



Foundation Document Overview

Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument

Mississippi



Contact Information

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Purpose



MEDGAR AND MYRLIE EVERS HOME NATIONAL MONUMENT in Jackson, Mississippi, preserves the home of Medgar and Myrlie Evers, and interprets their contributions to the modern American civil rights movement and their legacies in the ongoing struggle for freedom and justice.



Significance

Significance statements express why Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument resources and values are important enough to merit national park unit designation. Statements of significance describe why an area is important within a global, national, regional, and systemwide context. These statements are linked to the purpose of the park unit, and are supported by data, research, and consensus. Significance statements describe the distinctive nature of the park and inform management decisions, focusing efforts on preserving and protecting the most important resources and values of the park unit.

- Medgar and Myrlie Evers were committed and equal partners in their civil rights work and in their private lives, raising their children while mobilizing their home as an extension of the NAACP Field Office in deeply segregated Mississippi. They made profound personal sacrifices in defense of African Americans' rights as US citizens and fought courageously to abolish white supremacy in the state they loved.
- Medgar and Myrlie Evers leveraged connections with the community, with students and academic organizations, and with television and print media outlets to organize and propagate challenges against Jim Crow voting laws and institutions. Their strategic approach to civil rights organizing helped to advance the fight for equality, school desegregation, integration of public spaces and accommodations, and voting rights. They helped organize almost every significant civil rights event in Mississippi from 1952 until Medgar's assassination in 1963, a critical period during which the grassroots civil rights movement transformed into a national chorus.
- The Evers home – in the heart of a vibrant, middle-class, Black American neighborhood and laid out for added security amid persistent threats from white supremacists – reflects the care and attention that Medgar and Myrlie Evers devoted to creating a family-oriented environment in which to raise their three children while providing space to host civil rights workers, leaders, and colleagues, and to provide shelter and assistance to African Americans under threat by white supremacists.

Significance

- Medgar Evers’s prophetic statement, “You can kill a man, but you can’t kill an idea” was vindicated in the aftermath of his assassination on June 12, 1963. Evers’s assassination at his home shocked the nation, galvanized support for the movement, and catalyzed passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.
- Myrlie Evers, always an engaged and committed activist, stepped into the national spotlight as a civil rights and community leader after her husband’s assassination. Through action in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors, Myrlie Evers broke through gender and racial barriers and served as a driving force for change.



Fundamental Resources and Values

Fundamental resources and values are those features, systems, processes, experiences, stories, scenes, sounds, smells, or other attributes determined to merit primary consideration during planning and management processes because they are essential to achieving the purpose of the park and maintaining its significance.

- **Medgar and Myrlie Evers House**
- **Evers Home Historic Landscape and Views**
- **Sacred Space: the Carport**
- **Connection with the Elraine Neighborhood**

Interpretive Themes

Interpretive themes are often described as the key stories or concepts that visitors should understand after visiting a park—they define the most important ideas or concepts communicated to visitors about a park unit. Themes are derived from—and should reflect—park purpose, significance, resources, and values. The set of interpretive themes is complete when it provides the structure necessary for park staff to develop opportunities for visitors to explore and relate to all of the park significances and fundamental resources and values.

- Medgar and Myrlie’s home was the nerve center of the life and work of two nationally important and influential civil rights leaders.
- The story of Medgar and Myrlie Evers is a love story of two people who were as devoted to each other and their family as they were to the civil rights movement.
- Medgar Evers was a patriot in the truest sense of the word: He fought for his country in World War II and fought for racial equality and human rights on the home front.
- The work of the Everses is unfinished and it is up to all of us to continue the march towards justice and equal rights for all.
- Medgar was a servant leader who amplified grassroots civil rights voices into a national chorus.
- The Everses chose to make their home in Mississippi, the birthplace of a strong Black freedom movement, making the state an important battleground in the African American struggle against the racism and terror that was widely sanctioned in the south.
- Medgar and Myrlie’s home was part of the Elraine neighborhood, a vibrant community where Black Americans could pursue the American Dream.
- The violation of the home that Medgar and Myrlie created as a safe place for their family and work is a solemn reminder of the danger inherent in unchecked racism and discrimination which our country still struggles to eradicate.
- The life and legacy of Dr. Myrlie Evers—mother, journalist, and civil rights activist—is one of resilience, courage, and the relentless pursuit of justice.

Description

The Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument in Jackson, Mississippi, honors the life, work, and legacies of two important civil rights leaders, Medgar and Myrlie Evers. Built in 1956, the house is in Jackson's Elaine subdivision, the first post-World War II subdivision created for middle-class African Americans in Mississippi. The house helps tell a powerful story of the sacrifices the couple faced as civil rights activists and the efforts they made to raise and protect their family. The Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home became a unit of the National Park Service in November 2020 via Section 2301 of the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act of 2019. The monument links the couple's work to a tangible place where visitors may engage with their story and learn about the ongoing struggle for social justice in America.

Medgar and Myrlie were partners in their civil rights work and private lives. Named the first field secretary for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in Mississippi in 1954, Medgar Evers helped Black Americans register to vote, promoted school desegregation, and investigated racially motivated murders and abuses. He led marches, sit-ins, prayer vigils, voter registration drives and boycotts, and persistently appealed to Black people and white people to work together. He led efforts to help James Meredith successfully integrate the University of Mississippi in 1962. Myrlie Evers worked tirelessly behind the scenes to make those civil rights efforts happen, providing personal and logistical support for her husband and other civil rights workers. The civil rights campaigns that Medgar and Myrlie Evers led had national implications for racial equity and were frequently reported to a national audience. They contributed to lasting changes in the federal response to civil rights crimes.

Medgar and Myrlie Evers remained committed to their civil rights work despite threats against their lives and property and undertook to make their home a safe place to raise their children.

To enhance security, they selected a house on a lot between two other homes in the interior of the neighborhood and chose to forego a front door in favor of a side entrance sheltered by a carport. They placed furniture in front of windows to block potential gunfire. Medgar even taught his children how to crawl infantry-style to the bathroom if they heard strange noises.

Medgar Evers was assassinated shortly after midnight on June 12, 1963, in the home's carport while his family was inside. He was transported to a hospital, where he died shortly thereafter. After the assassination, Myrlie Evers (later, Evers-Williams) emerged as a civil rights figure and community leader in her own right. She furthered the cause of justice and equity for all Americans in a career that spanned decades. Notable accomplishments included founding the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Institute. She also served as director of planning at the Center for Educational Opportunity for Claremont Colleges; authored the first corporate guides for women seeking opportunities beyond clerical work; was appointed by the mayor of Los Angeles as the first Black female commissioner to the Board of Public Works; was elected as the first female chair of the NAACP; and was selected in 2013 to deliver the invocation at the second inauguration of President Barack Obama.

