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The African Americans: Many Rivers to Cross with Henry Louis Gates, Jr.

Featured Interviewees

Episode Five: ***Rise!*** (1940 - 1968)

Tuesday, November 19, 8-9 p.m.

Rise! examines the long road to civil rights, when the deep contradictions in American society finally became unsustainable. Beginning in World War II, African Americans who helped fight fascism abroad came home to face the same old racial violence. But this time, mass media—from print to radio and TV—broadcast that injustice to the world, planting seeds of resistance. And the success of black entrepreneurs and entertainers fueled African American hopes and dreams. In December 1955, Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat to a white man on a city bus in Montgomery, Alabama, heralding the dawn of a new movement of quiet resistance, with the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. as its public face. Before long, masses of African Americans practiced this nonviolent approach at great personal risk to integrate public schools, lunch counters and more. As the civil rights movement scored one historic victory after another, non-violence was still all too often met with violence—until finally, enough was enough. By 1968, Dr. King, the apostle of non-violence, would be assassinated, unleashing a new call for “Black Power” across the country.

Michael Bertrand, Associate Professor of History, Tennessee State University
Location: Memphis, TN

Ruby Bridges, First African American to integrate William Frantz Elementary School, 1960
Location: William Frantz Elementary School, New Orleans, LA

Martin Duberman, Paul Robeson Biographer
Location: United Nations, New York, NY

Rev. David C. Forbes, Sr., Civil Rights Activist
Location: Shaw University, Raleigh, NC

Aram Goudsouzian, Professor of Humanities, University of Memphis
Location: Greenwood, MS

Rep. Eleanor Holmes Norton, U.S. Congresswoman
Location: Washington, DC

Charlayne Hunter-Gault, Journalist, Integrated University of Georgia, 1961
Location: University of Georgia, Athens, GA

Vernon E. Jordan, Jr., Civil Rights Attorney
Location: New York, NY

Peniel E. Joseph, Professor of History, Tufts University
Location: Woodward Ave, Detroit, MI

Judge Damon J. Keith, U.S. Federal Judge
Location: Detroit MI

David Levering Lewis, Professor of History, New York University
Location: Milan, NY

Rep. John Lewis, U.S. Congressman
Location: Washington, DC

Diane Nash, Civil Rights Activist
Location: Washington, DC

Charles J. Ogletree, Jr., Civil Rights Lawyer, Jesse Climenko Professor of Law, Harvard University
Location: Cambridge, MA

Christopher Parker, Associate Professor of Political Science, University of Washington
Location: Jacksonville, NC

Dr. Alvin Poussaint, Professor of Psychiatry, Harvard University
Location: Canton and Jackson, MS

Dan Rather, Journalist
Location: New York, NY

Patricia Sullivan, Professor of History, University of South Carolina
Location: Cambridge, MA

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