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# THE COALITION OF UNITED PROGRESSIVES CHARMECK CHRONICLE

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*Greetings!*

We truly appreciate everyone's involvement.  
This War on Oppression will only be won as one  
mass movement.

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## Sections

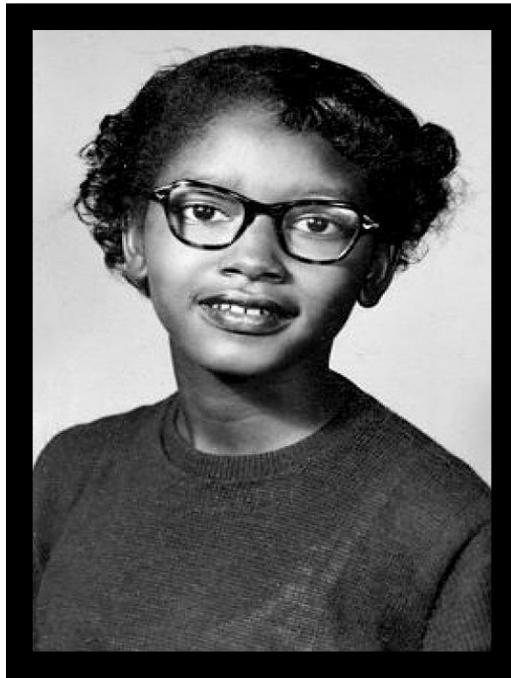
- Spotlight - by DonnaMarie Woodson
  - Editorial - by Tarik Kiley
    - Announcements
    - Happenings Gallery!

## Our Mission Statement

The continual unification of as many organizations as possible, starting at the local level and branching out to both the state of North Carolina and then the entire nation.

# Spotlight

## Claudette Colvin



**(Before Rosa Parks)**

**(September 5, 1939)**

**By  
DonnaMarie Woodson**

## Ten incredible Black Women You Should Know About Series



Claudette Colvin

Before Rosa Parks refused to give up her bus seat to a white person in Montgomery, Alabama, there was Claudette Colvin. On March 2, 1955, she was arrested at the age of 15 for refusing to give up her seat to a white woman on a crowded, segregated bus. This arrest occurred

nine months before the more widely known incident in which Rosa Parks helped spark the 1955 Montgomery bus boycott.

Other women in Montgomery also refused to give up their seats on the same bus system. But, most of the women were quietly fined, and no one heard much more.

***Ms. Colvin was the first to challenge the law.***

Now an 82-year-old retiree, Ms. Colvin lives in the Bronx. Speaking to



NPR back in 2008, she recalls taking the bus home from high school on March 2, 1955, as clear as if it were yesterday.

The bus driver ordered her to get up, and she refused, saying she'd paid her fare and it was her constitutional right. Two police officers put her in

handcuffs and arrested her. Her school books went flying off her lap.

"All I remember is that I was not going to walk off the bus voluntarily," Colvin says." Even at age 15, Claudette had a spirit of dedication to civil rights.

At her segregated Booker T. Washington High School, she learned about the history and importance of Sojourner Truth, a former slave who became an abolitionist and women's rights activist, and Harriet Tubman, the runaway slave. The latter led more than 70 slaves to freedom through the network of safe houses known as the Underground Railroad.

Ms. Colvin's recalls the class had also been talking about the injustices they were experiencing daily under the Jim Crow segregation laws, like not being able to eat at a lunch counter.

"We couldn't try on clothes," Ms. Colvin says. "You had to take a brown paper bag and draw a diagram of your foot ... and take it to the store. Can you imagine all of that in my mind? My head was just too full of black history, you know, oppression that we went through. It felt like Sojourner Truth was on one side pushing me down, and Harriet Tubman was on the other side of me pushing me down. I couldn't get up."

Dragged off the bus, handcuffed, and jailed, Ms. Colvin remembers how she felt when the jail door slammed shut - "And then I got scared, and panic come over me, and I started crying. Then I started saying the Lord's Prayer."

Claudette had a tumultuous childhood. Born to Mary Jane Gadson and C.P. Austin, her father abandoned the family. Gadson could not support her children financially. Ms. Colvin and her younger sister, Delphine, were taken in by their great aunt and uncle, Mary Anne and Q.P. Colvin, whose daughter, Velma Colvin, had already moved out.

Ms. Colvin and her sister referred to the Colvins as their parents and took their last name. When they took Claudette in, the Colvins lived in Pine Level, a small country town in Montgomery County, the same area where Rosa Parks grew up.



Claudette, parents,  
and her siblings

Although she was one of four female plaintiffs in *Browder v. Gayle*, the Supreme Court case that overturned Montgomery's bus segregation laws, her role in challenging the Jim Crow system has largely been overshadowed.

**Latest Update:** Ms. Colvin, now 82, was placed on indefinite probation



Judge Calvin Williams meets Claudette Colvin after he had her arrest record expunged.

at 15 for refusing to give up her bus seat to a white woman. In December 2021, after 66-years, a judge erased her record! She was accompanied by the 90-year-old Fred Gray, the civil rights lawyer who represented her in 1956.

"My name was cleared," Ms. Colvin told CBS News, the BBC's US partner. "I'm no longer a juvenile delinquent at 82."

**Click to view the video of Claudette Colvin's Story.**

<https://youtu.be/2pIxIERgLT8>

Why has Claudette's story been largely forgotten? At the time, the NAACP and other Black organizations felt Rosa Parks made a better icon for the movement than a teenager. As an adult with the right look, Rosa Parks was also the secretary of the NAACP and was both well-known and respected – people would associate her with the middle class, which would attract support for the cause.

Ms. Colvin has often said she is not angry that she did not get more recognition; instead, she is disappointed.

Colvin and her family have been fighting for recognition for her action. In 2016, the Smithsonian Institution and its National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC) were challenged by Ms. Colvin and her family. They asked that Ms. Colvin receive a more prominent mention in the civil rights movement history.

The NMAAHC has a section dedicated to Rosa Parks, which Ms. Colvin does not want to be taken away. Still, her family's goal is to get the historical record right and officials to include Ms. Colvin's part of history.

Ms. Colvin's sister, Gloria Laster, says. "Had it not been for Claudette Colvin, Aurelia Browder, Susie McDonald, and Mary Louise Smith, there may not have been a Thurgood Marshall, a Martin Luther King, or a Rosa Parks."

### Works Cited:

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# Editorial

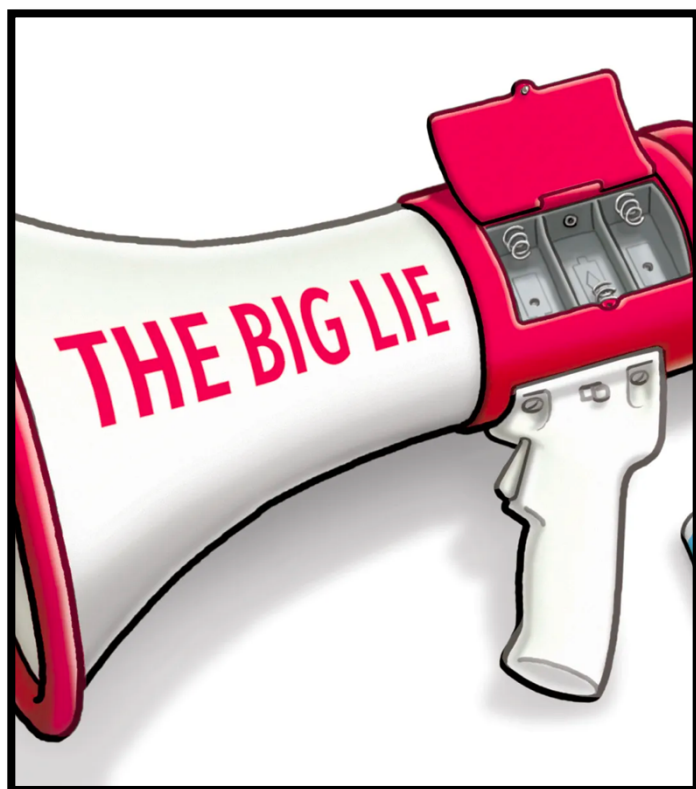
## Lies and More Lies

By

Tarik Kiley

12/26/2021

The far-right wing of the Republican party's capacity for lying never ceases to amaze me. The latest iteration of dishonesty involves two



Georgian election workers. According to Reuters.com, "Two Georgia election workers who were the target of vote-rigging conspiracy theories have sued the far-right. One America News Network, its top executives, and former President Donald Trump's ex-lawyer Rudy Giuliani allegedly spread lies about them.

The defamation lawsuit was filed [...] in federal court in

Washington, D.C., by Wandrea "Shaye" Moss, a voter registration officer in Fulton County, and her mother, Ruby Freeman. She was a temp worker for the 2020 election.



**The lawsuit targets San Diego-based Herring Networks, which owns and operates One America News Network, as well as the channel's Chief Executive Robert Herring, President Charles Herring, and reporter Chanel Rion.”**

**The fascinating thing about this case is that Rudy Giuliani was also named a defendant. This twist is important because Giuliani used to be former President Trump’s lawyer. Giuliani was a big proponent of voter fraud, costing Trump the 2020 election. In other words, Giuliani worked actively to spread the “Big Lie.” In fact, he often appeared on the One America News Network.**

**Moss and Freeman’s complaint states that they were falsely accused of conspiracy to create “secret batches of illegal ballots and running them through voting machines to help then-candidate Joe Biden defeat Trump,” according to Reuters.com. So basically, two election workers were accused of stuffing ballots without any evidence.**

**Moss and Freeman have also filed another lawsuit against the far-right website, the Gateway Pundit, stating that it has also made false statements against them. They also say that the false reports from the Gateway Pundit resulted in harassment and death threats against them for months. Moss and Freeman want the false statements regarding them removed from the One America News Network, while they also seek punitive and compensatory damages.**





So, the Big Lie is more significant than we thought. Two election workers in Georgia were accused of counting “suitcases” of fake ballots on election night. Trump himself mentioned Freeman’s

name in a telephone call insisting that Georgian officials overturn the state’s election results. He said Freeman’s name 18 times in this phone call, accusing Freeman of being a “known political operative” who “stuffed the ballot boxes,” according to Reuters.com.

### *What is this all about?*

The “Big Lie” is about people lying to hold onto power. If they could convince enough people of the “Big Lie,” maybe Trump could have



held onto power? Of course, the lie didn’t stop with words. It also included actions on the part of Trump supporters to attempt to overthrow American democracy at the January 6<sup>th</sup> insurrection.

This attack on poll workers also shows that the right-wing of the Republican party has completely taken over the entire party and will do almost anything to perpetuate their power.

It is also hilarious that the Republicans, who accuse everyone else of dishonesty, are mainly dishonest themselves. In fact, according to CNN.com, “Rudy Giuliani's law license [was] suspended in Washington, DC, after he temporarily lost his license in New York for pushing election lies. The appeals court in DC said Giuliani’s suspension from working as an attorney in the city is a "pending outcome" of his situation in New York, according to disciplinary court records.” This ruling was around July 2021. So, the biggest liars here are those who accuse others of lying. The difference here is that there is evidence to show that Giuliani and his fellow defendants did lie.



It seems the USA is living through a dystopian nightmare with Trump and his supporters and their “Big Lie.” In a world where truth is politicized and scientific proof is denied in the name of seizing power, we truly must fight even more vigorously for our democracy. After all, one of the primary lessons I learned in elementary school was the difference between truth and fiction. Science is based on observation and evidence. I hope that the American people will utilize critical thinking and realize that.

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# **Announcements**



## **Tuesday Morning Breakfast Forum**

Tuesday, January 4<sup>th</sup> – 7:00 – 8:00 PM

Zoom, Register [here](#).

## **N. Meck Democrats Monthly Meeting**

Thursday, January 6th at 7:00 PM

ZOOM

## **N. Mecklenburg Progressives Dinner**

Monday, January 10th at 6:00 PM

RSVP Michelle Blumenthal

[n.meck.progressives@gmail.com](mailto:n.meck.progressives@gmail.com)

ZOOM

## **Democratic Women of Mecklenburg County**

2022 Board Installation

Wednesday, January 12th 6:30 PM

RSVP via Facebook Page

ZOOM

# Announcements



## Senior Democrats of Mecklenburg County

January Membership Meeting  
Friday, January 14<sup>th</sup> at 11:30 AM  
RSVP via Facebook Page  
Zoom

## LGBTQ Democrats of Mecklenburg County

Don't Forget the Judges! Virtual Forum  
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 19, 2022, at 6:30 PM  
Anyone on or off Facebook



Please submit your group events to [donnamarie93@gmail.com](mailto:donnamarie93@gmail.com) by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month for inclusion in the Announcements.

# Happenings Gallery!



## The Executive Corner:

Executive Director - Jade X. Jackson

Rev Rodney Sadler, Joel Segal, DonnaMarie Woodson

Rev Glencie Rhedrick

## Coalition of United Progressives-CharMeck Chronicle

Editor: DonnaMarie Woodson

Contributor: Tarik Kiley