

WOMEN TO WATCH

Mother of a Movement

name: Rosa L. Parks

who she is: Flash point for the modern-day civil-rights movement after her refusal to give up her bus seat to a white man in December of 1955. Her stand, so to speak, was the catalyst for the Montgomery, Ala., bus boycott.

what she does: Co-founded the Rosa and Raymond Parks Institute for Self-Development in Detroit; retired from the office of Congressman John Conyers in Detroit in 1988 after serving more than 20 years

what the institute does: Motivates youth to reach their potential through such programs as bank training, substance-abuse prevention and goal setting. In the Pathways to Freedom program, youth research history around the country -- by bus -- tracing the underground railroad.

her values: Her commitment to first-class citizenship is based on her belief that all people are created equal; her power stems from her philosophy of quiet strength.

family: Widowed without offspring (she considers the world her children)



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born: 1913

education: High-school diploma and more than two dozen honorary doctorates, including one from Soka University in Tokyo, Japan

pivotal moment: "When I decided I was going to have a life that would benefit others. I realized I couldn't do things alone, so I joined with people of like minds, including Ms. Elaine Steele [the institute's co-founder]. I wanted to be with someone who also wanted to help others, particularly youth and seniors."

by Cindy Frenkel Kanter

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