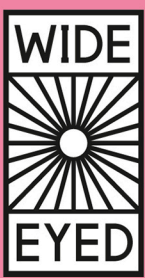




50 TRAILBLAZERS  
of the  
50 STATES

CELEBRATE  
THE LIVES OF  
INSPIRING PEOPLE  
WHO PAVED  
THE WAY FROM  
EVERY STATE  
IN AMERICA!

written by HOWARD MEDGAL  
illustrated by ABBEY LOSSING

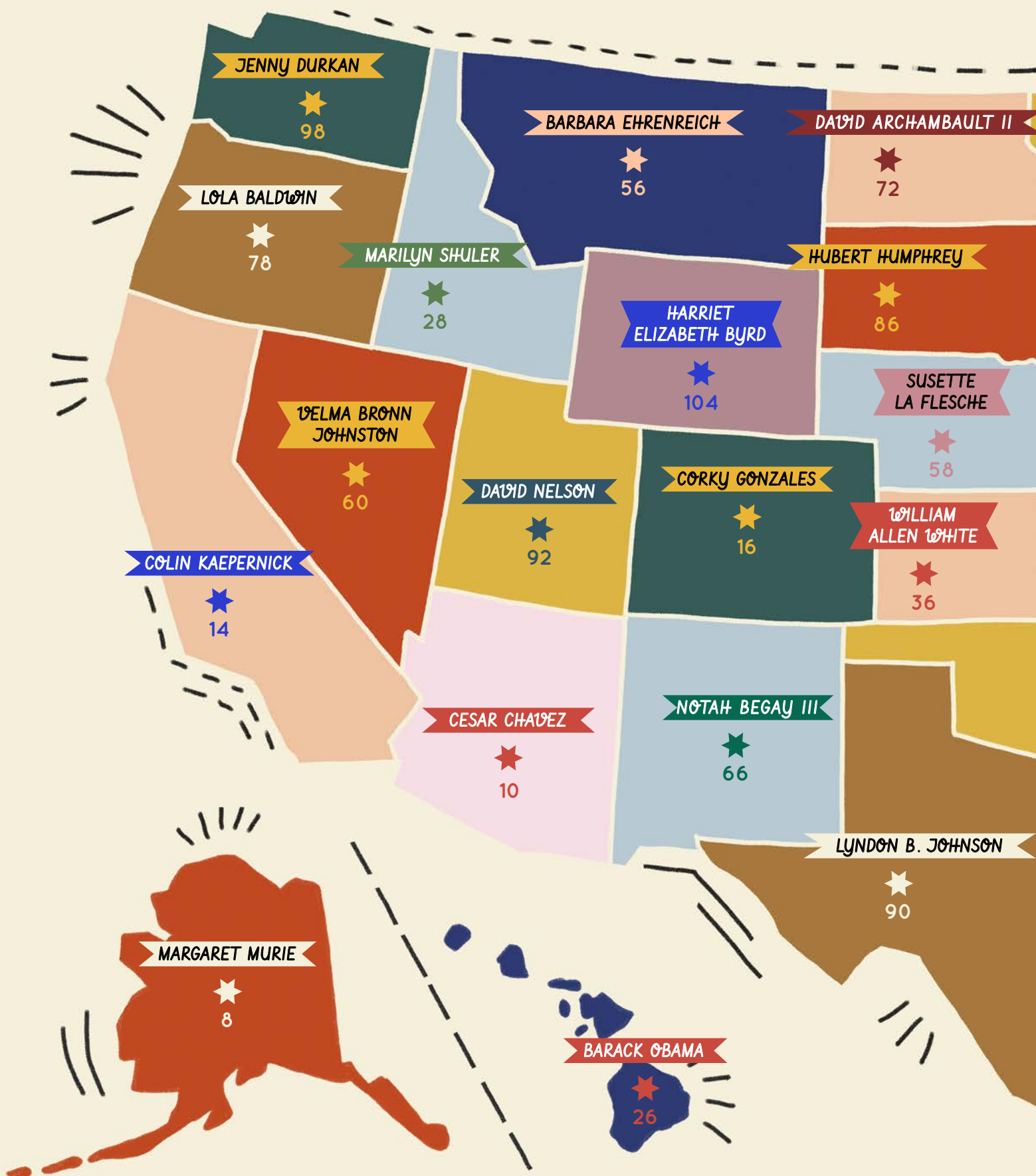




50 **TRAILBLAZERS**  
of the  
50  
**STATES**

written by **HOWARD MEGDAL**

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# Contents



It's easy to think of history as a collection of incredible momentary breakthroughs—of civil rights leaping forward at the stroke of Lyndon B. Johnson's pen when he signed the Voting Rights Act, of women standing up for their rights through the ratification of the 19th Amendment to the United States Constitution, of Rosa Parks sitting down to stand up for what she believed.

But of course, we know this isn't true. History isn't just a whirlwind of epic and celebratory moments. Out of every corner, out of every moment in American history, we have heroes who stepped forward. Not because they saw an opportunity to make a change with the flip of a switch, but instead because they recognized that someone, somewhere, needed to start the long, hard work of repairing our world.

All across America people have looked around and realized that there's an opportunity to go out and fight to make the world a better place. Not just for themselves but for every single American, regardless of their background, bank account, sexual preference, or skin color.

**THE FIGHT STILL ISN'T OVER. ALL ACROSS AMERICA PEOPLE ARE STILL TRYING TO MAKE A CHANGE. ALL OVER THIS COUNTRY THERE ARE PEOPLE COMING FORWARD TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE AND CREATING HISTORY THROUGH THEIR OWN STRUGGLES AND BATTLES.**

**SOMEDAY WE WILL LOOK BACK AT THESE HEROES—THE EMMA GONZÁLEZES OF THE WORLD, THE WEST VIRGINIA TEACHERS TRYING TO MAKE A CHANGE, THE FOOTBALL PLAYERS TAKING A KNEE TO FIGHT RACIAL INJUSTICE—AND KNOW THAT THEY WERE A PART OF THE PROGRESS WE WILL ALL ENJOY TOMORROW.**



# Rosa Parks

With a single bus ride, Rosa Parks served as a catalyst for change that altered the course of history. But while many stories through the years talk about Rosa as some kind of accidental activist, that isn't really true.

AFRICAN  
AMERICAN  
RIGHTS  
ACTIVIST



Rosa Parks was born Rosa McCauley on February 4, 1913. She grew up in segregated **ALABAMA**, so while her parents were both successful—her mother was a teacher, her father a carpenter—Parks saw people of color treated as if they were worth less in almost every way. **SEGREGATION** meant her schools were different from the ones white kids could attend, not as nice—and the black kids had to walk, while the white kids took the bus! To make matters worse, her school was burned down by racists—twice.

By the time she married Raymond Parks, a member of the **NAACP** (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People), in 1932, Rosa understood the need to get more involved in groups that tried to make the world a fairer place. She was elected secretary in 1943, despite facing sexism even within the NAACP, where many of the men did not think women should occupy leadership positions. And even with laws designed to keep people of color from voting, Rosa Parks **REGISTERED TO VOTE** in 1945, on her third try.

*"You must never be fearful about what you are doing when it is right."*



*"People always said that I didn't give up my seat because I was tired, but that isn't true. I was not tired physically, or no more tired than I usually was at the end of a working day. I was not old, although some people have an image of me as being old then. I was forty-two. No, the only tired I was, was tired of giving in."*



*"I did not want to be mistreated, I did not want to be deprived of a seat that I had paid for. It was just time."*



Then came the ride that changed everything. On December 1, 1955, Rosa Parks was riding a **MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA CITY BUS**. The law at that time said that if a white person wanted a seat, a black person had to give it up. White bus driver James Blake ordered Parks to do so. Parks **REFUSED**. What followed was an African American **BOYCOTT** of the Montgomery buses until the law changed. Parks was found guilty of disorderly conduct and fined \$10. But her action touched off the collective force of a community that ultimately bent the people of Montgomery, Alabama toward an important symbol of **EQUALITY**, foreshadowing the end of segregation itself.



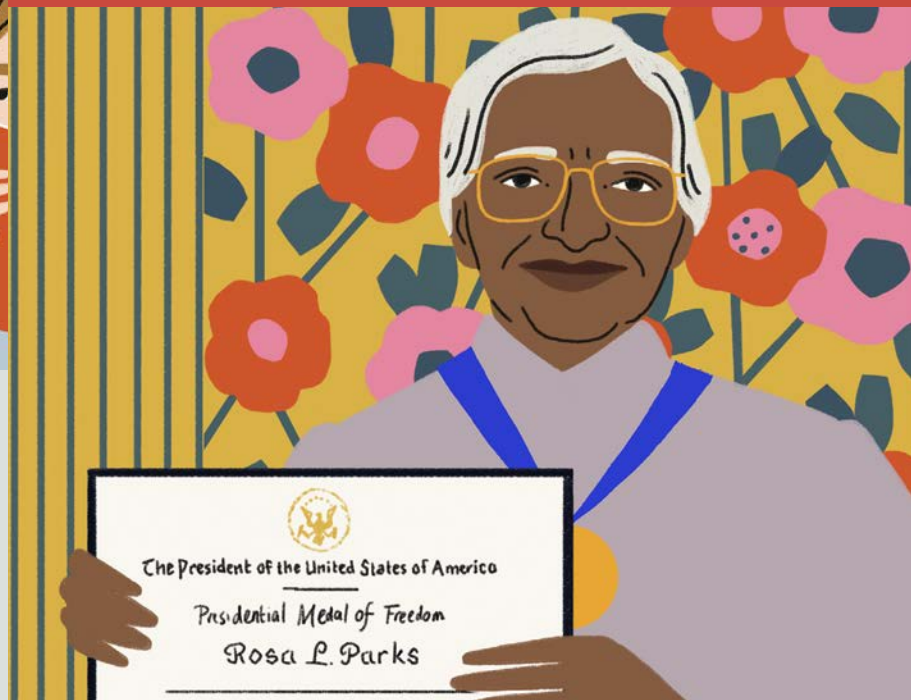
**NAME:** Rosa Parks

## **TRAILBLAZER OF ACTIVISM AND HUMAN RIGHTS**

**BORN:** 1913 **DIED:** 2005

**WHY?** Rosa Parks represented generations of African Americans who faced discrimination and worse in the American South. Parks and her allies reached the breaking point, and decided, through mass action, to say: enough.

Parks paid a price for it; unable to work in Alabama, she and her husband moved to **DETROIT**. There, she helped a young congressional candidate named John Conyers get elected. Parks went on to work in his office for the next 23 years.



**THE TRAILBLAZE CONTINUES...** Parks died in 2005 but she has been honored many times. A street in Detroit and the library and museum at Troy University are all named after her. She received the **PRESIDENTIAL MEDAL OF FREEDOM**, and the very bus on which she made her stand is now in The Henry Ford Museum. Her papers can be found in the Library of Congress.

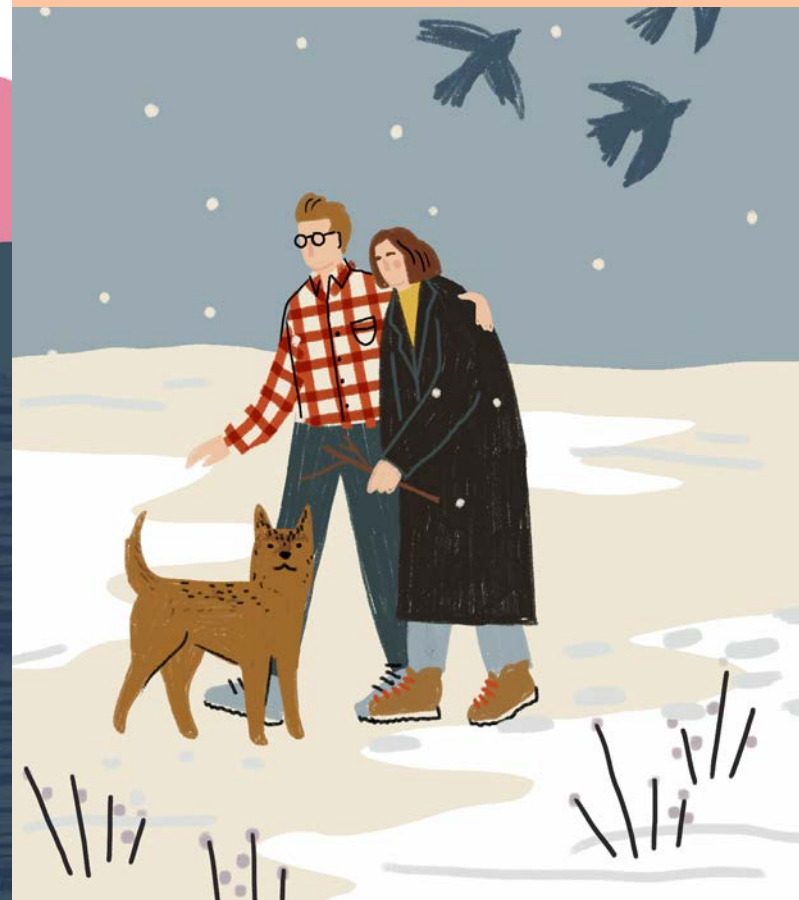
# Margaret Murie

GRANDMOTHER  
OF THE  
CONSERVATION  
MOVEMENT

Long before she moved presidents, Murie graduated from Alaska Agricultural College and School of Mines, the very **FIRST WOMAN** to do so! “Mardy” married her husband, Olaus, a biologist whom she met in Fairbanks, in a ceremony as the sun rose. They traveled to the Koyukuk for their honeymoon, and enjoyed **“JOY IN COMPANIONSHIP AND IN THE SIMPLE THINGS.”**



Known as the “Grandmother of the Conservation Movement,” Murie moved to Alaska at age five, and grew up in a log cabin decades before Alaska even became a state. By the end of her life, she’d been honored by President Bill Clinton with the **MEDAL OF FREEDOM**, after convincing President Dwight D. Eisenhower to designate eight million acres as the **ARCTIC NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE (ANWR)**, and decades later, President Jimmy Carter to more than double that area of **PROTECTED LAND**.



*“Do I dare hope to believe that one of my great-grandchildren may someday journey to Sheenakaj and still find the gray wolf trotting across the ice of Lobo Lake?”*





*"Wilderness itself is the basis of all our civilization. I wonder if we have enough reverence for life to concede to wilderness the right to live on?"*



Mardy and Olaus moved to Wyoming to study the **ELK POPULATION**, but she frequently returned to Alaska throughout her life. After helping to stop decimation of elk in Wyoming, Mardy and Olaus bought a ranch there, which served as a centerpiece for the policies she pushed for in America and around the world.



**NAME:** Margaret Murie

**TRAILBLAZER OF ANIMAL ACTIVISM AND LAND RIGHTS**

**BORN:** 1902 **DIED:** 2003

**WHY?** The twentieth century brought unprecedented growth and technology to the United States. Murie rightly feared that without a human decision to set aside some of the untouched land, we'd lose it forever. She spent the better part of that century making sure it didn't happen on her watch.



**THE TRAILBLAZE CONTINUES...** The Murie Ranch continues to grow. It was designated a **NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK** in 2006. In 2015 it became part of Teton Science Schools, geared around place-based education. And as the government threatened to bring drilling to ANWR, Alaskan voices rose in **PROTEST**. Margaret Murie's vision for the future was theirs as well.

*"I hope that the United States of America is not so rich that she can afford to let these wildernesses pass by. Or so poor that she cannot afford to keep them."*

# Cesar Chavez

LABOR  
LEADER AND  
CIVIL RIGHTS  
ACTIVIST



By 1952, he'd joined the **COMMUNITY SERVICE ORGANIZATION**, and by 1958, he was the group's national director, working diligently to get Mexican Americans registered to vote. Then in 1962, he left the CSO to start what became the **NATIONAL FARM WORKERS ASSOCIATION**, changing the balance of power for workers forever.

*"Preservation of one's own culture  
does not require contempt or  
disrespect for other cultures."*



Cesar Chavez, as much as anyone, pushed the **FAIR TREATMENT OF FARM WORKERS** forward in America, while serving as a vital example that labor rights must not be an issue for white workers alone. Born in Yuma, Arizona, one of six children, Chavez and his family moved to California after Chavez's father was cheated out of his home. His schooling ended in seventh grade, so he could **WORK FULL-TIME** and keep his mother from having to work in the fields.

