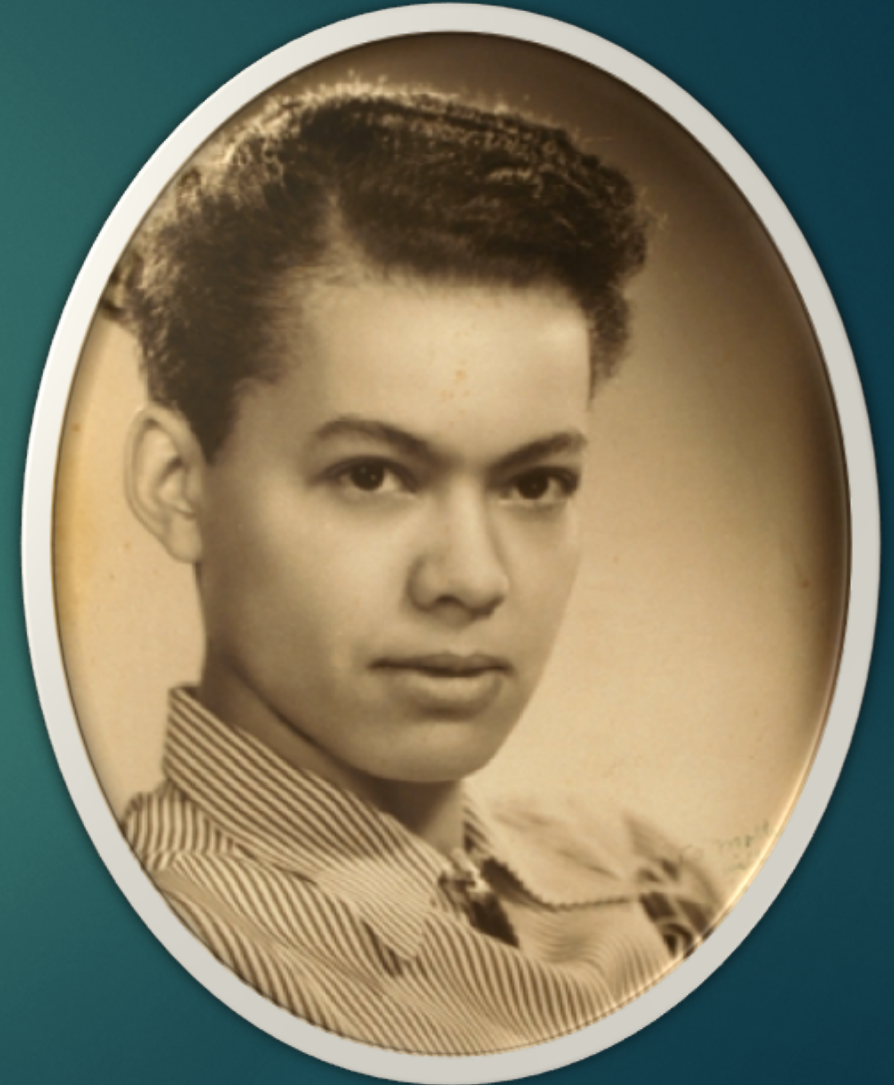


Pauli Murray: A Civil & Women's Rights Trailblazer

- To view this PDF as a projectable presentation, save the file, click "View" in the top menu bar of the file, and select "Full Screen Mode"
- So that teachers have detailed information, some of the slides are very text heavy. Teachers are encouraged to edit this presentation's content to best meet their particular learning objectives.
- For an editable version of the PPT, email Carolina K-12 at CarolinaK12@unc.edu with the title of the PowerPoint in the subject line.
- The lesson procedure notes additional information as well as numerous potential discussion questions to accompany each slide.



Warm-Up



- Listen to the poem as it is read to you.
- Underline or highlight any words or phrases that strike or move you.
- Jot down emotions, thoughts, connections, and your own reactions in the blank space below.
- You can also sketch or describe any images that stick in your mind based on what you hear.

Pauli Murray

- ▶ Today we will look at the incredible life of Pauli Murray, a Civil Rights hero who was raised in Durham.
- ▶ We will examine her life in its historical context, looking at the effects her work had on the Civil Rights Movement and the fight for women's rights.



Early Life

- Born in Baltimore. Endured a difficult early life.
- Raised in Durham, North Carolina by her aunt and grandparents
 - Came from a family of teachers
- Top student at **Hillside High School** (1926) in Durham
 - Graduated at 15
 - Offered a scholarship to attend a segregated university



Pauli Murray through her Oral History

- ▶ Throughout today's lesson, we will be learning about Pauli Murray through oral history.
- ▶ You will hear about her life in her own words.
- ▶ When we listen to the clips, think about not only *what* she is saying but *how* she says it.

Murray on Durham's "Racial Climate"

- ▶ Listen to the oral history excerpt ([link](#))
- ▶ Answer the questions found on the listening guide.
- ▶ Know before you listen: "nadir" means the lowest point of a period of time

"The terror of lynching was always in the background. The awareness of the Ku Klux Klan was always in the background...I suppose this awareness to a child of my generation grows with you just like almost a part of your body and your being. It's hard to say when you become aware because you take it in all of the time."

~Pauli Murray

Leaving the South for New York

- ▶ After graduation, Murray was offered a scholarship to an all-black college, but *refused it* on the grounds that she could no longer tolerate segregation.

“Underneath it all, I hated segregation so that all I wanted to do was get away from segregation. No more segregation for me. I was 15, but I knew. I had had enough.” ~Pauli Murray

- ▶ She moved to New York, where she was exposed to prominent civil rights activists and thinkers, and enrolled in Hunter College, where she was one of 45 African American women - out of 7,000!

Murray on applying to UNC Grad School (1938)

- ▶ In 1938, applied to UNC' s Graduate School of Sociology, which at the time was segregated.
- ▶ Listen to the Murray' s reasoning regarding applying, and what happened after.
 - ▶ Clip 2 ***“It was real fear – not disagreement with me on principal.”***
 - ▶ Clip 3
- ▶ Answer the questions found on the listening guide.



Rejected by the University, and the NAACP

- ▶ Although the Supreme Court ruled that year in *Gaines v. Canada* (1938) that state schools were required to provide graduate education to black as well as white students, Murray's application was rejected on the basis of her race.
- ▶ Largely working on her own, Murray corresponded with the university's president, Frank Porter Graham.
- ▶ She sent copies of their letters to the African-American press and implored Thurgood Marshall and the NAACP to take her case. Her fight for admittance made national news.
- ▶ The university still denied Murray admission, and the NAACP refused to represent her—a decision that was likely based on her “maverick” tendencies as well as questions about her gender and sexual identity.

15 Years *Before* Rosa Parks

- ▶ In 1940, while traveling by bus to visit her family in North Carolina, Murray and a friend were arrested for refusing to sit in broken seats reserved for black riders.
- ▶ Jailed in Petersburg, Virginia, Murray drew on a vast network of friends and colleagues, including Eleanor Roosevelt, for help.
- ▶ Despite initial assistance from the NAACP, once again Murray's case did not become a springboard for challenging the constitutionality of "separate but equal" in the courts.
- ▶ Instead, she and her friend served jail sentences for disorderly conduct.



Howard University

- ▶ Back in New York a few months after her arrest, Murray began working with the **Workers Defense League**, a team of lawyers appealing the conviction of Odell Waller.
 - Waller, a Virginia sharecropper sentenced to death for killing his landlord, claimed self-defense but was convicted of first-degree murder by an all-white “poll-tax” jury.
 - Despite the efforts of Murray, Ransom, and many others—including Eleanor Roosevelt—Waller’s appeals were rejected, and he was executed in 1942.
- ▶ The experience galvanized her commitment to study law. In the course of working on his case, a lawyer encouraged her to apply to Howard’s law school.

Howard University

- ▶ Murray entered Howard University School of Law in 1941. She was the only female in her class, and began to strongly feel the impacts of sexism.
- ▶ She began to study Gandhi's teachings on nonviolence and led sit-ins at whites-only cafes in Washington, D.C., training her fellow students in methods of civil disobedience.
- ▶ Although the sit-ins were successful in forcing some establishments to serve African-Americans, white newspapers refused to cover the protests, and Howard administration demanded that the students end their demonstration.

"No matter what happens to you temporarily, whether you are served in a restaurant, or go to prison, or get slapped down, the resources of human history are behind you and the future of human society is on your side, if there is to be any human society in the future. **You have nothing to lose and everything to gain.**" ~Pauli Murray

Applying to Harvard

- ▶ After graduating first in her class - and as the only woman - in 1944, she received a fellowship that should have sent her to Harvard to continue her graduate work, as so many male graduates of Howard had gone before her.
- ▶ Listen to Murray discussing her application to Harvard: ([Clip 4](#))



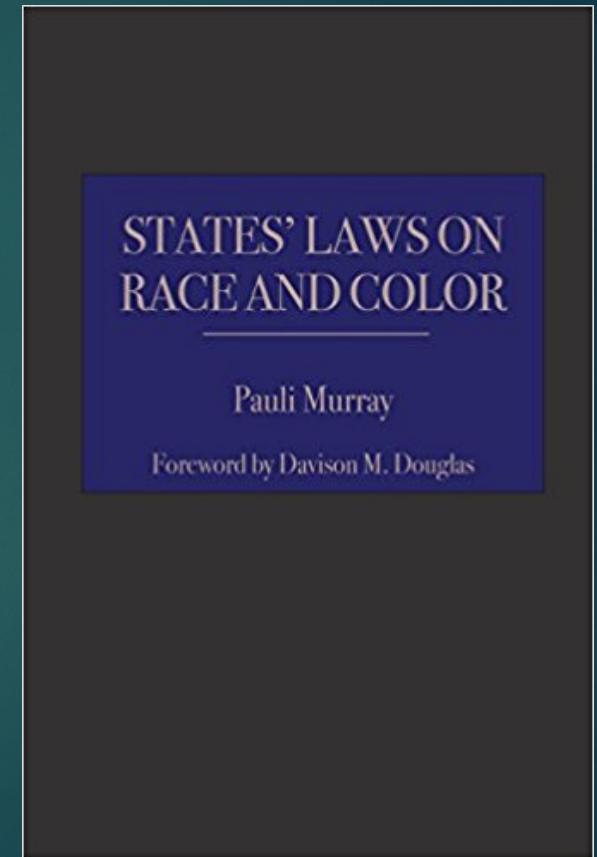
Denied at Harvard Based on Sex

- ▶ Despite her top grades and a letter from Harvard alumnus and United States President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Harvard denied her application because she was not **“of the sex entitled to be admitted to Harvard Law School.”**
- ▶ Undeterred, Murray moved to California and received a master of law degree from Berkeley the following year.
- ▶ In 1946, she was named a deputy attorney general in California, making her the first African American in the state’s attorney general’s office.

Murray provides the foundation for challenging Brown v. BOE

- ▶ In 1951, Murray researched and wrote *States' Laws on Race and Color*, a 746-page publication detailing segregation laws and practices throughout the country.
- ▶ Thurgood Marshall called it the “bible” for lawyers working on *Brown v. Board of Education* and other civil rights cases.
- ▶ OPTIONAL: Listen to the oral history clip ([Clip 5](#))

“I’ve lived to see my lost causes found.”



The Fight Against “Jane Crow”

- ▶ Applied to Yale Law School & earned her doctorate degree in 1965.
- ▶ Appointed to the President’s Commission on the Status of Women in 1961.
- ▶ Having long argued that discrimination on the basis of sex was similar to racial discrimination, she developed the approach of using the **Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment** to challenge discrimination on the basis of sex.
- ▶ Her strategy would expand women’s rights along the same lines used by the NAACP in its attack on segregation.



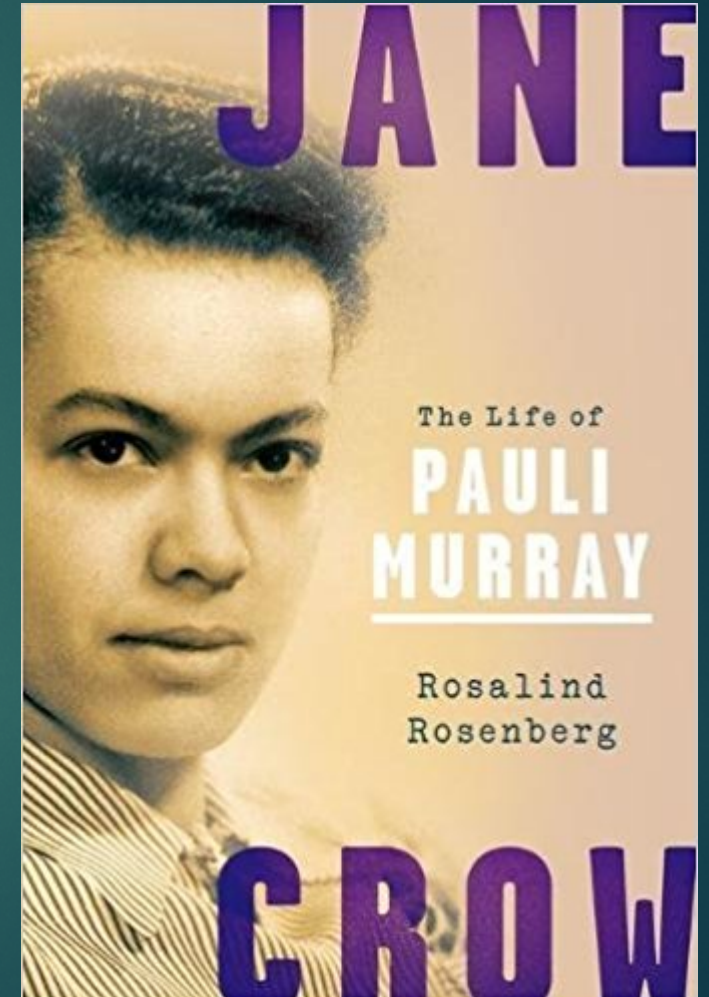
The Fight Against “Jane Crow”

- ▶ Additionally, her work and influence helped ensure that “sex” was included in Title VII of the **Civil Rights Act of 1964**.
- ▶ After graduating from Yale, she and a co-author published “Jane Crow and the Law: Sex Discrimination and Title VII” which drew parallels between racial and sex discrimination.
- ▶ In 1971, Ruth Bader Ginsburg read “Jane Crow” and used it in her successful Supreme Court case, *Reed v. Reed*, challenging sex discrimination. Ginsburg named Murray as a co-author on her Brandeis Brief.
- ▶ Helped found the National Organization for Women (1966), and she served on the national board of the American Civil Liberties Union.

Murray on Gender Discrimination and Women's Liberation

- ▶ Listen to the oral history clip ([Clip 6](#))
- ▶ Answer the corresponding questions in your listening guide

“The two meet in me.”



What did Pauli Murray do?

- ▶ Graduated from Hunter College (1 of 45 African American women— out of 7,000!)
- ▶ Attempted to desegregate UNC in 1938
- ▶ Attempted to desegregate interstate bus travel in 1940
- ▶ Graduated Howard Law first in her class (& was the only female student)
- ▶ Led sit-ins that desegregated some Washington, DC cafes
- ▶ Earned a fellowship to Harvard (though she was ultimately denied based on being female)
- ▶ Earned a Master of Law from Berkeley
- ▶ Served as the first African American deputy attorney general in CA
- ▶ Wrote *States Laws on Race & Color* (1951) that helped craft the argument for *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954)
- ▶ Used **Equal Protection Clause of 14th Amendment** to challenge sexism, expanding women's rights along the same lines used by the NAACP in its attack on segregation.
- ▶ Earned a doctorate from Yale in 1965
- ▶ Her work ensured that "sex" was included in Title XII of the **Civil Rights Act of 1964**.
- ▶ Co-authored "Jane Crow and the Law: Sex Discrimination and Title VII," which was utilized by Ruth Bader to challenge sex discrimination in the Supreme Court case *Reed v. Reed*.
- ▶ Helped found the National Organization for Women (1966)
- ▶ Served on the national board of the American Civil Liberties Union.

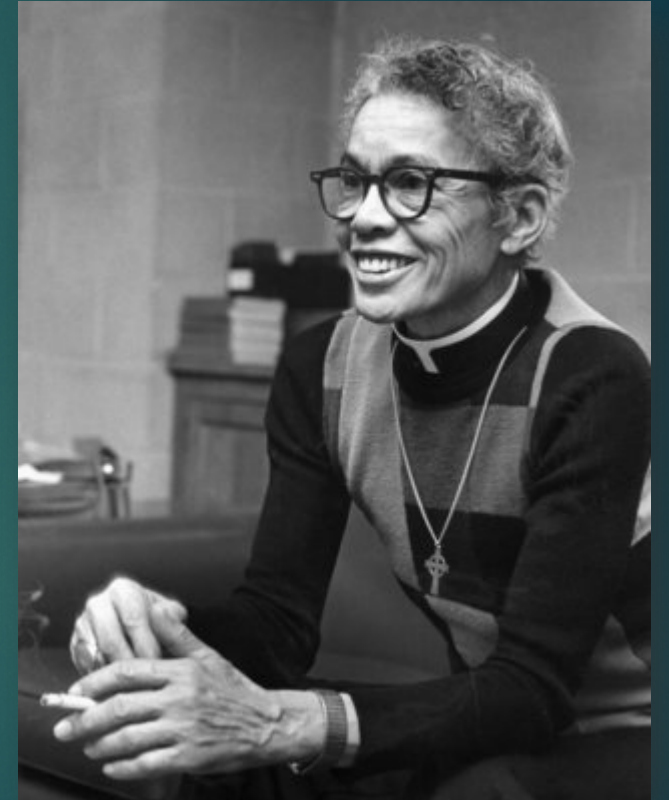
Dark Testament – by Pauli Murray

Hope is a crushed stalk
Between clenched fingers
Hope is a bird' s wing
Broken by a stone.
Hope is a word in a tuneless ditty –
A word whispered with the wind,
A dream of forty acres and a mule,
A cabin of one' s own and a moment to rest,
A name and place for one' s children
And children' s children at last . . .
Hope is a song in a weary throat.
Give me a song of hope
And a world where I can sing it.
Give me a song of faith
And a people to believe in it.
Give me a song of kindness
And a country where I can live it.
Give me a song of hope and love
And a brown girl' s heart to hear it.

Murray's Vision of America

- ▶ Listen to the audio clip ([Clip 7](#)). Take notes as you listen on your guide.

“I want to see America be what she says she is. And I consider it part of my responsibility to do that. It’s a kind of patriotism.”



Write a Letter to Pauli Murray

- ▶ In the last interview clip, Murray says that it is part of her responsibility to “help America be what she says it is.” Based on what you have learned in class (and additional research should you choose), write a letter to Murray in which you congratulate her on some of the specific ways you believe she lived up to this responsibility.
- ▶ In your letter, include at least two examples of Murray’s activism/achievements during her own life time, and two examples of either:
 - ▶ current events that show how America has achieved Murray’s dream for it (perhaps that you can attribute to her work)
 - ▶ Or current events that highlight there is still work to be done (If she has inspired you in any way to do something about it, note that, too!)