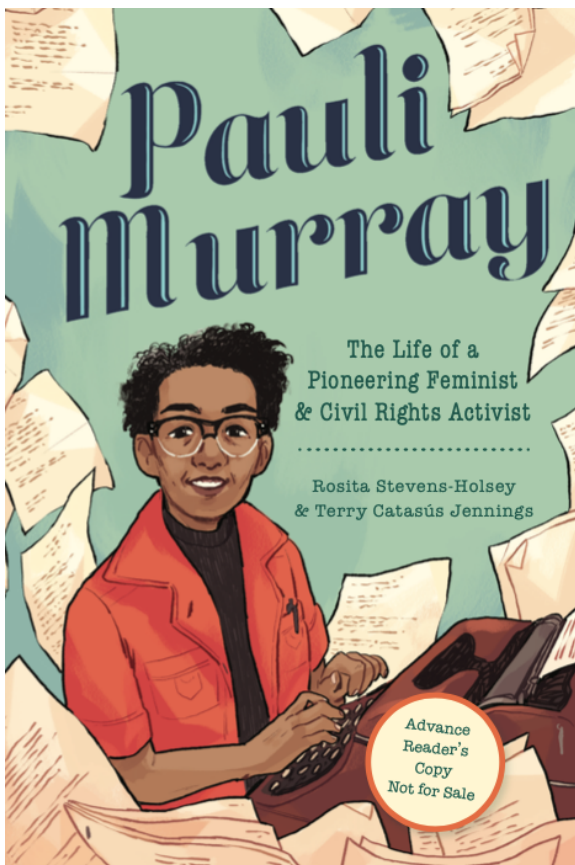


PAULI MURRAY

THE LIFE OF A PIONEERING FEMINIST AND CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVIST

By Rosita Stevens-Holsey and Terry Catasús Jennings

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES



ABOUT THE BOOK

Pauli Murray was a thorn on the side of white America [of Franklin Roosevelt and subsequent presidents] demanding justice and equal treatment for all. She was a civil rights and women’s rights activist before any movement advocated for either—the brilliant mind that, in 1944, conceptualized the arguments that would win *Brown V. Board of Education of Topeka Kansas*, and in 1964, the arguments that won women equality in the workplace. Throughout her life, she fought for the oppressed, not only through changing laws, but by using her powerful prose to influence those who could effect change. She lived by her convictions and challenged authority to demand fairness and justice regardless of the personal consequences. Without seeking acknowledgement, glory, or financial gain for what she did, Pauli Murray fought in the trenches for many of the rights we take for granted. Her goal was human rights and the dignity of life for all.

Little Bee Books

Ages 10+

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OVERCOMING STUMBLING BLOCKS

One might say that Pauli Murray *believed she could, so she did* and that *no matter what obstacles she met, nevertheless she persisted*.

What were some of the roadblocks in Pauli Murray's path and how did she succeed in spite of them?

Can you recall a time when you needed to overcome stumbling blocks to accomplish something, but eventually you were able to complete it after hard work and determination?

Write several paragraphs or a short essay on what it took to accomplish your task.

Student Name _____

PAULI MURRAY LESSONS

What lessons did you learn while reading about Pauli Murray that might better prepare you to be successful in life or to be a productive member of society?

Student Name _____

“OTHERS”

Think of Pauli Murray. She was an “other” in her own community. Think about how she might feel if people did not accept her as a human being. Share how you would feel if you were an “other” in your own community—of a different skin color, a different nationality, different abilities, different gender identity.

Student Name _____

ADVOCATING

Can you describe an incident when you advocated for something you believed in. someone you didn't know well?

Student Name _____

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Make a list of Pauli Murray's accomplishments and write a short note about how each made the world a better place.

Student Name _____

SOCIAL JUSTICE

What is your understanding of social justice? What are our responsibilities as a human being toward other human beings? Write a paragraph on how you see yourself standing up for social justice?

Student Name _____

BEING IN CHARGE

Sometimes we feel helpless and powerless. How does not being in charge at school or at home make you feel? What kind of things would you do if you were in charge? Write a paragraph about it.

Student Name _____

PAULI MURRAY FAN CLUB

Pauli Murray was a hero, she was a feminist, a civil rights activist, a poet, a priest, a person who changed the world. Share what you admire most about her.

Student Name _____

DRAW IT!

Illustrate a scene in Pauli Murray's life that resonated with you.

Student Name _____

BLOG IT!

Along with a group, create blog posts of artwork, images, text, and/or video around a theme from the book.

Student Name _____

ROLE PLAY!

In a group, illustrate cultural inequity, through role playing or a video.

Student Name _____

DO IT!

You can effect change in their own neighborhood by:

- a. holding a letter writing campaign
- b. writing to companies to change policies
- c. writing to local politicians
- d. volunteering for a cause (i.e., food bank, visiting senior centers, raising funds for a nonprofit)

Tell about an issue or problem in your neighborhood that you would want to change and how you would go about doing that.

Student Name _____

MATCH IT!

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| A | <i>Plessy v. Ferguson</i> | Amendment that abolishes slavery |
| B | Hunter College | Co-Founder, along with PM of National Organization for Women |
| C | Transgender | PM partner |
| D | Howard University | PM poem read at Martin Luther King's funeral |
| E | Thirteenth Amendment | Supreme Court decision that ended segregation and toppled Jim Crow laws. |
| F | Betty Friedan | Gender identification PM would have probably chosen had she been alive today |
| G | Sharecropper | Paid to be able to vote or be part of a jury. Designed to suppress the vote of Black people. Abolished in 1966 |
| H | The Bottoms | University where PM learned to be a lawyer |
| I | Fourteenth Amendment | Head of the NAACP at the time <i>Brown v. Board of Education</i> was being decided. Later the first Black Supreme Court Justice. |
| J | Halley's Comet | PM's Aunt and adoptive mother |
| K | Eleanor Roosevelt | What PM called laws and customs that discriminated against women |
| L | Renee Barlow | PM and Howard students held sit-ins to segregate this restaurant |
| M | Jim Crow | 1896 Supreme Court Case that ruled that "separate but equal" was legal therefore allowing Jim Crow laws to be passed |
| N | Fifteenth Amendment | PM book about her family and Black history |
| O | <i>Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas</i> | A character in a minstrel show. Also the laws that kept people with black skin separate from people with white skin. |
| P | Yale University | A person who farms another person's farm for a share of the profits |
| Q | Thurgood Marshall | College in New York where PM attended |
| R | Jane Crow | Amendment granting African American men the right to vote (not women) |
| S | Poll Tax | Amendment providing equal protection of the law |
| T | Little Palace Cafeteria | First Lady who became PM's friend |
| U | <i>Proud Shoes</i> | Area of Raleigh, NC where PM was brought up |
| V | Pauline Dame | PM's teacher, friend, and mentor |

Student Name _____

MATCH IT! (KEY)

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| N | Fifteenth Amendment | U | .PM book about her family and Black history |
| O | <i>Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas</i> | L | A character in a minstrel show. Also the laws that kept people with black skin separate from people with white skin. |
| P | Caroline Ware | G | A person who farms another person's farm for a share of the profits |
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