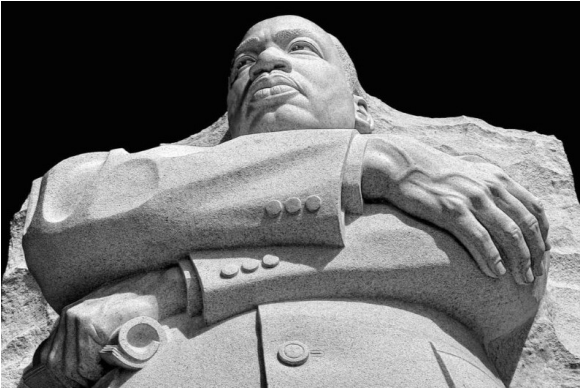


Local Politics Matter

Unsung Heroes

Never Forget



On this day that marks the 50th anniversary of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. I can't help but to reflect on a couple of things. First Dr. King was and remains a true American hero. In fact I recently heard him referred to as the greatest hero of the 20th century. Yes Dr. King was a special individual of the highest order. The second thing that came to mind is the fact that as African Americans we are not afforded the luxury of choosing our own heroes. I am not taking anything away from Dr. King but he is not the only individual that the African American community holds up as a hero. He is our one hero who "White America" has wholly accepted. Let's think about some other African Americans of note who have made significant contributions to our history. As you go through this list ask yourself why these individuals aren't widely celebrated in these United States of America.

Nat Turner:

[Nathaniel "Nat" Turner \(1800-1831\)](#) was a black American slave who led the only effective, sustained

slave rebellion (August 1831) in U.S. history. Spreading terror throughout the white South, his action set off a new wave of oppressive legislation prohibiting the education, movement, and assembly of slaves and stiffened proslavery, anti-abolitionist convictions that persisted in that region until the American Civil War (1861–65).

Mamie and Emmitt Till:

There is no way to separate [Mamie and Emmitt Till](#) in our history. There aren't many people who don't know the story of Emmitt Till the young 14 year old boy who was beaten so badly by two white men in Mississippi that his mother could hardly identify his body. Well, Mamie Till set off a movement when she insisted that her son's body be displayed in an open casket forcing the nation to see the brutality directed at blacks in the South at the time. Mamie Till said, "I want the world to see this because, there is no way I could tell this story and give them the visual picture of what my son looked like".

Malcolm X: [Malcolm X \(1925 - 1965\)](#)

an African-American Muslim minister and human rights activist. To his admirers he was a courageous advocate for the rights of blacks, a man who indicted white America in the harshest terms for its crimes against black Americans; detractors accused him of preaching racism and violence. He has been called one of the greatest and most influential African Americans in history.

Black Panthers:

While I Love the Black Panther movie and the mythical Country of WAKANDA, I must pay homage to the Black Panther Party. [The Black Panther Party](#) or the BPP (originally the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense) was a political organization founded by Bobby Seale and Huey Newton in October 1966. The party was active in the United States from 1966 until 1982, with international chapters operating in the United Kingdom in the early 1970s, and in Algeria from 1969 until 1972. At its inception on October 15, 1966, the Black Panther Party's core practice was its armed citizens' patrols to monitor the behavior of officers of the Oakland Police Department and challenge police brutality in Oakland, California. In 1969, community social programs became a core activity of party members. The Black Panther Party instituted a variety of community social programs, most extensively the Free Breakfast for Children Programs, and community health clinics to address issues like food injustice. The party enrolled

the largest number of members and made the greatest impact in the Oakland-San Francisco Bay Area, New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Seattle, and Philadelphia.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation Director J. Edgar Hoover called the party "the greatest threat to the internal security of the country", and he supervised an extensive counterintelligence program (COINTELPRO) of surveillance, infiltration, perjury, police harassment, and many other tactics designed to undermine Panther leadership, incriminate party members, discredit and criminalize the Party, and drain the organization of resources and manpower. The program was also accused of assassinating Black Panther members.

Yes all of these individuals and many more are heroes. Whether you agree with their tactics or not they stood up to hatred, bigotry and oppression. As we stand on Martin's shoulders we must also stand on the shoulders of these great heroes.

[Share Your Comments](#)

[Return to LPM](#)