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Coretta Scott King - I

Lead: In the pantheon of the civil rights movement Martin Luther King, Jr., and his wife, Coretta Scott King, shine most brightly.

Intro: *A Moment in Time* with Dan Roberts.

Content: As the issue of African-American Civil rights forced itself onto the American national agenda, it is not surprising that the prosperous, educated, black upper-class should feel most acutely the second-class status which America's white majority

enforced so vigorously to keep them in their place.

Coretta felt this inequality as she walked each day five miles to the single-room Crossroad School in Marion, Alabama. Buses took white children to a segregated school which she had to pass on foot. Unwilling to allow this to discourage her, she was an excellent student, excelled in music, and, in 1945, won a scholarship to Antioch College in Ohio. She knew the sting of discrimination and early in her undergraduate years gravitated toward activism, joining the college's chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and various other committees working to achieve civil liberty. She excelled in

music and education and won a scholarship for further study at the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston.

There she met her future husband, Martin, and after their marriage the two over-achievers moved back South to Montgomery Alabama, where he became pastor of the Dexter Avenue Baptist church and they stepped into history. When Mrs. Rosa Parks refused to yield her seat to a white customer on a segregated city bus, she was arrested. The more established black ministers in town were reluctant to support the resulting attempt to break the wall of segregation in public conveyances. In the chaos that followed King accepted the leadership

of the movement and soon the world grew to know the charming and articulate couple from Montgomery as they called attention to the vast edifice of racial discrimination in America. Next time: leading as wife and widow.

At the School of Professional and Continuing Studies, University of Richmond, I'm Dan Roberts.

Resources

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