

= Pauli Murray =

Anna Pauline " Pauli " Murray (November 20 , 1910 ? July 1 , 1985) was an American civil rights activist , women 's rights activist , lawyer , and author . Drawn to the ministry , in 1977 Murray became the first black woman to be ordained as an Episcopal priest and among the first group of women to become priests in this church .

Born in Baltimore , Maryland , Murray was raised mostly by her maternal grandparents in Durham , North Carolina . At the age of sixteen , she moved to New York to attend Hunter College , graduating with a Bachelor of Arts degree in English in 1933 . In 1940 , Murray sat in the whites @-@ only section of a Virginia bus with a friend , and they were arrested for violating state segregation laws . This incident , and her subsequent involvement with the socialist Workers ' Defense League , led to a career goal as a civil rights lawyer . She enrolled in the law school of Howard University , where she also became aware of sexism . She called it " Jane Crow " , alluding to the Jim Crow racial segregation laws . Murray graduated first in their class , but was denied the chance to do post @-@ graduate work at Harvard University because of her gender . She earned a master 's in law at University of California , Berkeley , and in 1965 she became the first African American to receive a Doctor of Juridical Science degree from Yale Law School .

As a lawyer , Murray argued for civil rights and women 's rights . National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) Chief Counsel Thurgood Marshall called Murray 's 1950 book States ' Laws on Race and Color the " bible " of the civil rights movement . Murray served on the 1961 Presidential Commission on the Status of Women and in 1966 was a co @-@ founder of the National Organization for Women . Ruth Bader Ginsburg later named Murray a coauthor on a brief for Reed v. Reed in recognition of her pioneering work on gender discrimination . Murray held faculty or administrative positions at the Ghana School of Law , Benedict College , and Brandeis University .

In 1973 , Murray left academia for the Episcopal Church , becoming an ordained priest in 1977 , among the first generation of women priests . Murray struggled in her adult life with issues related to her sexual and gender identity , describing herself as having an " inverted sex instinct " . She had a brief , annulled marriage to a man and several deep relationships with women . In her younger years , she occasionally passed as a teenage boy . In addition to her legal and advocacy work , Murray published two well @-@ reviewed autobiographies and a volume of poetry .

= = Early life = =

Murray was born in Baltimore , Maryland in 1910 . Both sides of her family were of mixed racial origins , with ancestors including black slaves , white slave owners , Native Americans , Irish , and free blacks . The varied features and complexions of her family were described as a " United Nations in miniature " . Murray 's parents ? schoolteacher William H. Murray and nurse Agnes (Fitzgerald) Murray ? both identified as black . In 1914 , Agnes died of a cerebral hemorrhage . After her father began to have emotional problems as a result of typhoid fever , relatives took custody of the children and eventually William was committed to a psychiatric institution , where he received no meaningful treatment .

Three year old Pauli Murray was sent to Durham , North Carolina , to live with her mother 's family . There , her maternal aunts , Sarah (Sallie) Fitzgerald and Pauline Fitzgerald Dame (both teachers) as well as her maternal grandparents Robert and Cornelia (Smith) Fitzgerald raised her . She attended St. Titus Episcopal Church with her mother 's family , as had her mother before Murray was born . In 1923 , her father , who had been committed to the Hospital for the Negro Insane of Maryland , died as a result of being beaten by a white guard . Murray had wanted to rescue him when she reached legal age , but was just thirteen .

Murray lived in Durham until the age of sixteen , at which point she moved to New York to finish high school and prepare for college . There she lived with the family of her cousin Maude ; they were passing for white in their white neighborhood . Murray 's presence discomfited Maude 's neighbors , however , as Murray was more visibly of partial African descent . She nonetheless graduated with

her second high school diploma and honors in 1927 , and was able to enroll at Hunter College for two years .

Murray was briefly married in 1930 , to a man she referred in her autobiography only as " Billy " , although they would not formally divorce for 18 years . She had the marriage annulled several months after it began .

Inspired to attend Columbia University by a favorite teacher , Murray was turned away because the university did not admit women ; she did not have the funds to attend its partner women 's school of Barnard College . Instead she attended Hunter College , a free city university , where she was one of the few students of color . Murray was encouraged in her writing by one of her English instructors , who gave her an " A " for an essay about her maternal grandfather ; this became the basis of her later memoir Proud Shoes (1956) about her mother 's family . Murray published an article and several poems in the college paper . She graduated in 1933 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in English .

Murray took a job selling subscriptions to Opportunity , an academic journal of the National Urban League , a civil rights organization based in New York City . Poor health forced her to resign , and her doctor recommended that Murray seek a healthier environment .

She took a position at Camp Tera , a " She @-@ She @-@ She " conservation camp established at the urging of First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt to parallel the male Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camps formed under President Franklin D. Roosevelt 's New Deal to provide employment to young adults while improving infrastructure . During her three months at the camp , Murray 's health recovered and she met Eleanor Roosevelt , which would later lead to correspondence that changed her life . However , Murray clashed with the camp 's director who found a Marxist book from her Hunter College course in Murray 's belongings , questioned Murray 's stance during the First Lady 's visit , and disapproved of her cross @-@ racial relationship with Peg Holmes , a white counselor . Murray and Holmes left the camp in February 1935 , and began traveling the country by walking , hitchhiking , and hopping freight trains . Murray later worked for the Young Women 's Christian Association .

= = Law school years = =

Murray applied to the University of North Carolina in 1938 , but was rejected because of her race ; all schools and other public facilities in the state were segregated . The case was broadly publicized in both white and black newspapers . Murray wrote to officials ranging from the university president to President Roosevelt , releasing their responses to the media in an attempt to embarrass them into action . The NAACP was initially interested in the case , but later declined to represent her in court , perhaps fearing that her long residence in New York state weakened her case . NAACP leader Roy Wilkins opposed representing her because Murray had already released her correspondence , which he considered " not diplomatic " . Concerns about her sexuality may also have played a role in the decision ; Murray often wore pants rather than the customary skirts of women and was open about her relationships with women .

In early 1940 , Murray was walking the streets in Rhode Island , distraught after " the disappearance of a woman friend . " She was taken into custody by police . She was transferred to Bellevue Hospital in New York City for psychiatric treatment . In March , Murray left the hospital with Adelene McBean , her roommate and girlfriend , and took a bus to Durham to visit her aunts .

In Petersburg , Virginia , the two women moved out of the broken seats in the black (and back) section of the bus , where state segregation laws mandated they sit , and into the white section . Inspired by a conversation they had been having about Gandhian civil disobedience , the two women refused to return to the rear even after the police were called , and they were arrested and jailed . Murray and McBean were initially defended by the NAACP , but when the pair were convicted only of disorderly conduct rather than violating segregation laws , the organization ceased to represent them . The Workers ' Defense League (WDL) , a socialist labor rights organization that was also beginning to take civil rights cases , paid her fine . A few months later the WDL hired Murray for its Administrative Committee .

With the WDL , Murray became active in the case of Odell Waller , a black Virginia sharecropper sentenced to death for killing his white landlord , Oscar Davis , during an argument . The WDL argued that Davis had cheated Waller in a settlement and as their argument grew more heated , Waller had shot Davis in legitimate fear of his life . Murray toured the country raising funds for Waller 's appeal . She wrote to First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt on Waller 's behalf . Roosevelt in turn wrote to Virginia Governor James Hubert Price , asking him to guarantee that the trial was fair ; she later persuaded the president to privately request Price to commute the death sentence . Through this correspondence , Murray and Eleanor Roosevelt began a friendship that would last until the latter 's death two decades later . Despite the WDL 's and Roosevelts ' efforts , however , the governor did not commute Waller 's sentence . Waller was executed on July 2 , 1942 .

= = = Howard University = = =

Murray 's trial on charges stemming from the bus incident and her experience with the Waller case inspired a career in civil rights law . In 1941 , she began attending Howard University law school . Murray was the only woman in her law school class , and she became aware of sexism at the school , which she labeled " Jane Crow " ? alluding to Jim Crow , the system of racial discriminatory state laws oppressing African Americans . On Murray 's first day of class , one professor , William Robert Ming , remarked that he did not know why women went to law school . She was infuriated .

In 1942 , while still in law school , Murray joined the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) . That year she published an article , " Negro Youth 's Dilemma , " that challenged segregation in the US military , which continued during World War II . She also participated in sit @-@ ins challenging several Washington , D.C. restaurants with discriminatory seating policies . These activities preceded the more widespread sit @-@ ins during the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s .

Murray was elected Chief Justice of the Howard Court of Peers , the highest student position at Howard , and in 1944 she graduated first in her class . Men who graduated first in the class were awarded Julius Rosenwald Fellowships for graduate work at Harvard University , but that university did not accept women . Murray was rejected despite a letter of support from President Roosevelt . She wrote in response , " I would gladly change my sex to meet your requirements , but since the way to such change has not been revealed to me , I have no recourse but to appeal to you to change your minds . Are you to tell me that one is as difficult as the other ? "

She did post @-@ graduate work at Boalt Hall School of Law at University of California , Berkeley . Her master 's thesis was The Right to Equal Opportunity in Employment , which argued that " the right to work is an inalienable right " . It was published in the California Law Review produced by the school .

= = Later career = =

After passing the California bar exam in 1945 , Murray was hired as the state 's first black deputy attorney general in January of the following year . That year , the National Council of Negro Women named her its " Woman of the Year ; " Mademoiselle magazine did the same in 1947 .

In 1950 , Murray published States ' Laws on Race and Color , an examination and critique of state segregation laws throughout the nation . She drew on psychological and sociological evidence as well as legal , an innovative discussion technique for which she had previously been criticized by Howard professors . Murray argued for civil rights lawyers to directly challenge state segregation laws as unconstitutional , rather than trying to prove the inequality of so @-@ called " separate but equal " facilities , as was done in some challenges .

Thurgood Marshall , then NAACP Chief Counsel and a future Supreme Court Justice , called Murray 's book the " bible " of the civil rights movement . Her approach was influential to the NAACP 's arguments in Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka (1954) , by which they drew from psychological studies assessing the effects of segregation on students in school . The US Supreme Court ruled that segregated public schools were unconstitutional .

Murray lived in Ghana from 1960 to 1961 , serving on the faculty of the Ghana School of Law . She returned to the US and studied at Yale Law School , in 1965 becoming the first African American to receive a J.S.D. (Juris Scientium Doctor , Doctor of the Science of Law) from the school . She taught at Brandeis University from 1968 to 1973 , where she received tenure as Full Professor in American Studies .

= = = Jane Crow = = =

At the front of the Civil Rights Movement , alongside such leaders as Martin Luther King , Jr. and Rosa Parks , but lesser known , was Pauli Murray , an outspoken woman who protested discrimination on the basis of race and sex . She coined the term " Jane Crow , " which demonstrated Murray 's belief that Jim Crow laws also negatively impacted African @-@ American women . She was determined to work with other activists to put a halt to both racism and sexism . Murray 's speech , " Jim Crow and Jane Crow , " delivered in Washington , D.C. in 1964 , sheds light on the long struggle of African @-@ American women for racial equality and their later fight for equality among the sexes . Pauli Murray ultimately helped push the American Civil Rights Movement by letting her audience know that women 's rights were just as important as civil rights . " Jim Crow and Jane Crow , " Murray 's speech , was given during Lyndon B. Johnson 's presidency . It primarily addresses an audience of African @-@ American women . Pauli Murray acknowledges the fact that African @-@ American women have always contributed to the progress of the Civil Rights Movement . She believes that African @-@ American women have worked just as hard , if not harder than , African @-@ American men to achieve equal rights among whites and blacks . According to Murray , " Not only have they stood ... with Negro men in every phase of the battle , but they have also continued to stand when their men were destroyed by it . " The black women decided to " ... continue ... [standing] ... " for their freedom and liberty even when " ... their men ... " began to experience exhaustion from a long struggle for civil rights . These women were unafraid to stand up for what they believed in and refused to back down from the long and tedious " battle . " Murray continues her praise for black women when she says that " ... one cannot help asking : would the Negro struggle have come this far without the indomitable determination of its women ? " The " Negro struggle " was able to progress partly because of " ... the indomitable determination of its women . " African @-@ American women were vital to the Civil Rights Movement and pushed it forward with their own might . They were just as important to the black struggle for racial justice as their male counterparts . Their work ethic and persistence defined African @-@ American women as important to a long fight against racism in America .

= = = Women 's rights = = =

Ruth Bader Ginsburg named Murray an honorary co @-@ author of her brief in Reed v. Reed (1971) . US President John F. Kennedy appointed Murray to the Presidential Commission on the Status of Women in 1961 . She prepared a memo titled A Proposal to Reexamine the Applicability of the Fourteenth Amendment to State Laws and Practices Which Discriminate on the Basis of Sex Per Se , which argued that the Fourteenth Amendment forbade sex discrimination as well as racial discrimination .

1963 she became one of the first to criticize the sexism of the civil rights movement , in her speech " The Negro Woman and the Quest for Equality " . In a letter to civil rights leader A. Philip Randolph , she criticized the fact that in the 1963 March on Washington no women were invited to make one of the major speeches or to be part of its delegation of leaders who went to the White House , among other grievances . She wrote :

I have been increasingly perturbed over the blatant disparity between the major role which Negro women have played and are playing in the crucial grassroots levels of our struggle and the minor role of leadership they have been assigned in the national policy @-@ making decisions . It is indefensible to call a national march on Washington and send out a call which contains the name of not a single woman leader .

In 1965 Murray published her landmark article (coauthored by Mary Eastwood) , " Jane Crow and the Law : Sex Discrimination and Title VII " , in the George Washington Law Review . The article discussed Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 as it applied to women , and drew comparisons between discriminatory laws against women and Jim Crow laws . In 1966 she was a cofounder of the National Organization for Women (NOW) , which she hoped could act as an NAACP for women 's rights . In March of that year , Murray wrote to Commissioner Richard Alton Graham that the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission was not fulfilling its duty in upholding the gendered portion of its mission , leaving only half the black population protected . Later she and Dorothy Kenyon successfully argued *White v. Crook* , a case in which the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit ruled that women have an equal right to serve on juries . When lawyer and future Supreme Court justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg wrote her brief for *Reed v. Reed* ? a 1971 Supreme Court case that for the first time extended the Fourteenth Amendment 's Equal Protection Clause to women ? she added Murray and Kenyon as coauthors in recognition of her debt to their work .

= = Academia and priesthood = =

Murray served as vice president of Benedict College from 1967 ? 68 . She left Benedict to become a professor at Brandeis University , where she remained until 1973 . In addition to teaching law , Murray introduced classes on African @-@ American studies and women 's studies , both firsts for the university . Murray later wrote that her time at Brandeis was " the most exciting , tormenting , satisfying , embattled , frustrated , and at times triumphant period of my secular career " .

Increasingly inspired by her connections with other women in the Episcopal Church , Murray , now more than sixty years old , left Brandeis to attend the seminary . After three years of study , in 1977 she became the first African @-@ American woman ordained as an Episcopal priest and among the first generation of Episcopal women priests . That year she celebrated her first Eucharist by invitation at Chapel of the Cross ; this was the first time a woman celebrated the Eucharist at an Episcopal church in North Carolina . In 1978 she preached her first sermon in her ' hometown ' of Durham , North Carolina , on Mother 's Day at St. Philip 's Episcopal Church , where her mother and grandparents had attended in the 19th century . She announced her mission of reconciliation . For the next seven years , Murray worked in a parish in Washington , D.C. , focusing particularly on ministry to the sick .

= = Death and legacy = =

The Rev. Dr. Pauli Murray died of pancreatic cancer in the house she owned with a lifelong friend , Maida Springer Kemp , in Pittsburgh , Pennsylvania , on July 1 , 1985 .

In 2012 the General Convention of the Episcopal Church voted to honor Murray as one of its Holy Women , Holy Men , to be commemorated on July 1 , the anniversary of her death , along with fellow writer Harriet Beecher Stowe . Bishop Michael Curry of the Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina said this recognition honors " people whose lives have exemplified what it means to follow in the footsteps of Jesus and make a difference in the world . "

In 2015 the National Trust for Historic Preservation named the childhood home of Murray (on Carroll Street in Durham , North Carolina 's West End neighborhood) as a National Treasure .

In April 2016 , Yale University announced that their leadership had selected Murray as the namesake of one of two new residential colleges , the other of which will be named after Benjamin Franklin upon completion in 2017 .

= = Sexuality and gender identity = =

Murray struggled with her sexual and gender identity through much of her life . Her marriage as a teenager ended almost immediately with the realization that " when men try to make love to me , something in me fights " . Though acknowledging the term " homosexual " in describing others , Murray preferred to describe herself as having an " inverted sex instinct " that caused her to behave

as a man attracted to women . She wanted a " monogamous married life " , but one in which she was the man . The majority of her relationships were with women whom she described as " extremely feminine and heterosexual " . In her younger years , Murray would often be devastated by the end of these relationships , to the extent that she was twice hospitalized for psychiatric treatment , in 1937 and in 1940 .

Murray wore her hair short and preferred pants to skirts ; due to her slight build , there was a time in her life when she was often able to pass as a teenage boy . In her twenties , she shortened her name from Pauline to the more androgynous Pauli . Murray pursued hormone treatments in the 1940s to correct what she saw as a personal imbalance , and even requested abdominal surgery to test if she had " submerged " male sex organs .

= = Memoirs and poetry = =

In addition to her legal work , Murray wrote two volumes of autobiography and a collection of poetry . Her first autobiographical book , *Proud Shoes* (1956) , traces her family 's complicated racial origins , particularly focusing on her maternal grandparents , Robert and Cornelia Fitzgerald . Cornelia was the daughter of a slave raped by her owner and his brother ; she was raised by her owner 's sister and educated . Robert was a free black from Pennsylvania , also of mixed racial ancestry ; he moved to the South to teach during the Reconstruction Era . Newspapers including *The New York Times* gave the book very positive reviews . *The New York Herald Tribune* stated that *Proud Shoes* is " a personal memoir , it is history , it is biography , and it is also a story that , at its best , is dramatic enough to satisfy the demands of fiction . It is written in anger , but without hatred ; in affection , but without pathos and tears ; and in humor that never becomes extravagant " .

Murray published a collection of her poetry , *Dark Testament and Other Poems* , in 1970 . The volume contains what critic Christina G. Bucher calls a number of " conflicted love poems " , as well as exploring economic and racial injustice . The collection has received little critical attention , and as of 2007 , was out of print .

A follow @-@ up volume to *Proud Shoes* , her memoir *Song in a Weary Throat : An American Pilgrimage* was published posthumously in 1987 . *Song* focused on Murray 's own life , particularly her struggles with both gender and racial discrimination . It received the Robert F. Kennedy Book Award , the Christopher Award , and the Lillian Smith Book Award .

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