

RUBY BRIDGES

This photo shows a baby black girl, Ruby Bridges, the first African-american to attend a white elementary school in the deep South, escorted out of a school in New Orleans by three U.S. Marshals on November 14 1960.



Ruby was born in Tylertown, Mississippi, to Abon and Lucille Bridges, when she was 4 years old, her parents decide to move to New Orleans, hoping for a better life in a bigger city.

When Ruby was in nursery school, she was one of many African-American students in New Orleans who were chosen to take a test determining if she could attend a white school.

The test was written to be especially difficult in this way the students would had difficulty passing it, so if all the African-American children failed the test, New Orleans schools might be able to stay segregated for more time. Ruby lived really near from an all-white school, but her school was several miles away, an all-black segregated school. She was one of the six black children in New Orleans who pass this test.

On the morning of November 14, federal marshals drove Ruby and her mother to her new school, arrived at the school two marshals would walk in front of Ruby and two would be behind her, there were lots of people protesting and threatening Ruby and her family.

As soon as Bridges entered the school, white parents pulled their own children out; all the teachers refused to teach while a black child was enrolled. Only one person agreed to teach Ruby, Barbara Henry, from Boston, and for over a year she taught her alone.

On the second day, a white student broke the boycott and entered the school, a few days later other white parents began bringing their children, and the protests began to subside.

Then Ruby start walking to school without the Federal Marshals and attending a full classroom that had white and black students. She missed Mrs. Henry, but eventually got used to her new classroom and teacher.

Ruby graduated from a desegregated high school, became a travel agent, married and had four sons. Ruby later wrote about her early experiences in two books and received the Carter G. Woodson Book Award. A lifelong activist for racial equality, in 1999, Ruby established The Ruby Bridges Foundation to promote tolerance and create change through education.

In 2000, she was made an honorary deputy marshal in a ceremony in Washington, D.C.

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