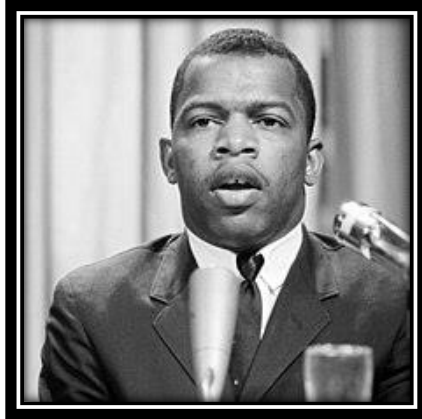


PROFILE OF RESISTANCE

John Lewis

US Congressman, civil rights activist

“Never, ever be afraid to make some noise and get in good trouble, necessary trouble.”



Background Information

Born: February 21, 1940 - Died July 17th, 2020

John Lewis was born in Troy, Alabama. His parents were sharecroppers. Lewis studied at American Baptist College and Fisk University. While he was in college, he learned about non-violent protesting. After graduation, Lewis led the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC).

Lewis's Resistance

John Lewis was a leader in the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. He fought against the segregation in the Southern states. Lewis and his friends would have “sit-ins” at White-only restaurants in Nashville, Tennessee. They would go to restaurants that excluded Black people, and try to order food. Lewis and his friends were arrested and sent to jail for the sit-ins.

Even when the police attacked Lewis, he did not respond with violence. He worked with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to organize the March on Washington, where MLK gave his famous “I Have a Dream” speech. Lewis was the youngest speaker at the 1963 March on Washington. He also led peaceful marches in Selma, Alabama.

Lewis was a leader of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). In 1964, Lewis and other members of SNCC opened freedom schools in Mississippi. Freedom schools provided education and training for Black children in the south. Lewis also organized bus boycotts, student sit-ins, and nonviolent protests.

Achievements

In 1981, Lewis was elected to the Atlanta City Council. In 1987, Lewis was elected to represent Georgia's 5th district, in the U.S. House of Representatives, which is a part of the U.S. Congress. With this new position of power, Lewis was able to write laws that support civil rights. Lewis was re-elected 14 times. He also helped to create the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, which is located across the street from the White House.¹

Essential Questions

