

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Federal Glover (925) 427-8138

Supervisor honors memory of civil-rights giant Rosa Parks

MARTINEZ (Oct. 25) -- Rosa Parks, considered by many to be the mother of the civil-rights movement, died last night of natural causes in her Detroit home. She was 92.

Parks wrote her way into the history books and galvanized African Americans across the country when she refused to move to the back of a bus in order to make room for a white passenger.

Almost 50 years after she was arrested and convicted of violating the segregation laws, an event that inspired a 381-day boycott of Montgomery, Ala.'s buses and a successful Supreme Court challenge, the country is remembering Parks as a hero.

"The best thing we can do to remember and honor Rosa Parks is to remember that one person can make a difference," said Supervisor Federal Glover, who represents District 5 in East Contra Costa County.

Glover introduced a moment of silence to remember the civil rights heroine during today's Board of Supervisors meeting.

"By the simple act of sitting down in a bus, she stood up for all people who have been denied their human and civil rights," he said. "All Americans -- but particularly people of color, immigrants and the unrepresented -- continue to ride that bus. We're finding out, it is a long and bumpy ride."

It's difficult for today's young people, who may view the 1950s as ancient history, to understand what Parks and her contemporaries were up against and the courage it took to defy the status quo. On Montgomery buses, the first four rows were reserved for whites. African Americans, who made up three-quarters of the city's bus riders, could sit in the middle rows only until white passengers wanted them, in which case they would move to the back or stand.

Until Dec. 1, 1955. On that day, Parks, a 42-year-old seamstress, was fed up. During the past half-century, myths about Parks' actions that day have arisen including the mistaken belief that she simply was too tired to move. The truth was that she was an active member of the NAACP, suffered the indignities of the Montgomery bus system for too long and was preparing for an NAACP meeting that night. "I felt that I had a right to be treated as any other passenger," Parks said in 1992. "We had endured that kind of treatment for too long."

Parks was born Rosa Louise McCauley on Feb. 4, 1913, in Tuskegee, Ala. After marrying Raymond Parks in 1932, she returned to high school to obtain her diploma at his urging.

After the Montgomery bus boycott, which the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. organized after her arrest, Parks had trouble finding work in Alabama. Facing threats, she and her husband moved to Detroit in 1957, where she worked as a congressional aide for Rep. John Conyers.