

Harriet Tubman

A Brave Guide to Freedom



Harriet Tubman was born into slavery around 1822 in Maryland. As a child, she worked very hard and was treated unfairly. Harriet wanted to be free and to help others be free, too.

In 1849, Harriet escaped slavery and made the dangerous journey to freedom. But she did not stop there. Harriet became a “conductor” on the Underground Railroad. The Underground Railroad was not a real train. It was a secret network of people and safe places that helped enslaved people escape. Harriet returned again and again to guide others to safety. This was extremely risky. If Harriet was caught, she could be sent back into slavery or punished.

Harriet showed courage, smart thinking, and strong leadership. She helped many people reach freedom by traveling at night and following safe routes. Later, during the Civil War, Harriet supported the Union cause and helped in different ways, including caring for people who were hurt or sick.

Harriet Tubman matters because she used her bravery to protect others and fight injustice. Today, people remember her as a hero who helped open doors to freedom and inspired others to keep working for what is right.

Frederick Douglass

A Voice for Freedom



Frederick Douglass was born in 1818 in Maryland. He was enslaved as a child, and many people tried to keep him from learning. Frederick believed reading and writing were powerful tools. He found ways to learn anyway, even when it was not allowed.

Frederick wanted freedom and worked toward it for years. In 1838, he escaped slavery and began a new life. He worked hard and became known as a strong speaker. He could explain unfairness clearly and help others understand why change was needed.

In 1845, Frederick published a book about his life. He wrote about what he experienced and why slavery was wrong. His book helped many people learn the truth. Frederick traveled to give speeches and encouraged others to stand up for equal rights.

Frederick Douglass matters because he used his voice and his writing to fight for justice. He showed that learning can help people speak up and lead. Today, many people still read his work and remember him as a leader who helped push the country toward freedom and fairness.

Rosa Parks

A Quiet Act of Courage



Rosa Parks was born in 1913 in Alabama. She grew up during a time when segregation laws were common. Segregation was unfair. It forced Black people and white people to use different schools, buses, and other places.

Rosa believed these laws were wrong. She wanted people to be treated with respect. Rosa worked with others who were trying to make life fairer. She learned how to stay strong even when people were unkind.

On December 1, 1955, Rosa was riding a bus in Montgomery, Alabama. A bus driver told her to give up her seat because she was Black. Rosa refused. She was arrested, but her decision inspired others to act.

Rosa Parks matters because her courage helped start the Montgomery Bus Boycott. Many people stopped riding the buses to protest unfair rules. Rosa showed that one calm, brave choice can help a whole community stand up for justice.

Jackie Robinson

Breaking the Barrier



Jackie Robinson was born in 1919 in Georgia and later grew up in California. Jackie loved sports and worked hard to become a great athlete. But when Jackie was growing up, many sports were segregated. That meant Black players were often not allowed to play in the major leagues.

Jackie faced unfair rules and unfair treatment, but he kept practicing and improving. He wanted a chance to play at the highest level. Jackie's talent and determination helped him earn that chance.

In 1947, Jackie Robinson joined the Brooklyn Dodgers and became the first Black player in Major League Baseball in the modern era. This was a huge change. Jackie faced rude comments and angry crowds. His challenge was to stay calm, stay focused, and keep playing his best.

Jackie Robinson matters because he helped open doors for others. After Jackie, more Black athletes were allowed to play in the major leagues. Jackie showed that courage, skill, and self-control can help break unfair barriers.

Thurgood Marshall

A Lawyer Who Changed Laws



Thurgood Marshall was born in 1908 in Maryland. He grew up in a time when many laws treated people unfairly. Thurgood decided he wanted to use the law to help create fairness. He worked hard in school and became a lawyer.

As a lawyer, Thurgood fought cases that protected civil rights. He believed that schools and communities should be fair for everyone. Thurgood prepared carefully, gathered information, and spoke clearly in court.

In 1954, Thurgood helped win the case *Brown v. Board of Education*. This important decision said public school segregation was wrong. It was a big step toward fairer schools, even though change took time.

Thurgood Marshall matters because he helped change laws in peaceful ways. In 1967, he became the first Black Justice on the U.S. Supreme Court. His work reminds us that rules can improve when people work for justice and equality.

Bessie Coleman

A Pilot Who Soared



Bessie Coleman was born in 1892 in Texas. She grew up in a large family and worked hard from a young age. Bessie loved learning, but opportunities were limited for Black women at the time. Still, Bessie had a big dream: she wanted to fly airplanes.

Bessie faced a major challenge. In the United States, many flight schools would not accept her because she was Black and because she was a woman. Instead of giving up, Bessie made a brave plan. She studied and saved money so she could travel and learn elsewhere.

In 1921, Bessie earned her pilot's license in France. She became the first Black woman in the world to earn an international pilot license. When she returned to the U.S., she performed in air shows and amazed crowds with her skills.

Bessie Coleman matters because she showed that courage and hard work can help people reach big goals. In 1922, she began flying in shows and inspiring others to dream bigger. Her story reminds us that barriers can be challenged, even when the path is difficult.

George Washington Carver

A Scientist Who Helped Farmers



George Washington Carver was born around 1864 during the Civil War years. He grew up with a love for nature and asked lots of questions about plants. George enjoyed learning how things grow and how to help the soil stay healthy.

George faced challenges because he lived in a time when Black students were often treated unfairly and had fewer chances to attend school. Even so, George kept learning. He studied science and became a teacher and researcher.

In 1896, George went to Tuskegee Institute in Alabama to help farmers. He taught ways to improve the soil and grow different crops. Farmers were having trouble because planting the same crop could wear out the land. George encouraged crop rotation, like growing peanuts and sweet potatoes to help the soil.

George Washington Carver matters because his ideas helped many families who farmed for a living. In 1916, he became well known for his science work. His story shows how curiosity and kindness can help communities solve real problems.

Martin Luther King Jr.

A Leader for Peaceful Change



Martin Luther King Jr. was born in 1929 in Atlanta, Georgia. He grew up during a time when segregation laws were common in many places. Segregation was unfair and kept Black people and white people separated in schools, buses, and other public spaces.

Martin worked hard in school and became a pastor. He believed people should be treated with respect and fairness. He also believed that change could happen through nonviolent actions. That means protesting peacefully, without hurting others, even when things are difficult.

In 1955, Martin became a leader during the Montgomery Bus Boycott. Many people stopped riding the buses to protest unfair rules. Martin encouraged people to stay peaceful and work together. Over time, his speeches helped more Americans understand why civil rights were important.

In 1963, Martin gave his famous “I Have a Dream” speech in Washington, D.C. He spoke about hope and equality. Martin Luther King Jr. matters because he helped lead the civil rights movement with courage and peaceful leadership. His work inspired many people to stand up for fairness and to keep working for justice today.

Ida B. Wells

A Fearless Truth-Teller



Ida B. Wells was born in 1862 in Mississippi. She grew up during a time when many laws were unfair to Black Americans. When Ida was young, she worked hard and cared about learning. She became a teacher, and later she became a journalist. A journalist is someone who writes news stories to share information with others.

Ida noticed that people were being treated unfairly. Some people were being hurt because of racism and hatred. Ida believed it was important to tell the truth, even when it was scary. She started writing articles about what she saw. She asked questions, looked for facts, and shared what she learned. This took courage, because some people did not want the truth to be told.

Ida faced big challenges. People threatened her, and she had to stay strong. But she kept speaking up. She traveled to different places to give speeches and to teach others about fairness and justice. She wanted people to understand that everyone deserves safety and respect.

Ida B. Wells matters because she used her voice and her writing to fight for justice. She showed that words can be powerful. Today, people remember her as a brave leader who helped others learn the truth and stand up for what is right.