



CITY COUNCIL

**Darryl Moore**  
Councilmember District 2

CONSENT CALENDAR  
November 29, 2005

To: Honorable Mayor and  
Members of the City Council

From: Councilmember Darryl Moore  
Councilmember Max Anderson

Subject: Recognition of December 1<sup>st</sup> as “Rosa Parks Commemoration Day”

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Berkeley City Council adopt a Resolution to recognize December 1<sup>st</sup> as “Rosa Parks Commemoration Day.”

BACKGROUND:

Thursday, December 1, 1955, around 6:00 p.m., Rosa Parks boarded the Cleveland Avenue bus in downtown Montgomery, Alabama, after a long day of work at the Montgomery Fair Department Store. She paid her fare, and sat in an empty seat in the first row of the "colored" section, directly behind the section reserved for whites. The bus reached its third stop in front of the Empire Theater, and several white passengers boarded the bus. The driver, noticing that all of the “white-only” seats were filled, proceeded to move the “colored” section sign to the row behind Parks, and demanded that four black people (including Parks) vacate their seats so the white passengers could sit down.

When recounting the events years later Mrs. Parks said, "When the white driver stepped back toward us, when he waved his hand and ordered us out of our seats, I felt a determination cover my body like a quilt on a winter night." Three of the passengers complied; Mrs. Parks did not. She was arrested and charged with a violation of Chapter 6, Section 11 of the Montgomery City Code, a "Jim Crow" segregation law. Four days later, Parks was tried on charges of disorderly conduct and violating a local ordinance. After a 30 minute trial, Parks was found guilty and fined \$10, plus \$4 court costs. Parks appealed her conviction and formally challenged the legality of racial segregation.

This event caused the formation of the “Montgomery Improvement Association,” led by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Dr. King wanted to set in motion a long-term legal challenge of bus segregation with what was initially intended to be a one-day boycott of the bus system. What

resulted was a 381-day boycott of the Montgomery bus system by the black community, culminating in the landmark court case *Browder v. Gayle*. On November 13, 1956, the United States Supreme Court declared racial segregation on buses unconstitutional and thus illegal. The decision in *Browder v. Gayle* led to the end of Montgomery Bus Boycott's on December 21, 1956.

The effects of Mrs. Parks' actions did not end with *Browder v. Gayle*. The effects of the Montgomery Bus Boycott spread beyond the city of Montgomery and even the State of Alabama. Mrs. Parks stand helped publicize the demeaning and unfair treatment that southern blacks were forced to live with and helped give birth to the American Civil Rights Movement .

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

None

CONTACT PERSON:

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RESOLUTION NO. ##,###-N.S.

RESOLUTION DESIGNATING DECEMBER 1<sup>ST</sup> AS  
“ROSA PARKS COMMEMORATION DAY” IN CELEBRATION OF THE  
50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE MONTGOMERY BUS BOYCOTT

WHEREAS, Rosa Parks was born Rosa Louise McCauley in Tuskegee, Alabama on February 4, 1913, in a country plagued by racism and social injustice; and

WHEREAS, throughout her life, Rosa Parks endured the suffering caused by the contemporary racist culture that permeated life in the United States during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century; and

WHEREAS, Rosa Parks is most notably celebrated as the “Mother of the Modern Day Civil Rights Movement” for her role in challenging racial segregation and initiating the Montgomery Bus Boycott on December 1, 1955 when she was arrested for refusing to yield her seat to a white passenger; and

WHEREAS, this seemingly simple act of defiance required a tremendous amount of courage and resolve. This simple act served as the catalyst to the American Civil Rights Movement and thrust a young, relatively unknown minister, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., to the forefront of the movement; and

WHEREAS, although Rosa Parks is best known for her defiant behavior which led to the Montgomery Bus Boycott, she was very involved in civil rights prior to and following the boycott, her efforts ranging from registering to vote in spite of the Jim Crow laws that made it virtually impossible for African American to register to vote, to co-founding the Rosa and Raymond Parks Institute for Self Development whose core program, “Pathways to Freedom,” traces the underground railroad through the American Civil Rights movement to contemporary civil rights struggles; and

WHEREAS, Rosa Parks has received innumerable awards and honors for her lifetime of dedication to civil rights and social justice including two of the nation’s highest honors, the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1996 and the Congressional Gold Medal in 1999; and

WHEREAS, upon her death at the age of 92 on October 24, 2005, The United States Senate passed a resolution on October 27, and the House of Representatives on October 28, to bestow upon Parks the distinctive honor of allowing her body to lie in state in the U.S. Capitol Rotunda. Since the practice began in 1852, Parks has become the 31st person, the second African American, the first woman, and the first American who had not been a U.S. government official to lie in state in the Rotunda.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Council of the City of Berkeley designate December 1<sup>st</sup> as “Rosa Parks Commemoration Day” in celebration of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Montgomery Bus Boycott and to encourage the citizens of Berkeley to reflect on Rosa Parks’ contributions to the American Civil Rights Movement and how her actions have shaped the social consciousness of contemporary society.