

PULLOUT

Background on Pauli Murray

Anna Pauline Murray was born in 1910. Orphaned at a young age, she was sent to live with an aunt in North Carolina who was affirming of Pauli's exploration of gender identity and expression. Pauli describes how her aunt referred to her as a "boy-girl."¹ Pauli never publicly addressed her gender identity, nor did she explicitly acknowledge it in her memoir, but personal papers and medical documents reveal that at times Pauli identified as a boy, felt "queer" or "in between," and later suffered "nervous breakdowns" and sought hormone therapy, which was denied.² In the 1930s, she adopted Pauli as her official name. We don't know how Pauli might identify today or the pronouns Pauli would choose because the language was not available during her lifetime. Therefore, we have chosen to use the pronouns *she/her* in keeping with the pronoun choices she used.

As an activist, Pauli Murray wrote letters in 1939 advocating for her admittance to the University of North Carolina after being denied because of her race, as well as letters to President Roosevelt and Eleanor Roosevelt (leading to a lifelong friendship) questioning the former's action on race discrimination and pushing for more to be done. Fifteen years before Rosa Parks, she and a friend were arrested and jailed in Virginia for refusing to give up their seats on a bus. As a student at Howard Law School in the 1940s, Pauli Murray coined the term *Jane Crow* to describe oppression based on gender and race. She also helped organize sit-ins at local restaurants to protest segregation well before the Greensboro sit-in of 1960. Murray worked with prominent members of the civil rights movement such as Bayard Rustin and James Farmer to form the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE). She continued her work with them and A. Philip Randolph to help organize the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom but was critical of male domination and lack of women's roles in the

civil rights movement. As a result, she would later cofound the National Organization for Women (NOW).

As a writer, her legal theories and papers inspired others and lay the groundwork for race and sex discrimination cases. Her law school seminar paper, "Should the *Civil Rights Cases* and *Plessy v. Ferguson* Be Overruled?" argued for a direct attack on segregation, and though she was mocked by her male peers for this, the paper along with her 1951 book *States' Laws on Race and Color*, which Thurgood Marshall called the "bible for civil rights lawyers," helped lay the foundation for *Brown v. Board of Education* and the end of the separate but equal doctrine ten years later. Ruth Bader Ginsburg credited Pauli Murray on an amicus brief for the historic 1971 Supreme Court case *Reed v. Reed*, which was the first time the nation's highest court recognized women as victims of sex discrimination.

As a trailblazer, Pauli Murray earned two distinctive firsts. In 1965, she was appointed as the first African American deputy attorney general in California. In 1977, she became the first African American female priest to be ordained by the Episcopal Church in 1977. ■

Notes

1. Pauli Murray, *Song in a Weary Throat: Memoir of an American Pilgrimage*, with an introduction by Patricia Bell-Scott (New York: Liveright, 2018).
2. Rosalind Rosenberg, *Jane Crow: The Life of Pauli Murray* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

References for Featured Sources

- A. Rosita Stevens-Holsey and Terry Catasús Jennings, *Pauli Murray: The Life of a Pioneering Feminist & Civil Rights Activist*, illus. Ashanti Fortson (New York: Yellow Jacket, 2002).
- B. Portrait of Murray, seated, June 1927, Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America, 20002217_1, Harvard University, https://digitalcollections.library.harvard.edu/catalog/W20002217_URN-3:RAD.SCHL:333188
- C. Photograph Album, ca. 1919–1950, Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America, MC 412, Harvard University, <https://iif.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:49842458> (refer to sequences 27 and 28)
- D. Pauli Murray Timeline, Pauli Murray Center, www.paulimurraycenter.com/murray-timeline
- E. Deborah Nelson Linck, *Pauli Murray: Shouting for the Rights of All People*, illus. Angela Corbin (Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing, 2022).
- F. Nicholas Graham, “The 1939 Correspondence Between Pauli Murray and Frank Porter Graham,” *For the Record*, <https://blogs.lib.unc.edu/uarms/2016/02/19/the-1939-correspondence-between-pauli-murray-and-frank-porter-graham/>.
- G. Pauli Murray, interview by Genna Rae McNeil, Southern Oral History Program, University of North Carolina, February 13, 1976, 02:11:42–02:23:36, <https://docsouth.unc.edu/sohp/G-0044/G-0044.mp3>. Oral history of bus incident.
- H. “Episode 2: Laying Down the Law,” in *Pauli the Podcast*, hosted and produced by Leoneda Inge, 1:36–4:19, www.wunc.org/podcast/pauli/2021-04-07/laying-down-the-law. Discusses how her work was used by Thurgood Marshall to win *Brown v. Board of Education*.
- I. DC Historic Preservation Office, “Civil Rights Tour: Education—Howard University Law School,” DC Historic Sites, <https://historicsites.dcpreservation.org/items/show/940?tour=12&index=25&gid=1&pid=3>. Photograph of 1944 class at Howard Law School.
- J. Ruth Bader Ginsburg, interview by Margo Guernsey and Llewellyn Smith, “RBG Wanted People To Know More About One Of Her Legal Heroes,” *TIME*, recorded in 2017, YouTube video, www.youtube.com/watch?v=rv838WxQaeQ&t=5s.
- K. *Murray, Abernathy, two women and a man talking*, ca. 1968–1973, Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America, MC412-797-3, Harvard University, https://digitalcollections.library.harvard.edu/catalog/W20002279_URN-3:RAD.SCHL:321064. Murray was an early organizer in the Civil Rights Movement. She cofounded the Congress of Racial Equality in 1942 and worked with leaders like Ralph Abernathy who served on CORE’s advisory committee.
- L. *Pauli Murray standing with a woman, Wheeler and Merrick in front of a dinner table*, 1957, Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America, MC412-18-9, Harvard University, https://digitalcollections.library.harvard.edu/catalog/W20001642_URN-3:RAD.SCHL:382489. Murray with Lyda Moore Merrick, an advocate for African Americans libraries and for those who were blind. Also pictured is John Wheeler, businessman, civil rights activist, President of Mechanics & Farmers’ Bank, and the first Black delegate to the National Democratic Convention for North Carolina.
- M. Vince Graas, *Group portrait of NOW founders at NOW’s organizing conference in Washington, D.C.*, October 30, 1966, Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America, MC412-892-1, Harvard University, https://digitalcollections.library.harvard.edu/catalog/W20002281_URN-3:RAD.SCHL:333224. Pauli Murray (back row, left of center) sits among the cofounders of the National Organization for Women. The organization was mostly made up of white women, and Murray left shortly after it was formed because she felt NOW failed to address the issues of African American women.
- N. *Membership of the Committee on Civil and Political Rights*, Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America, Harvard University, www.flickr.com/photos/schlesinger_library/9608215037/in/album-72157635266297099/.
- O. Pauli Murray, interview by Genna Rae McNeil, Southern Oral History Program, University of North Carolina, February 13, 1976, <https://docsouth.unc.edu/sohp/G-0044/G-0044.mp3>.

How did Pauli push for the promise?		
State and National Standards¹	<p>SS5.S4.GLE1.EOa: Describe and explain examples of individual rights as a foundation of citizenship. SS5.S4.GLE1.EOb: Give examples of group and individual actions that illustrate civic ideals in the founding of the United States. Social Justice Standard 3: Students will recognize that people’s multiple identities interact and create unique and complex individuals. Social Justice Standard 12: Students will recognize unfairness on the individual level (e.g., biased speech) and injustice at the institutional or systemic level (e.g., discrimination).</p>	
Staging the Question	<p>Have students discuss and list individual rights promised to citizens by the U.S. in its founding documents. Discuss the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was promised to citizens of the United States in its founding documents? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Equality (“all men are created equal”) ◦ Equal protection under the law ◦ Right to life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness • Do you think all citizens got what was promised? Why or why not? <p>Play the oral history interview with Pauli in 1976 (Source O), and display Pauli’s quotation, “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.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss and chart: What do you think Pauli means? What is her vision 	
Supporting Question 1	Supporting Question 2	Supporting Question 3
Who is Pauli Murray?	How did Pauli’s individual actions push for “America to be what she says she is”?	How did Pauli work with others to push for “America to be what she says she is”?
Formative Performance Task	Formative Performance Task	Formative Performance Task
Bubble Map of Influences See-Think-Wonder Observe-Reflect-Question Protocol ²	Read Aloud Anchor Chart First Set of Tasks: 1. Shared Reading 2. Oral History Analysis Tool 3. Repeated Listening Activity Second Set of Tasks: 1. See-Think-Wonder 2. Interview Discussion	Gallery Walk
Featured Sources	Featured Sources	Featured Sources
<p>Sources:</p> <p>A. <i>Pauli Murray: The Life of a Pioneering Feminist & Civil Rights Activist</i> B. Gender-conforming photograph of Pauli at age 16 C. Series of photographs of Pauli D. Pauli Murray Center online timeline or timeline from <i>Pauli Murray: Shouting for the Rights of All People</i></p>	<p>Sources:</p> <p>E. <i>Pauli Murray: Shouting for the Rights of All People</i> F. UNC Letters G. Oral History of bus incident (02:11:42–02:23:36) H. “Episode 2: Laying Down the Law,” <i>Pauli the Podcast</i> (1:36–4:19) I. Class of 1944 Howard Law School photograph J. Interview with Ruth Bader Ginsburg from <i>TIME</i></p>	<p>Sources:</p> <p>K. Photograph of Pauli Murray with Ralph Abernathy L. Photograph of Pauli with civil rights and visually impaired activists M. Photograph of Pauli with NOW N. Committee on Civil and Political Rights membership list</p>
Summative Performance Task	<p>ARGUMENT: Students will use at least 3 pieces of evidence from the sources to construct an argument that answers the compelling question</p>	
Taking Informed Action	<p>UNDERSTAND: Students will interpret a short clip from an interview with Pauli Murray (Source O) using an Oral History Analysis Tool.³ Then, in pairs, students will research and investigate one issue that impacts them and/or their community.</p> <p>ASSESS: Students will determine one issue to learn more about and create a presentation for their peers.</p> <p>ACT: Students will choose a form of action based on the issue and their interests. Actions may include writing letters, creating awareness through a multimodal presentation, volunteering for an organization and reporting back on the work being done, etc.</p>	

1. Social Studies Academic Standards, Colorado Department of Education, www.cde.state.co.us/cosocialstudies/statestandards; Social Justice Standards, Learning for Justice, www.learningforjustice.org/frameworks/social-justice-standards.
 2. Observe-Reflect-Question Protocol, Library of Congress, www.loc.gov/programs/teachers/getting-started-with-primary-sources/guides/
 3. Oral History Analysis Tool, Colorado Department of Education, www.cde.state.co.us/cosocialstudies/psssets

Oral History Analysis Sheet



Name: _____

What type of recording is it?



- ___ Audio
- ___ Film or video
- ___ Written document
- ___ Other

What time period did this story take place?



How do you know?

Who is telling the story?

What is their point of view?



Why are they telling the story?
What's the purpose?



What do you notice about the person telling the story?

- ___ They have an accent
- ___ They are old
- ___ They are young
- ___ They use words I don't know

Where was this recording made?

STUDIO

Home

Other: _____

What did you learn from listening to this person's story?



If you could ask this person a question what would it be?

