



## Myrlie Evers-Williams

### Biography

Myrlie Evers-Williams was born in Vicksburg, Mississippi in 1933. She attended Alcorn A&M College where she met and married fellow honor student, Medgar Evers. When he became the NAACP's first Mississippi Field Director in 1954, Myrlie acted as his support system through the dangerous times working to register African Americans for the vote and speaking out against **segregation** and other forms of inequality. In 1963, Medgar was tragically shot and killed. Myrlie suffered through two **hung juries** and then moved, with her three children to California.

She did not abandon the work for racial equality and **social justice**, she continued to travel around the U.S. telling her story and raising funds for the NAACP. In the late 1980s, Evers-Williams made history by being the first African American appointed to the Los Angeles Public Works Commission, overseeing a budget of \$1 billion. On February 18, 1995, she was elected to the position of Chairman of the National Board of Directors of NAACP, saying, "Medgar died for the NAACP. I will live for it." . With the support of a strong member base, she spearheaded operations that restored the association to its original status as a premier civil rights organization. Myrlie Evers-Williams steered the organization through its financial troubles and refocused it towards the noble work it originally set out to do.

### Vocabulary

- **Segregation** - The separation of groups of people based on race.
- **NAACP** - National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
- **Social Justice** - a vision for an equal and safe society for all.
- **Hung jury**– a jury that cannot come to an agreement. When this happens the trial is dismissed, and has to begin again.

### Activity I

To what position in the NAACP was Myrlie Evers Williams elected in 1995?

1. Mississippi Field Director
2. Chairman of the National Board of Directors
3. Commissioner of Public Works

2009 Freedom Award  
Recipient  
Myrlie Evers-Williams



National Civil Rights Museum  
450 Mulberry St.  
Memphis, TN 38103

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## Activity II–

Here are some websites where you can find the answers:

<http://www.naacp.org/about/history/mew/index.htm>

[http://www.olemiss.edu/mwp/dir/evers\\_myrlie/](http://www.olemiss.edu/mwp/dir/evers_myrlie/)

After her husband was murdered, how did she continue to help the NAACP?

Name three books written or co-written by Myrlie Evers-Williams.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Explain how the pictures below connect with Myrlie Evers-Williams



1.



2.



3.

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## Answer Sheet

### Activity I

Answer: 2.

### Activity II

**1. Possible Answers:** She began traveling across the country, telling her story, speaking out against inequality, and raising money for the NAACP. In 1995, she was elected the Chairman of the National Board of Directors of the NAACP and helped the organization regain its former strength as a Civil Rights organization.

**2.** *For Us, The Living*  
*Autobiography of Medgar Evers: A Hero's Life and Legacy Revealed Through His Writings, Letters and Speeches*  
*Watch Me Fly*

### 3. Possible Answers:

**1.** She fought for justice for her slain husband for over 30 years at which point Byron de la Beckwith was found guilty of the murder

**2.** She moved to California in 1964 with her children. She became the first African American appointed to the Los Angeles Public Works Commission. She also ran for the House of Representatives District 24 (L.A.) in 1970.

**3.** Myrlie Evers Williams assisted and supported her husband, Medgar, as he worked to register African Americans in Mississippi to vote, a dangerous job in the 1950s and 1960s.

**Attention Teachers! You can also find information on civil and human rights today in our new curriculum guide which is now available online through Learning Village. For information on how to access the curriculum guide go to <http://www.civilrightsmuseum.org>.**

