

Evers, Medgar (1925–1963), was an African American civil rights leader. He fought against segregation and racial discrimination in Mississippi during the 1950's and early 1960's. Evers was shot and killed outside his home in Jackson, Mississippi, on June 12, 1963.

Medgar Wiley Evers was born on July 2, 1925, in Decatur, Mississippi. He enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1942 during World War II. Evers received a bachelor's degree from Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College (now Alcorn State University) in 1952. From 1954 to 1963, he served on the staff of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) as field secretary for Mississippi. Evers traveled throughout the state, encouraging African Americans to register to vote. He also organized African American *boycotts* (buyers' strikes) against white-owned firms that practiced racial discrimination.

Evers soon became Mississippi's best-known champion of civil rights and a target of white supremacists, who violently opposed programs designed to guarantee blacks' rights. Ten days after Evers's murder, police arrested white supremacist Byron De La Beckwith for the crime. Beckwith, whose fingerprints were on the rifle that killed Evers, was tried twice in 1964 for the slaying. But each time, an all-white jury could not reach a verdict. The charges against Beckwith were dropped in 1969. In 1989, the case was reopened after new evidence was found. In 1994, a jury of eight African Americans and four whites convicted Beckwith of Evers's murder.

Medgar's brother Charles succeeded him as field secretary. In 1969, Charles was elected mayor of Fayette, Mississippi. He held that office until 1981 and again from 1985 to 1989. Medgar's widow, Myrlie Evers-Williams, served as chairwoman of the NAACP's board of directors from 1995 to 1998. In 1998, she set up the Medgar Evers Institute to work for civil rights. See [Evers-Williams, Myrlie](#).

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**Contributor:**

• **David J. Garrow**, Ph.D., Author, *Bearing the Cross: Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference*; winner, Pulitzer Prize for Biography or Autobiography, 1987.

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