who took over the Statue of Liberty to draw attention to the struggle for Puerto Rican independence. My advice to young people was: “Don’t become too narrow. Live fully. Meet all kinds of people. You’ll learn something from everyone. Follow what you feel in your heart.”



Yuri Kochiyama (1921–2014)

Fred Korematsu (1919–2005)

During World War II, President Roosevelt ordered all Japanese and Japanese Americans to be rounded up and put in “relocation camps” even if they were born in the United States; even if there was not a shred of evidence that they’d done anything wrong. I was born in Oakland, California. But because I came from Japanese ancestry, I was fired from my job at the shipyard when war broke out. When the government ordered me to go to an internment camp, I refused. I was arrested, but I vowed to fight for my rights as a citizen. And I did. I took my case, *Korematsu v. the United States*, all the way to the Supreme Court, the court ruled that Roosevelt’s order was constitutional in 1944. I was interned with my family for the duration of the war. I continued to be an activist when we were released. I complained because I was being paid half of what my white coworkers were being paid, and my boss threatened to call the police on me. This discouraged me from speaking up. I got married and raised a family. Years later, a lawyer found records in the National Archives that were withheld from the Supreme Court. He asked me if I wanted to try to reopen my case. I agreed and my conviction for evading internment was overturned in 1983. President Bill Clinton awarded me the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1998.



Fred Korematsu (1919–2005)

Audre Lorde (1934–1992)

I was born in New York City to immigrant parents from the West Indies. My childhood was spent in Harlem during the Depression, listening to my mother's stories. The skill that my mother had with words got me interested in writing. I published my first poem in *Seventeen Magazine* while still in high school. I attended college in New York and became a librarian in New York public schools. I was an active member of the gay rights community in Greenwich Village. I became a professor of poetry at Tougaloo College in Mississippi and used my teaching and writing to encourage my students to pursue social justice. I explored civil rights, feminism, and Black female identity in my work. "Those of us who stand outside the circle of this society's definition of acceptable women; those of us who have been forged in the crucibles of difference -- those of us who are poor, who are lesbians, who are Black, who are older -- know that survival is not an academic skill. It is learning how to take our differences and make them strengths. For the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house. They may allow us temporarily to beat him at his own game, but they will never enable us to bring about genuine change. And this fact is only threatening to those women who still define the master's house as their only source of support." I published six books of poetry and many individual essays, and I co-founded the Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press. When asked to describe myself, I said I am a, "Black lesbian, mother, warrior, poet." I documented my 14-year battle against cancer in *The Cancer Journals* and *A Burst of Light*.



Audre Lorde (1934–1992)

Winona LaDuke (1959–)

I grew up in Los Angeles, California. My family and I are Anishinabe from the Makwa Dodaem (Bear Clan) of the Mississippi Band of the White Earth reservation in northern Minnesota. Both of my parents inspired in me a commitment to activism. While I was in college at Harvard, I became involved in Native American environmental issues. At the age of 18, I spoke before the United Nations about Indian issues and quickly became a voice for American Indian economic and environmental concerns throughout the United States and internationally. After graduating from Harvard, I moved to the White Earth reservation in Minnesota. I started my life there as a teacher, but soon became involved in a lawsuit to recover lands originally held by the Anishinabe people and taken illegally by the U.S. government. I ran for office with Ralph Nader as candidate for vice-president in the 1996 and 2000 presidential campaigns. At present, I am actively involved in Native American environmental work throughout the United States.



Winona LaDuke (1959–)

Xiuhtezcatl Martinez (2000–)

My name is an Aztec word pronounced Shoe-Tez-Caht. I was born in Boulder, Colorado. My mother, Tamara, founded an environmental organization before I was born. At the age of six, I asked my mom if I could speak at an environmental rally in front of 300 people. I have been speaking out to defend the environment ever since. When I was nine I learned the city government in Boulder was going to start spraying new unhealthy chemicals in public parks, so about 50 of us kids brought it to the City Council. And it worked. The Council banned the use of those chemicals in public parks in Boulder. We were so fired up after that. Today I'm a hip hop artist and youth director of Earth Guardians, an organization of young activists and artists working together to create positive change in our communities to address climate change and other important issues that will define our future. I am a plaintiff in a lawsuit against the Obama administration for their failure to protect the atmosphere and our future. I have travelled across the globe talking about the dangers of climate change, fracking, and other environmental issues. I have received the 2013 United States Community Service Award from President Obama, the Peace First Prize in 2015, and the Nickelodeon Halo Award. "People listen to me more, because I stand out. They see a young person addressing issues that adults are afraid to talk about. There's a lot of cowardice in adults speaking up about issues that matter to them. But when people hear this stuff from me, you see them realize, 'So every problem that we see in the world is going to be left to this kid and his peers? How can we change that?'"



Xiuhtezcatl Martinez (2000–)

Robert “Bob” Parris Moses (1935–)

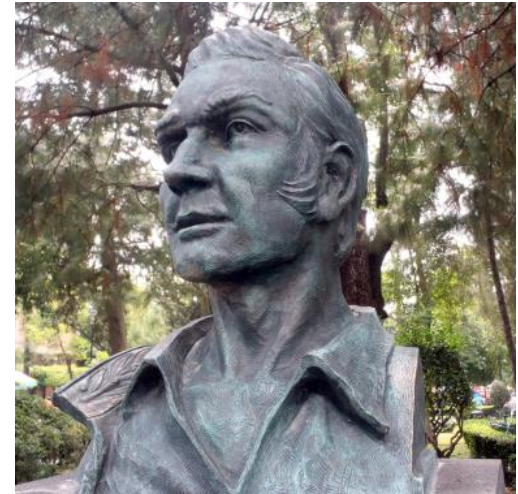
I grew up in Harlem and had never even been to the South, but when I saw newspaper pictures of college students in Greensboro conducting sit-ins, I knew I had to go. I left a good job teaching math at a New York prep school to work with the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC—everybody just called it “snick” in Mississippi.) I was 24 and it was 1960. I wore bib overalls and black-rimmed glasses. I was quiet and philosophical. People called me a leader, but I was really an organizer. There's a difference. Unlike some civil rights organizations, SNCC believed in group-centered leadership—helping empower ordinary local people to organize Movement work in their own communities. Mr. Amzie Moore, a long time and well-respected civil rights leader in the Delta, convinced me that voting rights were the key to change. Voter registration was rough. We would go to sharecroppers' homes, to churches, out in the fields—anyplace we could talk to people about signing up to vote. People were scared. They knew they could lose their jobs or lives. It happened to some folks. It was dangerous for us, too. A lot of SNCC people were beaten, firebombed, harassed just for trying to help people register. I was beaten and arrested in Amite County. But we didn't give up. We just kept taking people down to the courthouse to try to register. And gradually, some, but not many, people succeeded. Today, I run the Algebra Project.



Robert “Bob” Moses (1935–)

John O’Riley (1817-1850)

Originally, I’m from a small town in Ireland. When I immigrated to the U.S., I joined the U.S. Army and became a drillmaster at West Point, training men to be soldiers. I was sent to invade Mexico with the Army as part of the U.S.-Mexican War in 1846. The U.S. had no right to be there—they were trying to seize Mexican lands. It was like the British occupying Ireland. Mexicans were treated cruelly. The Mexicans appealed to me to leave the U.S. Army and to join theirs. And I did. I became a lieutenant and led about 260 U.S. soldiers who joined me fighting on the Mexican side in what was known as “St. Patrick’s Battalion.” In Boston and Philadelphia, the Protestants had burned our Catholic churches. The Mexicans are Catholic, too. But then we were captured by the U.S. and court-martialed. Most of us were sentenced to death by hanging. The “lucky” ones were given 50 lashes with a whip, forced to dig the graves for our friends who were executed, and then branded on our cheeks with the letter “D” for deserter. After I was branded, I was released and eventually rejoined the Mexican forces, where I continued to serve after the end of the war.



John O’Riley (1817–1850)

Paul Robeson (1898-1976)

I was born in New Jersey. My father, who escaped enslavement, raised my four siblings and me after my mother died when I was only six. During high school, I had lots of jobs to help support my family, but I still got very good grades and was an excellent football player. I earned a scholarship and went to private college, where I was the third Black student. I was on the varsity football, baseball, basketball, and track teams, part of the glee club, and won the oratory award all four years of college. Despite excelling in many areas, graduating as my college’s valedictorian, and putting myself through law school by playing professional football, I faced a lot of racial prejudice. I changed careers – taking up acting and singing. I became famous for my dramatic theatrical performances and concert singing. I moves to Britain where I was the first Black man in almost 100 years to play the leading role in Shakespeare’s Othello. I was also in a play about mining and began to fight for better pay and working conditions for miners. When I moved back to the U.S., I continued fighting for workers’ rights and against racism, leading an anti-lynching campaign. I met with President Truman and told him that if he did not enact anti-lynching laws, "the Negroes will defend themselves." The U.S. government tracked and surveilled me, and accused me of being a Communist. But I wasn’t afraid. I told Congress, “My father was a slave, and my people died to build this country, and I am going to stay here, and have a part of it just like you. And no fascist-minded people will drive me from it. Is that clear?” The U.S. government then took away my passport, canceled my concerts, and blacklisted me, but I continued to promote social justice and inspire future activists.



Paul Robeson (1898–1976)

Jo Ann Robinson (1912–1992)

Born near Culloden, Georgia, I was the youngest of 12 children. I was educated in the segregated public schools of Macon and then at Fort Valley State College. Following my college graduation, I became a public school teacher in Macon. After five years of teaching in Macon, I took a job at Alabama State College and was in Montgomery during the Montgomery Bus Boycott. In May 1954, more than 18 months before the arrest of Rosa Parks, I wrote to Montgomery's mayor as the Women's Political Council (WPC) president. In my letter, I threatened a Black boycott of city buses if discrimination did not stop. After Rosa Parks was arrested in December 1955, I played a central role in the start of the protest by producing the leaflets that spread the word of the boycott among the Black citizens of Montgomery. In 1960, I left Alabama and eventually settled in Los Angeles, where I taught. You can read more about my story in my book, *The Montgomery Bus Boycott and the Women Who Started It: The Memoir of Jo Ann Gibson Robinson*.



Jo Ann Robinson (1912–1992)

Favianna Rodriguez (1978–)

I was born in east Oakland, California. My parents had emigrated to the U.S. from Peru. I have been in love with art since elementary school. I identify as queer and Latina with Afro-Peruvian roots. As a teenager I lived in Mexico for two years and learned about the connection between art and activism. Since then, my art has addressed issues such as migration, economic inequality, gender justice, and ecology. I work on a lot of collaborative projects with other artists. I helped start a group called CultureStrike, a national arts organization that engages artists, writers and performers in migrant rights. I also cofounded a group called Presente.org, a national online organizing network dedicated to the political empowerment of Latino communities. You can see a program I helped produce on YouTube called "Migration is Beautiful." In a recent interview, I explained, "Those of us who fight for migrant rights are not only fighting back, we want to reframe the way migrants are viewed. We want to expose the tragic losses that have resulted from unjust immigration laws, and we want to inspire and challenge people to reimagine migration as something beautiful and natural — something we all do."



Favianna Rodriguez (1978–)

Bayard Rustin (1912–1987)

I was born and raised in Pennsylvania by Quaker parents who were involved in civil rights work. I moved to Harlem when I was in my twenties and made my living as a nightclub singer while continuing with my civil rights work. I was a strong believer in the nonviolent teachings of Mahatma Gandhi. I went to jail for refusing to fight during World War II. I faced discrimination not only for being a Black man, but also because of my socialist beliefs and homosexuality. Because of my arrest for homosexual activity in 1953 (this was illegal in some states at the time) and my affiliation with the Communist Party in 1941, I worked mostly behind the scenes as an advisor to civil rights groups, where my skills as a strategic organizer made me an invaluable asset. I mentored Dr. Martin Luther King on how to use nonviolence in the civil rights movement, specifically during the Montgomery Bus Boycott. Early on, I recognized the leadership potential in Dr. King and helped him found the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). In 1960, I resigned from the SCLC after a Congressman threatened to spread false rumors that I was in a relationship with Dr. King. I was instrumental in organizing the 1963 “March on Washington” where Dr. King moved the nation with his powerful oration. The FBI investigated me relentlessly—my FBI file is approximately 10,000 pages long. In 1977 I met and fell in love with Walter Naegle. I spent the final years of my life explicitly calling for gay rights.



Bayard Rustin (1912-1987)

Linda Sarsour (1980–)

I was born in Brooklyn, the oldest of seven children born to my Palestinian-immigrant parents. I got married at 17 in an arranged marriage and had my first of three children when I was 19. I planned to be an English teacher, but my father’s cousin co-founded the Arab American Association and I started organizing with them right before September 11, 2001. After the attacks, I witnessed the New York City Police Department targeting and spying on Muslim Americans. Since then, I have broken traditional stereotypes of how Muslim women “should” act and am vocally at the forefront of racial justice and civil rights work. I fought for NYC Public Schools to observe Muslim holidays and for the NYC Police Department to end bias-based profiling. I see the connections between police tactics on Muslims and on the Black community. I founded Muslims for Ferguson and I am active in and have been arrested for my participation in #BlackLivesMatter protests. I helped organize a march with the Justice League NYC from New York to Washington to end police brutality, and with the organization Respond with Love I have raised hundreds of thousands of dollars to rebuild Black churches and support arson victims in South Carolina. When my father’s cousin died in a car crash but I survived it, I became the Executive Director of the Arab American Association of New York. I continue fighting to end Islamophobia, mass incarceration, NYCPD stop-and-frisk and continue advocating for women, gays, prison inmates, victims of racial profiling as well as Muslim Americans.



Linda Sarsour (1980 -)

Margaret Chase Smith (1897–1995)

I was born in Maine, started working when I was 12, and was the captain of my basketball team. I graduated and had lots of jobs, including business executive and teacher. After I got married, I was elected to the Maine Republican State Committee and my husband was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in Washington D.C. When he died, I campaigned to fill his seat and became the first female U.S. Rep. from Maine. I was known as someone who didn't always do things the same as everyone else in my political party. After eight years in the House, I was elected to be Maine's first female U.S. Senator. At this time, in 1950, a fellow Republican Senator named Joseph McCarthy started persecuting people in our own country. He accused people of being gay and Communists and said that they were "un-American" traitors. He made life horribly difficult and traumatic for the people he accused, and many people were afraid to disagree with him for fear of being persecuted themselves. I stood up and gave a long speech on the Senate floor called the "Declaration of Conscience." I defended everyone's "right to criticize...right to hold unpopular beliefs...right to protest; the right of independent thought." I also said, "I don't want to see the Republican Party ride to political victory on the four horsemen of calumny -- fear, ignorance, bigotry, and smear." Sick of the status quo, I decided to run for U.S. President and became the first woman to have my name officially considered for nomination for U.S. President at a major political party's convention. Throughout my career, I supported increased educational funding and civil rights.



Margaret Chase Smith (1897-1995)

Ida Tarbell (1857–1944)

I was born in Pennsylvania when oil was first being developed in America. My father started a small oil producing business to provide for my family, but was adversely affected by schemes between the railroads and large oil companies to put small operators out of business. At this time, it was uncommon for women to go to school or work, but I graduated from college, the only woman in my class. I became a teacher, then a writer, and started a new type of journalism. I used sources of information nobody had ever used before and talked to people that had never been interviewed to find out the truth. In 1900, I started researching business practices of industrialist John D. Rockefeller and the massive Standard Oil organization. I researched thousands of documents all over the country and interviewed powerful executives, regulators, competitors and experts. I exposed Standard Oil's corrupt monopoly and they were sued by the U.S. government for doing illegal business. They called what I did muckraking, but today it's called investigative journalism. I was its founder because I resisted accepting injustices and exposed them for what they were.



Ida Tarbell (1857-1944)

Emma Tenayuca (1916–1999)

I was born in San Antonio, Texas. One of 11 children, and I lived with my grandparents when I was young. My first knowledge of the plight of workers came from visits to the “Plaza del Zacate,” the Trafalgar Square of San Antonio where socialists and anarchists came to speak. I was first arrested at the age of 16, at a union picket against the Finck Cigar Company. From 1934-48, I supported almost every strike in the city, writing leaflets, visiting homes of strikers, and joining them on picket lines. “I was arrested a number of times. I never thought in terms of fear. I thought in terms of justice.” Contact with fired workers led me to join the Workers Alliance (WA) in 1936 and the Communist Party in 1937. The WA held demonstrations for jobs, not relief, and demanded that Mexican workers have the right to strike without fear of deportation, and the right to a minimum wage. When 12,000 pecan shellers marched out of the factories in 1938, I was unanimously elected strike leader. What started out as a movement for organization for equal wages turned into a mass movement against starvation, for civil rights, for a minimum wage law, and it changed the character of West Side San Antonio. As a result of the anti-Mexican, anti-Communist, and anti-union hysteria that pervaded the U.S., I was forced to leave Texas to ensure my safety and well-being. I returned to San Antonio years later and worked as a teacher. I dedicated my life to speaking out at a time when neither Mexicans nor women were expected to speak at all. I became known as “*La Pasionaria*.”



Emma Tenayuca (1916–1999)

Mary Beth Tinker (1952–)

I grew up in Iowa where my father was a Methodist minister. My parents taught me that religious ideals should be put into action, so my family got involved in the Civil Rights Movement. In 1965, when I was thirteen years old, I became very concerned about the war in Vietnam. My brothers and sisters and I, along with some other students, decided to wear black armbands to school to mourn the dead on both sides of the Vietnam War and to support a Christmas truce called by Senator Bobby Kennedy that year. The Des Moines school board tried to block us from wearing the armbands, and most of the students who wore them were suspended. After we returned to school, we wore black clothing to protest how we were treated. We thought our right to free speech was being violated, and with the help of the American Civil Liberties Union, we filed a case that went all the way to the Supreme Court in *Tinker v. Des Moines*. In 1969, we won! Justice Abe Fortas wrote in the majority opinion that students and teachers do not “shed their constitutional rights...at the schoolhouse gate.” For years, I was a pediatric nurse. Now, I travel the country to educate young people about their rights, and to hear how they’re using those rights. I’ve decided that’s good for kids’ health, too. In 2006, the ACLU National Board of Directors’ Youth Affairs Committee renamed its annual youth affairs award the “Mary Beth Tinker Youth Involvement Award.”



Mary Beth Tinker (1952–)

Destiny Watford (1996-)

I grew up in a tight-knit Baltimore neighborhood, Curtis Bay. Our neighborhood has a high number of oil refineries, chemical plants, and other facilities that emit pollution. Many of my neighbors suffer from asthma and lung cancer. In high school, I attended a play called “Enemy of the People,” about a community that was being poisoned by a polluted hot spring. The play struck a chord with me, and after discussing it with a school advisor, I co-founded Free Your Voice, a student organization dedicated to community rights and social justice. With plans for the nation’s largest trash incinerator to be built in Curtis Bay moving ahead, we decided to protect our community from the plant’s pollution and bring positive alternatives within reach. We found out Baltimore City Schools had signed an agreement to purchase energy from the incinerator, so we attended a school board meeting to urge them to divest from the project. I gave a compelling presentation, students showcased art, and parents testified. By the end of 2015, all 22 incinerator customers canceled their contracts. The victory marked a moment of rebirth for residents who finally felt that their voices were heard. We put intense public pressure on government agencies to pull the project’s permits. In 2016, the Maryland Department of the Environment declared the incinerator’s permit invalid. Now we are pushing to reclaim the site for clean energy alternatives such as a solar farm and a recycling center. In 2016, I won the Goldman Environmental Prize. I am now a college student and continue to organize.



Destiny Watford (1996-)

Ida B. Wells (1862-1932)

I was born into slavery in Holly Springs, Mississippi, just months prior to emancipation in 1862. When my parents died of yellow fever when I was 14, I began teaching to support my seven younger siblings. When I was 22, a train conductor ordered me to move to a segregated railroad car. I refused, and was forcibly removed. I sued the railroad and won. The lawsuit was later overturned, but from that point on I worked to overcome injustices to people of color and to women. In 1889 I became co-owner of a Memphis newspaper, the *Free Speech and Headlight*. My editorials protesting the lynching of three Black friends led to a boycott of white businesses, the destruction of my newspaper office, and threats against my life. Undeterred, I carried my anti-lynching crusade to Chicago and published *Southern Horrors: Lynch Law in All Its Phases*, which documented racial lynching in America. In 1895 I married another newspaper owner, Ferdinand L. Barnett, and went on to have four children. I continued to write and organize for all of my life. I said, “One had better die fighting against injustice than die like a dog or a rat in a trap.” I was a founder of the NAACP, marched in the parade for universal suffrage in Washington, D.C. (1913), and established the Negro Fellowship League for Black men and the first kindergarten for Black children in Chicago.



Ida B. Wells (1862-1932)