

Timeline for James Howard Meredith June 25, 1933 -

James Meredith was born June 25, 1933 to Moses Arthur and Roxie Mariah Patterson Meredith. His given name was J.H. He was his father's seventh child and his mother's firstborn. Moses was known to all as "Cap."

J.H. grew up on the outskirts of Kosciusko, Mississippi on an 84 acre farm.

At age three, he started school at Cook Private School in 1936. Cap and local black farmers used their cattle, and livestock as collateral to obtain a bank loan from Merchants and Farmers Bank in Kosciusko to finance the school.

J.H. was called J-Boy by his family and people in the community.

Attala County took over the school which had been established with private funds during the 1939-1940 school year, and Cap stepped down from the board, withdrew his children from Cook Private School, and enrolled them in Attala County Training School in Kosciusko.

J.H., a 1st grader walked 4 1/2 miles to school which took one hour and 4 1/2 mile home back home. He completed the 11th grade at Attala County Training School.

Cap's youngest brother Cliff enrolled J.H. in Gibbs High School in St. Petersburg, Florida for his senior school year (1950-1951).

The clerk at the driver's license department in Florida, refused to issue J.H. a license with initials, so he changed his name from J.H. to James Howard.

He graduated from high school in 1951, and went to Detroit to enlist in the Air Force. Blacks couldn't enlist in the armed services in the south at that time.

James Meredith served in the Air Force from 1951-1960.

In 1956, James Meredith married Mary June Wiggins in Gary, Indiana.

He obtained an honorable discharge in 1960 and he and his wife, Mary June and their son, John Howard, who was born in Japan moved to Mississippi and the couple enrolled in Jackson State College.

JFK gave a Civil Rights platform speech during his campaign to win over black voters, and the day he took office Jan 21, 1960, James Meredith wrote a letter seeking admission to the University of Mississippi (Ole Miss).

A college friend introduced James Meredith to Medgar Wiley Evers, who became a key member of James Meredith's advisory team. Mr. Evers contacted Thurgood Marshal who headed the NAACP's Legal Defense Fund.

Marshal assigned Constance Motley from NY to work on James Meredith's legal case. R Jess Brown, who had a license to practice law in Mississippi joined the team too. Court documents were filed under Brown's license.

The legal team fought the case for nearly two years. They argued the case on the local level and lost, appealed to the 5th Court of Appeals, and went all the way to the Supreme Court.

After winning the right to attend Ole Miss, Governor Ross Barnett, the Lieutenant Governor, Paul B. Johnson blocked three of James Meredith's registration attempts.

The court imposed \$10K and \$5K fines on both men respectively to demanding they cease their interference with the court order.

On September 30, 1960, JFK, RFK, and Governor Ross Barnett negotiated a plan to allow James Meredith to become a resident on the Campus of Ole Miss.

President Kennedy announced Meredith's residence to the nation via a television press conference September 30, 1962.

The Klan and segregationists began entering the campus during day light hours September 30, 1962. U.S. Marshals were on campus. A riot which had been incited by Governor Ross Barnett turned into a full insurrection. JFK called in the National Guard and the army. The army had never been utilized to protect the rights of a citizen.

Two people were killed, and nearly 200 were injured during the Insurrection on the campus of the University of Mississippi, September 30, 1962.

October 1, 1962 James Meredith attended his first class.

He graduated August 18, 1963 obtaining a bachelor's degree in Political Science. The U.S. Marshals escorted Meredith and a caravan of supporters to Memphis.

One of government's officials informed Meredith he was on the Klan's hit list and recommended he move out of the state.

Meredith relocated to Nigeria and enrolled in a masters degree program. He obtained a masters degree in Government and Economics from the University of Ibadan in 1965.

He and his family moved to Manhattan, and he enrolled in law school at Columbia University in 1965. His wife became a local school teacher.

On June 5, 1966, James Meredith started "Meredith Walk Against Fear," a 225 mile walk from the Tennessee-Mississippi line on Highway 51 to Jackson with 16 men. Some were from Memphis and a few had travelled from NY.

Meredith sought to encourage blacks to register to vote, and to show black men they had nothing to fear by walking the highways and bi-ways in Mississippi.

On June 6, 1966, the Meredith started off walking with a few NY friends in Hernando, Mississippi. Other men were planning to join them at another location in the county. The small group were followed by news reporter, a photographer, and several patrol cars.

Aubrey Norvell, a white male from Memphis spotted James Meredith walking, and ambushed him. Meredith was taken to a hospital in Memphis.

Dick Gregory flew his family to Memphis in his private plane to visit James Meredith. Gregory went to Hernando to the site of the shooting and decided to resume the walk.

Dr. Martin Luther King of SCLC, SNCC's Stokely Carmichael, and other leaders visited Meredith in the hospital and asked his permission to resume the walk which they renamed the Meredith March Against Fear. Gregory supported King and the other leaders.

Sunday, June 26, 1966 the march reached Tougaloo, Mississippi. James Brown performed on stage at Tougaloo College. People walked from Tougaloo College up State Street to the State Capital in Jackson, Mississippi where speeches were presented from the back of a truck bed.

James Meredith received the loudest cheers. People cheered loudly with great excitement.

"The purpose of the march... to challenge that thing at the base of white supremacy - fear - fear that grips the Negro in America..." James H. Meredith said June 26, 1966.

His first memoir *Three Years in Mississippi* was published by Indiana University Press in 1966.

In 1979, Mary June died from heart failure.

In 1981, James Meredith married Judy Alsobrooks in Gary, Indiana.

He worked one year tenures at a few jobs over his long career. He was a stock broker in NY, a visiting professor of African American Studies at the University of Cincinnati, taught at Thomas Christian Academy in Yazoo City, and served as a Domestic Advisor to Senator Jesse Helms.

While working in Washington, DC, Meredith conducted genealogy and historical research at the Library of Congress and used the data to self-published a volume of books.

To date he has published 27 works.

His latest memoir *A Mission from God: A Memoir and Challenge to America* was published by Simon and Schuster in 2012.

Over the years he launched walks to the library, walked to support HIV, immigrants, and in 2009 he launched the Meredith Walk for the Poor through the Mississippi Delta.

He is a self-made business man, an author of many books, an education pioneer, and now a devoted grandfather.