

WILSON LIBRARY
N C COLLECTION - UNC-CH
P O BOX 8890
CHAPEL HILL NC 27515-8890

The Carolina Times

THE TRUTH UNBRIDLED

VOLUME 94 - NUMBER 35 DURHAM, NORTH CAROLINA - SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 5, 2015 TELEPHONE (919) 682-2913 PRICE: 50 CENTS

Amelia Boynton Remembered as the 'Rosa Parks' of Selma Movement

By George E. Curry
NNPA Editor-in-Chief

WASHINGTON (NNPA) - Amelia Boynton Robinson, who died Wednesday in Montgomery, Ala., at the age of 104, is being remembered as the "Rosa Parks" of the Selma voting rights movement.



Mrs. Amelia Boynton Robinson (Photo by Stephonia Taylor McLinn)

Mrs. Boynton, as she was known throughout the movement, had been hospitalized since suffering a stroke in July. She was a courageous voting rights crusader who was brutally beaten on "Bloody Sunday" on the Edmund Pettus Bridge, the first leg of the Selma to Montgomery, Ala. March that provided the impetus for passage of the landmark Voting Rights Act of 1965, which was signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson. She and her late husband, Samuel Boynton, opened their home to Atlanta-based voting rights organizers representing the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. also conducted many of his strategy sessions in the Boynton home.

"Dr. Boynton was the straw that stirred the drink. She was a major catalyst in the Selma to Montgomery march," said Charles Steele, Jr., president and CEO of SCLC, the organization founded by Dr. King. "She could start and more importantly, bring attention to 'Bloody Sunday' and her strength, courage and tenacity helped make her the historical icon that we know today. Dr. Boynton was Selma what Rosa Parks was Montgomery," a reference to the African American seamstress whose refusal to give up her seat to a white patron ignited the 1955 Montgomery, Ala. Bus Boycott that propelled King to national fame.

President Barack Obama, who was with the wheelchair-bound Boynton in March to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Selma to Montgomery March, also praised the civil rights warrior.

Fifty years ago, she marched in Selma, and the quiet heroism of those marchers helped pave the way for the landmark Voting Rights Act," he said in a statement. "But for the rest of her life, she kept marching - to make sure the law was upheld, and barriers to the polls torn down. And America is so fortunate she did." Obama added, "To honor the legacy of an American hero like Amelia Boynton requires only that we follow her example - that of us fight to protect every citizen's right to vote."

Rep. John Lewis (D-Ga.), whose skull was cracked in Selma on "Bloody Sunday," said: "This nation has lost a crusader, a warrior, and a fighter for justice. She was one of the most dependable, reliable leaders to lead us up for the right to vote in Selma, Alabama and in the American South."

She continued, "Amelia Boynton was fearless in the face of racial injustice, willing to risk her life on the frontlines of change in America. She was arrested, shoved and pushed in front of the Dallas County courthouse by sheriff Jim Clark. She was knocked down on Bloody Sunday on March 7, 1965, on the Edmund Pettus Bridge as 600 of us attempted to march to Montgomery to dramatize the dire need for voting rights legislation in this country." Lewis noted that Boynton led the registration drives in Alabama long before he was born. She was a co-founder of the Dallas County Voters League in 1951 and held voter registration drives throughout the darkest,

and attempted to begin a full-fledged SNCC project," Young said. "They hoped to win some converts to SNCC among young people at Selma University, but the administration of the school was extremely fearful, and they were banned from the campus. However, a few students did become active, and joined with adults like Mrs. Amelia Boynton, president of the banned NAACP, and the pastor of the Catholic Mission to form the beginnings of a movement.

"It did not take long for Bernard to establish himself in Selma, but he was viciously beaten by a group of whites in front of his home one night, and might have been killed had a neighbor not appeared on his porch with a rifle and chased the attackers away."

Despite constant threats, Boynton did not give in to fear.

Young wrote that she and her husband had two spare rooms and that they made one available to him and the second was shared by Dorothy Cotton and Septima Clark when they were in town to organize blacks.

He wrote, "Mrs. Boynton never charged us a penny in rent for the months we stayed in her home."

In 1964, a year after the death of her first husband, Boynton ran for Congress, the first female African American to seek that office in Alabama and the first woman of any race to run for Congress as a Democrat. She received 10 percent of the vote, a major accomplishment in an era in which few blacks were allowed to register.



Boynton, in wheelchair next to President Obama, at 50th anniversary celebration of the Selma to Montgomery March (Photo by Stephonia Taylor McLinn).



Blacks 'Left Behind' in New Orleans Recovery

10 Anniversary Remembers Tragedy In New Orleans

By Freddie Allen
NNPA Senior Washington Correspondent

WASHINGTON (NNPA) - As Gulf Coast residents and policymakers celebrated the recovery of the Crescent City on the 10th anniversary of Hurricane Katrina, advocacy groups challenged the narrative of a resilient and better New Orleans by launching KatrinaTruth.org, a website that shows that post-Katrina progress in New Orleans still hasn't reached poor black communities.

Judith Browne Dianis, the co-director of the Advancement Project, a multiracial civil rights group, said that, 10 years ago, the Advancement Project was on the ground in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, working with communities to protect the rights of survivors.

"Ten years later, the city of New Orleans wants to sell us a bag of bad goods, telling us that the city has gotten better, but unfortunately the recovery and the reconstruction has been uneven and African American families have been left behind," said Dianis.

On the a telephone call with reporters to discuss the launch of KatrinaTruth.org, Dianis described a landscape dominated by charter schools, dispossession, destruction and gentrification and new businesses that catered to a "mew class of wealthier, white residents," as black New Orleanians face severe disparities in education,

employment, housing and the criminal justice system.

A recent poll by CNN/ORC found that more than half (51 percent) believe that the United States is still vulnerable to a "Katrina-like emergency" 10 years after the storm claimed more than 1,300 lives.

"This is why the myth of resilient New Orleans that the city wants to sell everyone is so dangerous," explained Dianis. "It is a narrative that paves over the history of black New Orleans and ignores the true cost of exclusionary, disaster capitalism policies."

KatrinaTruth.org is a direct response to the wrong narrative of progress espoused by the city's Katrina10 media campaign and the media that echoes those sentiments, said Dianis.

"In New Orleans, especially post-Katrina, what we're seeing is nonprofit groups parachuting in, to 'fix' New Orleans and to fix our families and to do what they think is best for New Orleans, but this has led not only to the duplication of work but also opportunity for new organizations to ignore the historical struggles that have plagued the black community," said Gina Womack, the executive director of Families and Friends of Louisiana's Incarcerated Children (FFLIC), a nonprofit focused on juvenile justice reform.