Once we’ve used this packet in class, you can leave it at home. Do not discard until after the Civil Rights exam.

BOOKER T. WASHINGTON

Booker T. Washington was the most famous black man in America between 1895 and 1915. He was also considered the most influential black educator of the late 19th and early 20th centuries insofar as he controlled the flow of funds to black schools and colleges. Born a slave on a small farm in the Virginia backcountry, he worked in the salt furnaces and coalmines of West Virginia as a child. Determined to educate himself, he traveled hundreds of miles under great hardship until he arrived -- broke, tired, and dirty -- at Hampton Institute.

He became a star pupil under the tutelage of General Samuel Chapman Armstrong, head of Hampton. Washington was teaching at Hampton when General Armstrong called him aside after chapel. He said he had received a letter from some "gentlemen in Alabama" asking him to recommend a white principal for a colored school they wanted to open there in the town of Tuskegee. In 1881, Washington founded Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute on the Hampton model in the Black Belt of Alabama.

Starting with a broken down building, he used his ability to win the trust of white Southerners and Northern philanthropists to make Tuskegee into a model school of industrial education. He reassured whites that nothing in his educational program challenged white supremacy or offered economic competition with whites. He accepted racial subordination as a necessary evil, at least until such time as blacks could prove themselves worthy of full civil and political rights. As far as blacks were concerned, Washington insisted that industrial education would enable them to lift themselves up by their bootstraps and escape the trap of sharecropping and debt.

In September 1895, Washington became a national hero. Invited to speak at the 1895 Cotton States and International Exposition in Atlanta, Washington publicly accepted disfranchisement and social segregation as long as whites would allow black economic progress, educational opportunity, and justice in the courts. "The wisest of my race understand that the agitation of questions of social equality is the extremest folly and that progress in the enjoyment of all the privileges that will come to us must be the result of severe and constant struggle rather than artificial forcing. The opportunity to earn a dollar in a factory just now is worth infinitely more than to spend a dollar in an opera house."

Washington further publicized himself and his program by publishing his (ghost-written) autobiography, UP FROM SLAVERY, in 1901. He also founded the National Negro Business League in 1900. Presidents Theodore Roosevelt and William Howard Taft, both men with deep racial prejudices, used Washington as an advisor because he accepted racial subordination. He was able to recommend candidates for minor political posts that traditionally were given to blacks. The industrialists who controlled the financing of many black schools in the South depended upon his advice as to which schools should receive funds. In 1903, Washington's policies received a challenge from within the black community. W.E.B. Du Bois, then a scholar at Atlanta University, attacked Washington's philosophy in the book THE SOULS OF BLACK FOLK.
An organized resistance to Washington grew within the black intellectual community. But as far as
the majority of middle-class and working-class blacks were concerned, Washington remained their
man. His popularity enabled him to neutralize criticism, sometimes by devious means such as
bribing newspapers to report false and unflattering reports of his critics. Because of his image as a
conciliator, Washington seldom could publicly criticize injustice. Yet, behind the scenes, he did
finance court cases challenging segregation and tried to mitigate some of its excesses. When
Woodrow Wilson became president in 1913, Washington lost his influence in the federal
government, which Wilson helped segregate further. Meanwhile, a new era had begun in the black
community, and a younger generation would no longer accept white supremacy. Under the
leadership of Du Bois and others, they would demand their political and civil rights.

from http://www.pbs.org/wnet/jimcrow/stories_people_booker.html

W.E.B. DU BOIS

W.E.B. Du Bois was born during the term of President Andrew Johnson and died the year that
Lyndon Johnson became president. Du Bois was born and raised in Massachusetts, and graduated
in 1888 from Fisk University, a black liberal arts college in Nashville, Tennessee. During the
summer, he taught in a rural school and later wrote about his experiences in his book THE
SOULS OF BLACK FOLK.

In 1895, Du Bois became the first African American to receive a Ph.D. in the subject of history
from Harvard University. He then studied in Germany but ran out of funds before he could earn a
post-doctoral degree. With the publication of THE PHILADELPHIA NEGRO: A SOCIAL
STUDY in 1899, the first case study of a black community in the United States, as well as papers
on black farmers, businessmen, and black life in Southern communities, Du Bois established
himself as the first great scholar of black life in America.

He taught sociology at Atlanta University between 1898 and 1910. Du Bois had hoped that social
science could help eliminate segregation, but he eventually came to the conclusion that the only
effective strategy against racism was agitation. He challenged the dominant ideology of black
accommodation as preached and practiced by Booker T. Washington, then the most influential
black man in America. Washington urged blacks to accept discrimination for the time being and
elevate themselves through hard work and economic gain to win the respect of whites.

In 1903, in his famous book THE SOULS OF BLACK FOLK, Du Bois charged that
Washington's strategy kept the black man down rather than freed him. This attack crystallized the
opposition to Booker T. Washington among many black intellectuals, polarizing the leaders of the
black community into two wings -- the "conservative" supporters of Washington and his "radical"
critics. In 1905, Du Bois took the lead in founding the short-lived Niagara Movement, intended to
be an organization advocating civil rights for blacks. Although the Niagara Movement faltered, it
was the forerunner of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), which was founded in 1909. Du Bois played a prominent role in the organization's creation and became its director of research and the editor of its magazine, THE CRISIS.

For many young African Americans in the period from 1910 through the 1930s, Du Bois was the voice of the black community. He attacked Woodrow Wilson when the president allowed his cabinet members to segregate the federal government. He continued to fight against the demand by many whites that black education be primarily industrial and that black students in the South learn to accept white supremacy. Du Bois emphasized the necessity for higher education in order to develop the leadership capacity among the most able 10 percent of black Americans, whom he dubbed "The Talented Tenth."

In the 1930s, Du Bois found himself in a bitter dispute with Walter White, the head of the NAACP, when Du Bois suddenly penned articles that advocated voluntary segregation, maintaining that black children would receive a better education from black teachers. Du Bois resigned from the editorship of THE CRISIS and the NAACP in 1934.

He taught for the next ten years at Atlanta University and published two of his major works, BLACK RECONSTRUCTION: AN ESSAY TOWARD A HISTORY OF THE PART WHICH BLACK FOLK PLAYED IN THE ATTEMPT TO RECONSTRUCT DEMOCRACY IN AMERICA 1860-1880 and DUSK OF DAWN. In 1951, when he was 83 years old, the federal government prosecuted Du Bois for his affiliation with the Communist Party. A judge eventually threw out the case. Disillusioned with the United States, he officially joined the Communist Party in 1961 and moved to Ghana; he renounced his American citizenship more than a year later.


THURGOOD MARSHALL

Thurgood Marshall (1908-1993), the first African American ever to serve on the Court, was the younger of two sons of a railroad porter who later worked on the staff of a whites-only country club. His mother was a school teacher. Marshall graduated from Lincoln University in 1930 and applied to University of Maryland Law School but was turned down because of his race. He then attended Howard University Law School, though his mother had to pawn her wedding and engagement rings to pay the tuition. He graduated first in his class in 1933, just as America was feeling the full impact of the Great Depression.

As soon as he graduated, Marshall opened a law office in Baltimore, and the following year he represented the local chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in a suit challenging the University of Maryland Law School's policy of segregation. He won the case, and Marshall was brought onto the national staff of the NAACP in 1936, becoming
the organization's chief legal counsel in 1940. He remained with the NAACP for a total of 25 years and served as its key strategist in the legal effort to end racial segregation throughout American society. In a series of federal court cases, Marshall and his mentor, Charles Hamilton Houston, set out to reverse segregation sanctioned by the Supreme Court's decision in *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896). Since that decision had called for "separate but equal" institutions for blacks and whites, the NAACP argued that institutions for African Americans were not equal to the parallel institutions for whites. A series of decisions ruled in favor of the NAACP, and, beginning in 1945, Marshall began challenging the Plessy doctrine itself. This ultimately led to the landmark case of *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), which Marshall successfully argued before the Supreme Court in 1952 and again in 1953. The resulting Court decision overturned the Plessy doctrine of "separate but equal," agreeing that students' self-esteem was harmed by the mere fact of segregation. While the decision applied only to segregation in public education, it set the stage for the civil rights movement. Marshall prevailed in 29 of the 32 cases he argued before the Supreme Court.

President John F. Kennedy nominated Marshall to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit in 1961. President Lyndon Baines Johnson appointed him solicitor general in 1965 (the first African-American to hold this position). In 1967 President Johnson created an opening on the Supreme Court by choosing for his attorney general Ramsey Clark, the son of Associate Justice Tom Clark. Justice Clark resigned from the Court to avoid conflicts of interest, and the president appointed Marshall to fill his seat. Marshall is said to have remarked, "I have a lifetime appointment and I intend to serve it. I expect to die at 110, shot by a jealous husband." At heart a New Deal liberal, Marshall demonstrated an unwavering commitment to universal civil rights and civil liberties. He was a staunch opponent of the death penalty and a dedicated civil libertarian. No justice was more consistent in opposing government regulation of speech or private sexual conduct. As the Court became more conservative in his final years and he found himself in the liberal minority, he wrote, "Power, not reason, is the new currency of this Court's decision making." He retired in 1991.


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**ROSA PARKS**

We know the story. One December evening, a woman left work and boarded a bus for home. She was tired; her feet ached. But this was Montgomery, Ala., in 1955, and as the bus became crowded, the woman, a black woman, was ordered to give up her seat to a white passenger. When she remained seated, that simple decision eventually led to the disintegrated segregation in the South, ushering in a new era of the civil rights movement.

This, anyway, was the story I had heard from the time I was curious enough to eavesdrop on adult conversations. I was three years old when a white bus driver warned Rosa Parks, "Well, I'm going to have you arrested," and she replied, "You may go on and do so." As a child, I didn't understand
how doing nothing had caused so much activity, but I recognized the template: David slaying the giant Goliath, or the boy who saved his village by sticking his finger in the dike. And perhaps it is precisely the lure of fairy-tale retribution that colors the lens we look back through. Parks was 42 years old when she refused to give up her seat. She has insisted that her feet were not aching; she was, by her own testimony, no more tired than usual. And she did not plan her fateful act: "I did not get on the bus to get arrested," she has said. "I got on the bus to go home."

Montgomery's segregation laws were complex: blacks were required to pay their fare to the driver, then get off and reboard through the back door. Sometimes the bus would drive off before the paid-up customers made it to the back entrance. If the white section was full and another white customer entered, blacks were required to give up their seats and move farther to the back; a black person was not even allowed to sit across the aisle from whites. These humiliations were compounded by the fact that two-thirds of the bus riders in Montgomery were black.

Parks was not the first to be detained for this offense. Eight months earlier, Claudette Colvin, 15, refused to give up her seat and was arrested. Black activists met with this girl to determine if she would make a good test case — as secretary of the local N.A.A.C.P., Parks attended the meeting — but it was decided that a more "upstanding" candidate was necessary to withstand the scrutiny of the courts and the press. And then in October, a young woman named Mary Louise Smith was arrested; N.A.A.C.P. leaders rejected her too as their vehicle, looking for someone more able to withstand media scrutiny. Smith paid the fine and was released.

Six weeks later, the time was ripe. The facts, rubbed shiny for retelling, are these: On Dec. 1, 1955, Mrs. Rosa Parks, seamstress for the Montgomery Fair department store, boarded the Cleveland Avenue bus. She took a seat in the fifth row — the first row of the "Colored Section." The driver was the same one who had put her off a bus 12 years earlier for refusing to get off and reboard through the back door. ("He was still mean-looking," she has said.) Did that make her stubborn? Or had her work in the N.A.A.C.P. sharpened her sensibilities so that she knew what to do — or more precisely, what not to do: Don't frown, don't struggle, don't shout, don't pay the fine?

At the news of the arrest, local civil rights leader E.D. Nixon exclaimed, "My God, look what segregation has put in my hands!" Parks was not only above moral reproach (securely married, reasonably employed) but possessed a quiet fortitude as well as political savvy — in short, she was the ideal plaintiff for a test case.

She was arrested on a Thursday; bail was posted by Clifford Durr, the white lawyer whose wife had employed Parks as a seamstress. That evening, after talking it over with her mother and husband, Rosa Parks agreed to challenge the constitutionality of Montgomery's segregation laws. During a midnight meeting of the Women's Political Council, 35,000 handbills were mimeographed for distribution to all black schools the next morning. The message was simple:

"We are...asking every Negro to stay off the buses Monday in protest of the arrest and trial... You can afford to stay out of school for one day. If you work, take a cab, or walk. But please, children and grown-ups, don't ride the bus at all on Monday. Please stay off the buses Monday."

Monday came. Rain threatened, yet the black population of Montgomery stayed off the buses, either walking or catching one of the black cabs stopping at every municipal bus stop for 10 cents
per customer — standard bus fare. Meanwhile, Parks was scheduled to appear in court. As she made her way through the throngs at the courthouse, a demure figure in a long-sleeved black dress with white collar and cuffs, a trim black velvet hat, gray coat and white gloves, a girl in the crowd caught sight of her and cried out, "Oh, she's so sweet. They've messed with the wrong one now!"

Yes, indeed. The trial lasted 30 min., with the expected conviction and penalty. That afternoon, the Montgomery Improvement Association was formed. So as not to ruffle any local activists' feathers, the members elected as their president a relative newcomer to Montgomery, the young minister of Dexter Avenue Baptist Church: the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. That evening, addressing a crowd gathered at the Holt Street Baptist Church, King declared in that sonorous, ringing voice millions the world over would soon thrill to: "There comes a time that people get tired." When he was finished, Parks stood up so the audience could see her. She did not speak; there was no need to. Here I am, her silence said, among you.

And she has been with us ever since a persistent symbol of human dignity in the face of brutal authority. The famous U.P.I. photo (actually taken more than a year later, on Dec. 21, 1956, the day Montgomery's public transportation system was legally integrated) is a study of calm strength. She is looking out the bus window, her hands resting in the folds of her checked dress, while a white man sits, unperturbed, in the row behind her. That clear profile, the neat cloche and eyeglasses and sensible coat — she could have been my mother, anybody's favorite aunt.

History is often portrayed as a string of arias in a grand opera, all baritone intrigues and tenor heroeics. Some of the most tumultuous events, however, have been provoked by serendipity — the assassination of an inconsequential archduke spawned World War I, a kicked-over lantern may have sparked the Great Chicago Fire. One cannot help wondering what role Martin Luther King Jr. would have played in the civil rights movement if the opportunity had not presented itself that first evening of the boycott — if Rosa Parks had chosen a row farther back from the outset, or if she had missed the bus altogether.

At the end of this millennium (and a particularly noisy century), it is the modesty of Rosa Parks' example that sustains us. It is no less than the belief in the power of the individual, that cornerstone of the American Dream, that she inspires, along with the hope that all of us — even the least of us — could be that brave, that serenely human, when crunch time comes.

== Rita Dove, former U.S. poet laureate, won the 1987 Pulitzer Prize for Poetry

MUHAMMAD ALI

Oliver Wendell Holmes once observed that every profession is great that is greatly pursued. Boxing in the early '60s, largely controlled by the Mob, was in a moribund state until Muhammad Ali — Cassius Clay, in those days — appeared on the scene. "Just when the sweet science appears
to lie like a painted ship upon a painted ocean," wrote A.J. Liebling, "a new Hero...comes along like a Moran tug to pull it out of the ocean."

Though Ali won the gold medal at the Rome Olympics in 1960, at the time the experts didn't think much of his boxing skills. His head, eyes wide, seemed to float above the action. Rather than slip a punch, the traditional defensive move, it was his habit to sway back, bending at the waist — a tactic that appalled the experts. Lunacy.

Nor did they approve of his personal behavior: the self-promotions ("I am the greatest!"), his affiliation with the Muslims and giving up his "slave name" for Muhammad Ali ("I don't have to be what you want me to be; I'm free to be what I want"), the poetry (his ability to compose rhymes on the run could very well qualify him as the first rapper) or the quips ("If Ali says a mosquito can pull a plow, don't ask how. Hitch him up!"). At the press conferences, the reporters were sullen. Ali would turn on them. "Why ain't you taking notice?" or "Why ain't you laughing?"

It was odd that they weren't. He was an engaging combination of sass and sweetness and naïveté. His girlfriend disclosed that the first time he was kissed, he fainted. Merriment always seemed to be bubbling just below the surface, even when the topics were somber. When reporters asked about his affiliation with Islam, he joked that he was going to have four wives: one to shine his shoes, one to feed him grapes, one to rub oil on his muscles and one named Peaches. In his boyhood he was ever the prankster and the practical joker. His idea of fun was to frighten his parents — putting a sheet over his head and jumping out at them from a closet, or tying a string to a bedroom curtain and making it move after his parents had gone to bed.

The public as well had a hard time accepting him. His fight for the heavyweight championship in Miami against Sonny Liston was sparsely attended. Indeed, public sentiment was for Liston, a Mob-controlled thug, to take care of the lippy upstart. Liston concurred, saying he was going to put his fist so far down his opponent's throat, he was going to have trouble removing it.

Then, of course, three years after Ali defended the championship, there came the public vilification for his refusal to join the Army during the Vietnam War — "I ain't got no quarrel with them Viet Cong" — one of the more telling remarks of the era. The government prosecuted him for draft dodging, and the boxing commissions took away his license. He was idle for 3 1/2 years at the peak of his career. In 1971 the Supreme Court ruled that the government had acted improperly. But Ali bore the commissions no ill will. There were no lawsuits to get his title back through the courts. No need, he said, to punish them for doing what they thought was right. Quite properly, in his mind, he won back the title in the ring, knocking out George Foreman in the eighth round of their fight in Zaire — the "Rumble in the Jungle."

Ali was asked on a television show what he would have done with his life, given a choice. After an awkward pause — a rare thing, indeed — he admitted he couldn't think of anything other than boxing. That is all he had ever wanted or wished for. He couldn't imagine anything else. He defended boxing as a sport: "You don't have to be hit in boxing. People don't understand that."

He was wrong. Joe Frazier, speaking of their fight, said he had hit Ali with punches that would have brought down a building. Coaxed into fights by his managers long after he should have
retired, and perhaps because he loved the sport too much to leave it, Ali ended up being punished by the likes of Leon Spinks and Larry Holmes, who took little pleasure in what they were doing.

Oscar Wilde once suggested that you kill the thing you love. In Ali's case, it was the reverse: what he loved, in a sense, killed him. The man who was the most loquacious of athletes ("I am the onliest of boxing's poet laureates") now says almost nothing: he moves slowly through the crowds and signs autographs. He has probably signed more autographs than any other athlete ever, living or dead. It is his principal activity at home, working at his desk. He was once denied an autograph by his idol, Sugar Ray Robinson ("Hello, kid, how ya doin'? I ain't got time"), and vowed he would never turn anyone down. The volume of mail is enormous.

The ceremonial leave-taking of great athletes can impart indelible memories, even if one remembers them from the scratchy newsreels of time — Babe Ruth with the doffed cap at home plate, Lou Gehrig's voice echoing in the vast hollows of Yankee Stadium. Muhammad Ali's was not exactly a leave-taking, but it may have seemed so to the estimated 3 billion or so television viewers who saw him open the Atlanta Olympics in 1996. Outfitted in a white gym suit that eerily made him seem to glisten against a dark night sky, he approached the unlit saucer with his flaming torch, his free arm trembling visibly from the effects of Parkinson's.

It was a kind of epiphany that those who watched realized how much they missed him and how much he had contributed to the world of sport. Students of boxing will pore over the trio of Ali-Frazier fights, which rank among the greatest in fistic history, as one might read three acts of a great drama. They would remember the shenanigans, the Ali Shuffle, the Rope-a-Dope, the fact that Ali had brought beauty and grace to the most uncompromising of sports. And they would marvel that through the wonderful excesses of skill and character, he had become the most famous athlete, indeed, the best-known personage in the world.

== George Plimpton is the editor of The Paris Review and the author of Truman Capote

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**JACKIE ROBINSON**

I was 14 years old when I first saw Jackie Robinson. It was the spring of 1948, the year after Jackie changed my life by breaking baseball's color line. His team, the Brooklyn Dodgers, made a stop in my hometown of Mobile, Ala., while barnstorming its way north to start the season, and while he was there, Jackie spoke to a big crowd of black folks over on Davis Avenue. I think he talked about segregation, but I didn't hear a word that came out of his mouth. Jackie Robinson was such a hero to me that I couldn't do anything but gawk at him.

They say certain people are bigger than life, but Jackie Robinson is the only man I've known who truly was. In 1947 life in America — at least my America, and Jackie's — was segregation. It was two worlds that were afraid of each other. There were separate schools for blacks and whites, separate restaurants, separate hotels, separate drinking fountains and separate baseball leagues. Life
was unkind to black people who tried to bring those worlds together. It could be hateful. But Jackie Robinson, God bless him, was bigger than all of that.

Jackie Robinson had to be bigger than life. He had to be bigger than the Brooklyn teammates who got up a petition to keep him off the ball club, bigger than the pitchers who threw at him or the base runners who dug their spikes into his shin, bigger than the bench jockeys who hollered for him to carry their bags and shine their shoes, bigger than the so-called fans who mocked him with mops on their heads and wrote him death threats.

When Branch Rickey first met with Jackie about joining the Dodgers, he told him that for three years he would have to turn the other cheek and silently suffer all the vile things that would come his way. Believe me, it wasn't Jackie's nature to do that. He was a fighter, the proudest and most competitive person I've ever seen. This was a man who, as a lieutenant in the Army, risked a court-martial by refusing to sit in the back of a military bus. But when Rickey read to him from The Life of Christ, Jackie understood the wisdom and the necessity of forbearance.

To this day, I don't know how he withstood the things he did without lashing back. I've been through a lot in my time, and I consider myself to be a patient man, but I know I couldn't have done what Jackie did. I don't think anybody else could have done it. Somehow, though, Jackie had the strength to suppress his instincts, to sacrifice his pride for his people's. It was an incredible act of selflessness that brought the races closer together than ever before and shaped the dreams of an entire generation.

Before Jackie Robinson broke the color line, I wasn't permitted even to think about being a professional baseball player. I once mentioned something to my father about it, and he said, "Ain't no colored ballplayers." There were the Negro Leagues, of course, where the Dodgers discovered Jackie, but my mother, like most, would rather her son be a schoolteacher than a Negro Leaguer. All that changed when Jackie put on No. 42 and started stealing bases in a Brooklyn uniform.

Jackie's character was much more important than his batting average, but it certainly helped that he was a great ballplayer, a .311 career hitter whose trademark was rattling pitchers and fielders with his daring base running. He wasn't the best Negro League talent at the time he was chosen, and baseball wasn't really his best sport — he had been a football and track star at UCLA — but he played the game with a ferocious creativity that gave the country a good idea of what it had been missing all those years. With Jackie in the infield, the Dodgers won six National League pennants.

I believe every black person in America had a piece of those pennants. There's never been another ballplayer who touched people as Jackie did. The only comparable athlete, in my experience, was Joe Louis. The difference was that Louis competed against white men; Jackie competed with them as well. He was taking us over segregation's threshold into a new land whose scenery made every black person stop and stare in reverence. We were all with Jackie. We slid into every base that he swiped, ducked at every fastball that hurtled toward his head. The circulation of the Pittsburgh Courier, the leading black newspaper, increased by 100,000 when it began reporting on him regularly. All over the country, black preachers would call together their congregations just to pray for Jackie and urge them to demonstrate the same forbearance that he did.
Later in his career, when the "Great Experiment" had proved to be successful and other black players had joined him, Jackie allowed his instincts to take over in issues of race. He began striking back and speaking out. And when Jackie Robinson spoke, every black player got the message. He made it clear to us that we weren't playing just for ourselves or for our teams; we were playing for our people. I don't think it's a coincidence that the black players of the late '50s and '60s — me, Roy Campanella, Monte Irvin, Willie Mays, Ernie Banks, Frank Robinson, Bob Gibson and others — dominated the National League. If we played as if we were on a mission, it was because Jackie Robinson had sent us out on one.

Even after he retired in 1956 and was elected to the Hall of Fame in 1962, Jackie continued to chop along the path that was still a long way from being cleared. He campaigned for baseball to hire a black third-base coach, then a black manager. In 1969 he refused an invitation to play in an old-timers' game at Yankee Stadium to protest the lack of progress along those lines.

One of the great players from my generation, Frank Robinson (who was related to Jackie only in spirit), finally became the first black manager, in 1975. Jackie was gone by then. His last public appearance was at the 1972 World Series, where he showed up with white hair, carrying a cane and going blind from diabetes. He died nine days later.

Most of the black players from Jackie's day were at the funeral, but I was appalled by how few of the younger players showed up to pay him tribute. At the time, I was 41 home runs short of Babe Ruth's career record, and when Jackie died, I really felt that it was up to me to keep his dream alive. I was inspired to dedicate my home-run record to the same great cause to which Jackie dedicated his life. I'm still inspired by Jackie Robinson. Hardly a day goes by that I don't think of him.

== Henry ("Hank") Aaron holds [held] the major league career home-run record (755) and works for the Atlanta Braves organization.

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

It is a testament to the greatness of Martin Luther King Jr. that nearly every major city in the U.S. has a street or school named after him. It is a measure of how sorely his achievements are misunderstood that most of them are located in black neighborhoods.

Three decades after King was gunned down on a motel balcony in Memphis, Tenn., he is still regarded mainly as the black leader of a movement for black equality. That assessment, while accurate, is far too restrictive. For all King did to free blacks from the yoke of segregation, whites may owe him the greatest debt, for liberating them from the burden of America's centuries-old hypocrisy about race. It is only because of King and the movement that he led that the U.S. can claim to be the leader of the "free world" without inviting smirks of disdain and disbelief. Had he and the blacks and whites who marched beside him failed, vast regions of the U.S. would have
remained morally indistinguishable from South Africa under apartheid, with terrible consequences for America's standing among nations. How could America have convincingly inveighed against the Iron Curtain while an equally oppressive Cotton Curtain remained draped across the South?

Even after the Supreme Court struck down segregation in 1954, what the world now calls human-rights offenses were both law and custom in much of America. Before King and his movement, a tired and thoroughly respectable Negro seamstress like Rosa Parks could be thrown into jail and fined simply because she refused to give up her seat on an Alabama bus so a white man could sit down. A six-year-old black girl like Ruby Bridges could be hectored and spit on by a white New Orleans mob simply because she wanted to go to the same school as white children. A 14-year-old black boy like Emmett Till could be hunted down and murdered by a Mississippi gang simply because he had supposedly made suggestive remarks to a white woman. Even highly educated blacks were routinely denied the right to vote or serve on juries. They could not eat at lunch counters, register in motels or use whites-only rest rooms; they could not buy or rent a home wherever they chose. In some rural enclaves in the South, they were even compelled to get off the sidewalk and stand in the street if a Caucasian walked by.

The movement that King led swept all that away. Its victory was so complete that even though those outrages took place within the living memory of the baby boomers, they seem like ancient history. And though this revolution was the product of two centuries of agitation by thousands upon thousands of courageous men and women, King was its culmination. It is impossible to think of the movement unfolding as it did without him at its helm. He was, as the cliché has it, the right man at the right time.

To begin with, King was a preacher who spoke in biblical cadences ideally suited to leading a stride toward freedom that found its inspiration in the Old Testament story of the Israelites and the New Testament gospel of Jesus Christ. Being a minister not only put King in touch with the spirit of the black masses but also gave him a base within the black church, then and now the strongest and most independent of black institutions.

Moreover, King was a man of extraordinary physical courage whose belief in nonviolence never swerved. From the time he assumed leadership of the Montgomery, Ala., bus boycott in 1955 to his murder 13 years later, he faced hundreds of death threats. His home in Montgomery was bombed, with his wife and young children inside. He was hounded by J. Edgar Hoover's FBI, which bugged his telephone and hotel rooms, circulated salacious gossip about him and even tried to force him into committing suicide after he won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964. As King told the story, the defining moment of his life came during the early days of the bus boycott. A threatening telephone call at midnight alarmed him: "Nigger, we are tired of you and your mess now. And if you aren't out of this town in three days, we're going to blow your brains out and blow up your house." Shaken, King went to the kitchen to pray. "I could hear an inner voice saying to me, 'Martin Luther, stand up for righteousness. Stand up for justice. Stand up for truth. And lo I will be with you, even until the end of the world.'"

In recent years, however, King's most quoted line—"I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character"—has been put to uses he would never have endorsed. It has become
the slogan for opponents of affirmative action like California's Ward Connerly, who insist, incredibly, that had King lived he would have been marching alongside them. Connerly even chose King's birthday last year to announce the creation of his nationwide crusade against "racial preferences."

Such would-be kidnappers of King's legacy have chosen a highly selective interpretation of his message. They have filtered out his radicalism and sense of urgency. That most famous speech was studded with demands. "We have come to our nation's capital to cash a check," King admonished. "When the architects of our Republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir," King said. "Instead of honoring this sacred obligation, America has given the Negro people a bad check; a check which has come back marked 'insufficient funds.'" These were not the words of a cardboard saint advocating a Hallmark card-style version of brotherhood. They were the stinging phrases of a prophet, a man demanding justice not just in the hereafter, but in the here and now.

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MALCOLM X

Malcolm X was important in shaping a Black Muslim and black power movement that challenged the nonviolent and integrationist struggle for African-American equality favored by Martin Luther King Jr.'s civil rights movement.

Born Malcolm Little in Omaha, Nebraska on May 19, 1925, Malcolm was one of eight children of Earl Little, a Baptist minister and follower of Marcus Garvey, the black nationalist, and Louise Little. For many years, Malcolm knew only poverty and violence. In 1929, the family moved to East Lansing, Michigan, where white racists tried to burn down their house. Two years later, Earl was run down by a trolley car, probably an act of murder. By that time the country was mired in the Great Depression, and Louise found it impossible to feed and care for her children. The children were placed in separate foster homes and institutions, and Louise was declared incompetent and placed in a mental hospital, where she spent the next quarter century.

At 13, Malcolm was sent to a juvenile detention home for a minor act of mischief. Three years later, he went to live with a sister in Boston. No longer attending school, he took on odd jobs and learned about street life in the black ghetto. Eventually he got a job as a sandwich man on trains between Boston and New York City and was quickly introduced to drugs and crime in Harlem. Sporting a zoot suit (a fad in the 1940s, it was a suit with long, draped pants, tight at the ankle, and a jacket with wide shoulders), Malcolm became a recognized underworld figure. He talked his way into a draft exemption from the armed forces during World War II. Back in Boston, he was arrested in 1946 for burglary and sentenced to 10 years in prison. He was 20 years old.

Prison was to be Malcolm's salvation. He began to read history, philosophy, and religion. Through
his brother, he learned about the Nation of Islam, also known as the Black Muslims, led by Elijah Muhammad. Based in Chicago, Muhammad preached against white racism and advocated a Muslim way of life, which forbade drinking, smoking, and drugs; he insisted that members have jobs. The movement's separatist ideology was extreme. Not only did it dismiss the civil rights movement's goal of full black integration into white society as illusory, it also depicted all whites as descended from the devil, born to harm blacks.

By the time Malcolm was released from prison in 1952, he was committed to the Nation of Islam and took the name Malcolm X, dropping what the Muslims considered a slave name. He progressed through the ranks rapidly, recruiting first in Detroit, then Boston and Philadelphia, and finally in New York. Malcolm had become an eloquent speaker, and owing largely to his efforts, which included starting a national Muslim newspaper, the movement attracted thousands of members. In 1959, the nation watched a television documentary on the Muslims called "The Hate That Hate Produced" on The Mike Wallace Show, and by the end of the year, the Muslims could claim 100,000 followers. One source of new recruits for the Muslims was the country's jails. An estimated 600 convicts joined the movement each year, most of them staying out of jail when released and dramatically altering their values and behavior.

On one hand, the Muslims were effective in organizing schools and businesses and in providing encouragement and moral support for their members. On the other hand, the movement frightened whites and the growing civil rights movement. Since the Muslims were anti-integration, they considered nonviolence absurd and would not cooperate in demonstrating with such groups as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People or the Congress of Racial Equality. Malcolm was especially extreme in his statements of hate for whites.

By the early 1960s, Malcolm's position of leadership had brought him into conflict with Muhammad as well as with some of the other leaders, who criticized him for forgetting the original religious intentions of the Muslims and being swayed by the glory of politics. When in 1963 Malcolm spoke of President John F. Kennedy's assassination as a case of "the chickens coming home to roost," suggesting that the hate directed at African Americans had been responsible for the killing of the president, Muhammad suspended him from the movement.

On his part, Malcolm had become suspicious of Muhammad's lifestyle and morals and the general Muslim policy of "nonengagement" from active confrontation with racism. In 1964, he broke with Muhammad and formed his own group, called the Muslim Mosque, Inc., determined to make the group international and to initiate a back-to-Africa movement. The same year, he made a pilgrimage to Mecca and visited several African countries, meeting and having discussions with prominent Muslim leaders and scholars. He discovered that the views of many Muslims differed from his racist views, and he seriously reconsidered his position. When he returned to the United States, he announced that his visit in the Islamic world had helped to alter his view that all whites were evil and racist. He now believed that the plight of African Americans was caused by Western civilization and hoped that Islamic leaders abroad would help him bring before the United Nations the issue of American racism and its capitalistic ramifications in Africa. He formed the Organization of Afro-American Unity to unify black groups he had previously feuded with. This willingness to work with integrationists offended more militant Muslim followers at the same time that his anticapitalism brought support from Marxists, though he was not actually committed to Marxism.
In early 1965, Malcolm’s house was firebombed, and a week later, he was assassinated on February 21, 1965 while speaking at a rally at the Audubon Ballroom in Harlem. He was 39 years old. He had long believed he would be killed by the Black Muslims, but although two of the three men convicted of shooting him were members of the Nation of Islam, no conspiracy was ever proved.

Malcolm, who had renamed himself El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz after his pilgrimage to Mecca, was survived by his wife Betty Shabazz, whom he had married in 1958, and four children. His funeral was attended by many African-American leaders, including Bayard Rustin, who had differed with him, and a huge crowd of followers. His words and actions have continued to fuel separatist tendencies in African-American communities, especially during moments, such as the late 1960s and late 1980s, when progress toward the integration of black and white America has been halted or reversed.

That people responded so strongly in different ways to a man who began his life by hating whites and ended it by having questioned his own deepest convictions is evidence of Malcolm X's influence and at the same time characteristic of an era of great struggle in the American conscience.

Sources:
Time Magazine (Parks, Ali, Robinson, King)