

Walking Tall

How did Ruby Bridges make history 50 years ago?

Fifty years ago, a little girl named Ruby Bridges arrived at her new elementary school. The school was in New Orleans, Louisiana.

As she walked toward the school's front doors, an angry crowd of people shouted at her. United States **marshals** walked with her. A marshal is an officer. They were there to protect the first grader. That's because the people didn't want Ruby to go inside. But the 6-year-old walked into the school anyway. As she did, she marched into history books.



Bettmann/Corbis

Ruby Bridges started first grade in 1960.

The day was Nov. 14, 1960. On that morning, little Ruby became one of the first African Americans to attend an all-white elementary school in the South.

Before then, the law in many states said that black children could not attend the same schools as white children. People of different races also had to use separate public restrooms. It was called **segregation**. That is when people of different races are kept separate.

U.S. leaders worked to end segregation. They helped bring **civil rights** to all Americans. Those are the rights to be treated equally. A few months before Ruby started school, a federal court ordered an end to school segregation in New Orleans.

By the time Ruby started the second grade, there were no more angry people outside her school. There were other African American students in her class. Today, children of all races go to school together.

Bridges says she was never scared to go to school during the first grade. "I wasn't really afraid," she told *WR News*. "I didn't really know what was going on at the time, and I loved school."

Meet Ruby Bridges

WR News student reporter Kaelin Ray recently asked Ruby Bridges how it feels to make a difference.

Kaelin Ray: What was your first day at the school like?

Ruby Bridges: My first day I spent sitting in the principal's office, so it was very confusing.

KR: How does it feel to know that you are a part of U.S. history?

RB: I'm [very] proud of that fact. My mother was really happy about me being able to attend that school. My father was more concerned about my safety.

Winning the Vote

Imagine if boys made all the rules. That's how it was in 1776, when the United States was founded. Women were not allowed to vote until 1920! This year [2012] is the 92nd anniversary of that important event.



Library of Congress, George Grantham Bain Collection

Thousands of women marched in New York City for the right to vote.

The women's suffrage movement began in the 1800s. Suffrage is the right to vote. To win this right, women held protests and marches. Hundreds of those women were arrested and jailed.

Women's groups across the country are honoring those who fought for this right with special events throughout the year. "Learning how women's actions changed America is important. It encourages us to understand that we can make a better world," said Molly Murphy MacGregor, the president of the National Women's History Project.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Use the article "Walking Tall" to answer question 1.

1. On Nov. 14, 1960, who became one of the first African Americans to attend an all-white elementary school in the South?

Answers will vary.

Use the articles "Winning the Vote" and "Walking Tall" to answer question 2.

2. Read this paragraph from the article.

"U.S. leaders worked to end segregation. They helped bring civil rights to all Americans. Those are the rights to be treated equally. A few months before Ruby started school, a federal court ordered an end to school segregation in New Orleans."

Did Ruby Bridges also help bring civil rights to all Americans? Support your answer with evidence from the article.

Answers will vary.

Use the article "Winning the Vote" to answer questions 3 to 4.

3. What did women do to win the right to vote?

Answers will vary.

4. Women winning the right to vote was an important event.

Support this statement with evidence from the text.

Answers will vary.

Use the articles "Winning the Vote" and "Walking Tall" to answer question 5.

5. Read these sentences from the article.

"Learning how women's actions changed America is important. It encourages us to understand that we can make a better world," said Molly Murphy MacGregor, the president of the National Women's History Project."

Compare how Ruby Bridges changed America with how women in the suffrage movement changed America.

Answers will vary.