

Pauli Murray Accomplishments:

- The first woman Chief Justice of the Court of Peers at Howard University Law School
- The first African American attorney in a major white law firm.
- The first African American Doctor of Juridical Science at Yale Law School
- The first African American Deputy Attorney General of a state (California),
- Chair NAACP Student Organization (1941)
- A member of President Kennedy's Commission on the Status of Women,
- Co-founder of the National Organization for Women,
- Member National Board of Directors American Civil Liberties Union
- Part of the first group of women to be ordained into the Episcopal priesthood
- The first female African American Episcopal Priest
- Featured on the cover of *North Carolina Episcopal Magazine*
- Named a saint by the Episcopal Church

The Definition of the Negro in 1910

Excerpt from Odum, Howard W. "Social Traits of the Negro." Columbia University Studies In History, Economics and Public Law. 1910.

Howard Odum's scientific study, published in 1910, was a trusted authority on the traits of the Negro race and was the basis of many racial policies of the time. This was the atmosphere into which Pauli Murray was born.

*"The Negro has few ideals and perhaps no lasting adherence to an aspiration of real manhood, integrity. He has little conception of the meaning of virtue, truth, honor, manhood, integrity. He is shiftless, untidy and indolent....He does not know the value of his word or the meaning of words in general.....lazy rather than industrious...lacks initiative ...is often dishonest and untruthful." "[Individual Negroes] however excellent they might be in character, are nevertheless of a race that cannot share the communal life of the whites."*ⁱ

Odum changed his stance in the 1930s and became a proponent of strong race relations. The damage, however, was insidious and long lasting. It could be said that damage is still among us. ". . . the racial ideology of Black people's inherent inferiority . . . dominated public opinion, disparaged their aspirations for advancement through education, and doomed the entire race to a permanently degraded Status." Pauli Murray in her Autobiography.ⁱⁱ

ⁱ Murray, Pauli. *Autobiography*. P. 9

ⁱⁱ Murray, Pauli. *Autobiography*. P. 8.

It Took More Than the Emancipation Proclamation

It took more than the Emancipation Proclamation and the Civil War for people of Black skin to reach the same legal status as whites. The emancipation proclamation stopped one person from owning another, but it did not change the hearts and minds of people who thought dark skinned people were inferior, lazy, ignorant, and in some cases not even human. The Emancipation proclamation did not grant people of color the vote, like Pauli's grandfather, Robert Fitzgerald, had hoped. Without the vote, dark skinned people couldn't elect others who looked like them, felt like them, knew of their experience and would change the laws that oppressed them. Over more than 150 years, laws were passed with the intention of providing people of color the same rights and benefits of citizenship as whites, but each time a law was passed, it seemed, those who did not believe in the equality of the races managed to subvert the laws. It has taken many steps forward to overcome the back slides and the battle is still not won.

Chronology	Positive Steps	Negative Steps
1863	Emancipation Proclamation	
July 18, 1863	54 th Massachusetts Negro Regiment fights admirably at Fort Wagner and puts to rest the myth that Black soldiers were lazy cowards.	
March, 1865	Fifth Massachusetts including Robert Fitzgerald take a Rebel Fortification in Petersburg.	
May, 1865	End of Civil War	
1865-66		Black Code
1865	13 th Amendment – Abolishes Slavery	
December 1865		Birth of Ku Klux Klan
1865 -77		Intimidation of Blacks by whites grows
1866-77	Reconstruction and Occupation of the South by Union Troops results in Blacks voting, holding office, holding jobs previously held only by whites. ⁱ	
1867	Reconstruction Act	
1868	14 th Amendment – Guarantees all persons equal protection under the law	

1870	15 th Amendment – African American males have the right to vote	
1877		Tilden Compromise – In a contested presidential Election Republican Rutherford Hayes is given the victory in exchange for Union troops leaving the Democratic South.
1877-1954		Jim Crow Laws enacted by southern States to keep people of dark skin separate/segregated and inferior.
1889 - 1966		Laws pass in many states requiring Blacks to pay a tax in order to vote. Designed to prevent Blacks from voting in the South, it often required paying poll tax in all previous years in order to vote.
1896		Plessy v. Ferguson enshrines the doctrine of separate but equal. Supreme court rules that laws which segregated Blacks from whites in public facilities are constitutional as long as the facilities are equal.
1896-1954		Jim Crow Laws proliferate
1909	Creation of NAACP to ensure enforcement of the 13-15 th amendments which ended slavery, guaranteed equal protection under the law and the vote for all adult males.	
1910-1954	NAACP Fights legal battles against discrimination NAACP begins to fight segregation one instance at a time. e.g. one school, one hospital, one drinking fountain as not being equal.	
1919	NAACP publishes <i>Eighteen Years of Lynching in the United States: 1889-1918</i> which puts the spotlight on lynching—the practice declines to a certain extent.	
1940	Pauli Murray refuses to sit in the back of the bus and goes to jail for creating a disturbance.	

1943	Ruth Powell, Pauli Murray and other Howard University students stage a sit-in at Little Palace Cafeteria in Washington, DC and integrate it.	
1944	Ruth Powell, Pauli Murray and other Howard University students stage a sit-in at a John R. Thompson Cafeteria in Washington, DC and integrate it.	
1944		U.S. Congress ⁱⁱ threatens to cut off funds to Howard University if student protests don't stop.
1950	<i>States Laws on Race and Color</i> by Pauli Murray lists every federal, state, county, municipal law governing race. It allows lawyers to better fight discrimination. ⁱⁱⁱ	
1954	<i>Brown vs. Board of Education</i> mandates desegregation of schools and overturns <i>Plessy vs. Ferguson</i> . This is the beginning of the dismantling of Jim Crow laws.	
1954-1973~		States refuse to desegregate schools
1955-1970	Civil Rights Movement	
1957	Civil Rights Act of 1957 – First time since reconstruction Congress passes a law to protect civil rights – in particular voting rights.	
1963	March on Washington for Jobs	
1964	Civil Rights Act of 1964 – Outlaws discrimination based on race, color, sex, religion or national origin. Bans segregation in schools, employment or public accommodations. Bans unequal voter registration requirements. Provides for States to withhold funding from schools which refuse to desegregate.	
1964	Pauli Murray and Mary Eastwood co-write “Jane Crow and the Law: Sex Discrimination and Title VII,”	

	equating racial discrimination to sex discrimination	
1964	24 th Amendment eliminates the poll tax in Federal Elections.	
1965	Voting Rights Act of 1965 prohibits state and local governments from infringing on voting rights granted by the 15 th amendment.	
1966	<i>Harper v. Virginia State Board of Elections</i> prohibits poll taxes in state elections as violating the 14 th Amendment.	
1966	Pauli Murray and Dorothy Kenyon—U. S. District Court for the Middle District of Alabama— <i>White v. Crook</i> – Prohibits “[s]ystematic exclusion of Negroes by race” and “[statutory] exclusion of women from jury service.” ^{iv}	
1968	Civil Rights Act of 1968 – Fair Housing Act prohibits discrimination in sale, and rental of housing on the basis of race, color, sex, religion and national origin.	
1971	Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Supreme Court of the United States— <i>Reed v. Reed</i> – “dissimilar treatment of men and women was unconstitutional” ^v	
1971- present	Battles large and small, personal and nationwide continue.	

ⁱ **Proclamation of Amnesty and Reconstruction** issued by President Lincoln; it offers pardon and restoration of property (except slaves) to Confederates who take an oath of allegiance to the Union and agree to accept emancipation; it also proposes a plan by which loyal voters of a seceded state can begin the process of readmission into the Union <http://www.freedmen.umd.edu/chronol.htm>

ⁱⁱ The U.S. Congress is the primary funder of the District of Columbia because of all the government buildings in DC which do not pay property taxes. District of Columbia still does not have voting representation in Congress.

ⁱⁱⁱ NAACP, ACLU used this book to fight Jim Crow laws and to integrate places where there are no laws, just custom, keeping races apart.

^{iv} Court Proceedings from <https://law.justia.com/cases/federal/district-courts/FSupp/251/401/2249435/>

^v <https://www.oyez.org/cases/1971/70-4>

Members of Your Race Are Not Admitted

Pauli didn't mean to stir up a storm. All she wanted was to attend a good graduate school for social work so she could help those in need. "Members of your race are not admitted to the University,"ⁱ was the answer she received. Perhaps a parallel track for Blacks would be provided during the next session of the General Assembly, but for now, Pauli was out of luck. Pauli's fingers burned and flew. And the press found out about the Black woman who had the gall to apply to the University of North Carolina. Reactions ranged from unbridled bigotry to steadfast support.^{ii iii iv} From University of North Carolina students who wanted nothing to do with a Black student, to Blacks and whites who thought Pauli was the bravest person in the world. The most hurtful response was from the President of North Carolina College for Negroes who asserted that Black students actually do "their best work only in their own schools."^v He advocated the continuation of separate but equal. Was he trying to protect his job? Separate was never equal. Even Aunt Pauline was against the fight. She was afraid that Pauli's notoriety would rub off on her and she would be dropped from her job without a pension. She was afraid of the Klan setting fire to her house. Still, in 1938.^{vi} It would have made sense for the NAACP to take on Pauli's case. Pauli was a model student, with excellent grades and blood ties to the University. And this case would test the separate but equal doctrine.^{vii} But the NAACP declined. Pauli didn't live in North Carolina when she applied, although neither did many white graduate students that attended UNC. The NAACP needed perfect cases and Pauli was far from perfect. She suspected that her "boy/girl thing" was to blame for the NAACP not championing her case. The University finally lay the blame for refusing to admit Pauli on the Constitution of the state of North Carolina.^{viii} Pauli did not receive any personal benefit from the storm she raised, but her case publicized the decision which she had hoped would have opened the doors to her. Inspired by her courage and her grace, Black students applied to Southern colleges and universities and were accepted under the Gaines decision.

ⁱ Murray, Pauli. *Autobiography*. P. 115

ⁱⁱ Murray, Pauli. *Autobiography*. P. "I think the state would close the University before they'd let a Negro in. I've never committed murder yet but if a Black boy tried to come into my home saying he was a "University student..." "Students hearing of the movement vowed that they would tar and feather any 'nigger' that tried to come into class with them." These are from the Daily Tar Heel, Around January 5, 1939.

Also a letter from an anonymous person saying "Your thinking has been sound and your bravery in daring to express yourself commendable." Murray, Pauli. *Autobiography*. P. 120

Kennon Cheek, president of Janitors' Association at UNC said "...masses of Negroes have [not] had the background and time to develop to the extent of enjoying social equality with the white folk." (Black) Murray, Pauli.

Autobiography. P. 120

Howard K. Beale, positive letter in the Daily Tar Heel and Louis Harris (Harris poll) as well PM 121.

ⁱⁱⁱ Governor Hoey's speech to General Assembly: "North Carolina does not believe in social equality between the races and will not tolerate mixed schools for the races, but we do believe in equality of opportunity in their respective fields of service, and the white race cannot afford to do less than justice for the Negro." Murray, Pauli. *Autobiography*. P. 118

^{iv} Newspaper stories from the Durham *Morning Herald*, *Daily Tar Heel*, New York *Daily News* (White) Norfolk *Journal and Guide*, The Baltimore *Afro-American*, Durham, *Carolina Times* pm 117

^v Murray, Pauli. *Autobiography*. P. 119

^{vi} Murray, Pauli. *Autobiography*. P. 126

^{vii} "We have opposed separate schools for the races since the beginning of the NAACP thirty years ago, because all surveys and statistics show conclusively that there does not exist in America a so-called equal school System. Murray, Pauli. *Autobiography*. P. 120

^{viii} Pauli's reply: The Constitution of North Carolina is inconsistent with the Constitution of the United States and should be changed to meet the ideals set forth by the first citizens of our country...We of the younger generation cannot compromise with our ideals of human equality. We have seen the consequence of such compromise in the bloody pages of human history, and we must hold fast, using all of our passion and reason." Murray, Pauli.
Autobiography. P. 123

Eleanor Roosevelt A Kindred Spiritⁱ

Eleanor Roosevelt was the first recipient of Pauli's activism. Pauli's confrontations by typewriter often included the first lady. Her undisguised target was President Roosevelt. Why not go to the top? But Pauli also knew that the chance of Franklin Roosevelt reading one of her letters were slim, where if she wrote the First Lady, her view might have a chance to be passed on to the President. She was right. Eleanor had been an activist on her own even before she married Franklin Roosevelt. After she came back from school in England, at age 17, Eleanor didn't do what most girls of her social standing were supposed to do. She didn't go to balls, or lounge in sailboats. Instead, she volunteered teaching immigrant women and women who worked in clothing factories. She learned about the terrible conditions of poor women's lives. When she met Franklin, Eleanor introduced him to the dreadful lives of immigrants and the poor. Throughout her life, Eleanor Roosevelt nudged Franklin to pass laws to help the plight of women and the poor. It wasn't a stretch at all for Eleanor to listen to Pauli. They were kindred spirits. It is a testament to both Pauli Murray and Eleanor Roosevelt that the two became friends. The two women had first met in person when Pauli organized National Sharecroppers Week in 1940. The First Lady invited Pauli and the head of the committee to the White House, donated \$100 and agreed to speak at the function. Their next encounter was a "confrontation by typewriter" when Eleanor Roosevelt crossed the picket line at Washington's Keith Theater. *Abraham Lincoln in Illinois* was playing in a benefit for the Children's Hospital. Not only were Blacks banned from watching the movie about their hero, but a contest for an Abe Lincoln lookalike was won by a Black. A very light-skinned Black. Once the organizers of the contest realized this, they canceled the award ceremony. Eleanor Roosevelt should not have crossed the picket lines. Not in Pauli's mind. Mrs. Roosevelt said she understood how the picketers felt, but the organizers of a charity event had the right to invite whoever they wanted. The two women disagreed, but they understood each other. Pauli spoke, Eleanor listened. Mrs. Roosevelt publicized Pauli's views in her newspaper column, "My Day."

When Pauli Murray railed against President Roosevelt, for not taking action against lynchings and racism at home, the First Lady said, "Come to tea." Pauli had gone as far as to say that she wished she had voted for someone else, Eleanor Roosevelt met Pauli at the door, gave her a warm hug, poured their tea, and listened. Pauli had been ruthless about the President. Eleanor won her over. Pauli couldn't stay mad.ⁱⁱ During their relationship, Pauli brought the First Lady first-hand knowledge of the inhumanities, humiliations, and unfairness suffered by Blacks. Mrs. Roosevelt listened. Being the eyes, ears, and legs of the disabled President, Eleanor brought Pauli's complaints to him. As she had taught him about the plight of working women and women in settlement houses when they were courting, Eleanor now brought Pauli's insights to Franklin. Sometimes the President was able to do something. Sometimes, Eleanor Roosevelt caused government policy to change on her own. Sometimes, like when the President responded merely with regret, the only thing Eleanor could say was "I understand." Both the President and Mrs. Roosevelt were Pauli's champions. They wrote on her behalf when she fought for admission to Harvard Law School. Eleanor Roosevelt hosted Pauli at the White House, at her apartment in New York, and at Val Kil, her home in Hyde Park. She hosted Pauli, as well as Pauli's aunts, and nieces. Sometimes the First Lady invited Pauli to dinners with dignitaries from other countries. The dignitary's response to this outstanding woman of color, spoke volumes to Eleanor.ⁱⁱⁱ Once, when Pauli was in a New York hospital recovering from appendicitis, Eleanor Roosevelt put the hospital in an uproar by visiting the young Black woman.

Throughout her life, Pauli never stopped educating Eleanor about the plight of the Negro race, and the First Lady always listened to the woman she called her “firebrand.” Even though Pauli often quarreled with the President’s inability to do all she wanted done, she felt his death deeply and she memorialized him in a poem.^{iv} ^vEleanor’s death was, to Pauli, a very difficult blow to bear. To Pauli, Eleanor Roosevelt had been a sister at arms, a confidant, a cheerleader, a mother and an aunt all rolled into one.

ⁱ There is a book called *The Firebrand and the First Lady*. Eleanor Roosevelt called Pauli Murray a Firebrand.

ⁱⁱ “I cannot tell you how much personal reassurance I found in the interview yesterday. There is no need for any apology to our generation. I only hope we can keep alive the flame of human compassion and freedom as you are doing.” Murray, Pauli. *Autobiography*. P. 193

ⁱⁱⁱ Murray, Pauli. *Autobiography*. P. 290-291

^{iv} There are many pictures of Pauli Murray and Eleanor Roosevelt in both Pauli’s autobiography and in *The Firebrand and the First Lady* by Patricia Bell-Scott

^v Poem “The Passing of F.D.R.” *Dark Testament and Other Poems, II*

The Agrarian Adjustment Act

With the Great Depression, the price of crops plummeted. Farmers could not live on the profits from what they sold, so they planted more to make ends meet. More supply meant lower prices. Farmers were not able to subsist. Franklin Roosevelt's administration instituted supports for farmers. The Agrarian Adjustment Act provided government funds to farmers in return for not planting. Less supply meant higher prices. That assistance was meant to be shared with all sharecroppers in the same proportion as shares of the crop, but the situation was so dire for everyone that farmers seldom split the government assistance with their sharecroppers.ⁱ

The Poll Tax And Odell Waller's Conviction

The Fifteenth Amendment gave Black men the right to vote in 1870. This did not sit well with people in the South who, at that time, still felt that Blacks were less than human and had little intelligence and integrity. Blacks, it was thought in states which had owned slaves before the Civil War, were incapable of the complex thinking needed to make a political choice on who should lead the town, the state, or the country. These states set out to deny Blacks from primaries and by instituting a poll tax.ⁱⁱ These taxes were amounts which seem small now, but at the time, would keep a Black man from voting, especially when it was required that a person pay the taxes for three years or back to the institution of the law, before he was able to vote. Often these poll taxes were also used to exclude Blacks from jury service. If there were no Negroes on a jury, the fate of a person of dark skin was exclusively in the hands of whites ignorant of Blacks' plight. In Spotsylvania County, Virginia, where Odell Waller was tried, a poll tax was required for voting, but there was no law that required the paying of the poll tax to serve on the jury. However, the laws did not prohibit the administrators of the courts from using the payment of poll taxes as a way of excluding jurors by basing the jury pool from voter roles. In the case of Odell Waller, the jury that tried him was picked, expressly, from a pool of jurors who had paid the poll tax. The jury was rigged so that no person of dark skin would sit in judgement of Odell.ⁱⁱⁱ [Graphic which could be included: By State, showing Slave Holding states and State which had not held slaves before the Civil War: Voting-age Black men registered after the Fifteenth Amendment was passed and number of registered voting-age Blacks by 1910. Pictures of the trial may be available.

ⁱ Agrarian Adjustment Act.

ⁱⁱ <http://americanhistory.si.edu/brown/history/1-segregated/white-only-1.html> Poll tax receipt

ⁱⁱⁱ Sherman, p. 96 I believe that this is a book that I have I need to look for the name of the source.

A Woman's Place is in the Home

After World War II, everyone wanted to return to normal. Normal, to many women, meant accepting lower paying, less important jobs than what they'd performed during the war. To others, it meant becoming mothers and house keepers. The government, in fact, encouraged women to buy the "new and exciting" appliances being made in factories that had made airplanes, tanks and munitions during the war. It was good for the economy, and it was a contrast to the Russian family during the cold war. Women also heard from psychologists and psychiatrists, that working mothers had delinquent and cowardly sons. Although fake news, the message stuck. Working women were charged with taking money away from men who were heads of households—by working—without considering that women could be heads of household as well. They were not granted important positions for fear they would get pregnant and leave. They were given no health or retirement benefits because it was assumed they would be covered by their husbands' plans. Was this a systematic effort to hurt women? Perhaps it was. It was certainly cheaper, but perhaps it was an effort to do what they thought—erroneously—was best for women and society as a whole.¹

¹ Jennings, *The Women's Liberation Movement*