

In the Name of Emmett Till: How the Children of the Mississippi Freedom Struggle Showed Us Tomorrow

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In the Name of Emmett Till shares the inspiring history of Mississippi's early civil rights activists.

The book opens with a timeline of early civil rights events before it tells the stories of people who were spurred to action by the brutal murder of Emmett Till, a young Northerner who was unaware of social mores in the segregated South. There was intense national media coverage of his battered body and trial, but a biased, all-white jury made up entirely of men let his suspected murderers go free. The event made it impossible to ignore systematic violence and injustice directed against Black Americans. Indeed, Emmett Till's 1955 murder sparked passion in young people to fight the racism and inequality that Black people faced daily.

The book highlights powerful stories of individuals like the Ladner sisters, Amos Brown, and Johnny Frazier, who instigated sit-ins, freedom rides, marches, and boycotts. It also includes the moving story of a girl whose rape pushed her into a life of prostitution until involvement in civil rights gave her purpose; she transformed into a university professor. It details the risks that people took, and the uncertainty and brutality they faced, to fight for their communities. And it shows how brave acts transformed lives and empowered others to work for justice, voting rights, and desegregation, feeding a movement that improved life for millions.

These stories of courage, conviction, and results demonstrate the impact that a single person can have on their community. A detailed bibliography, notes, glossary, and illustrations support the text, which features anonymous writings from people who were changed by what they learned in Freedom Schools, which fostered a legacy of activism.

In the compelling history text *In the Name of Emmett Till*, the bold actions of regular people are shown to have led to social change.

WENDY HINMAN (September / October 2021)

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