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Montgomery Marks Rosa Parks Anniversary

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MONTGOMERY, Ala. -- Hundreds of children marched Thursday from the site where Rosa Parks made history 50 years ago, commemorating the anniversary of the day she refused to give up her bus seat to a white man.

"Thank you, Rosa Parks. Thank you, Rosa Parks," the children chanted as they marched to the Capitol from the site about eight blocks away where Parks was arrested on Dec. 1, 1955.

Elijah Taylor, 12, said he joined the children's parade "to give tribute to all those people in Montgomery who walked during the bus boycott" as well as Parks.

"I did it because Rosa Parks stuck up for what was right," said Megan Hughes, 11.

The children, both black and white, joined arms and sang "We Shall Overcome" at the steps of the Capitol.

Earlier Thursday, Montgomery residents and civil rights figures held a prayer breakfast to remember Parks.

All buses in Montgomery paid tribute to Parks by leaving a seat empty with a display commemorating her act. Other bus systems around the country had similar displays. Parks died Oct. 24 at age 92 in Detroit, where she and her husband had moved in 1957.

The Montgomery Improvement Association, which hosted the prayer breakfast, was the group that organized and launched the boycott of city buses four days after Parks' arrest. The yearlong boycott, led by the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., became a key moment in the civil rights movement.

In New York, empty seats were marked with posters of her reading, "It All Started on a Bus," and bus drivers were keeping headlights on all day.

In Philadelphia, middle school students planned to write comments about Parks on posters on the outside of a bus that would be put into regular service.

Bus tributes were also set up in Boston; Cleveland; Newark, N.J.; and Washington, D.C.

In Detroit, a federal building on Detroit's east side was being renamed for Parks in an afternoon ceremony. The resolution renaming the building was signed into law by President Bush on Nov. 11.

On the Net:

<http://www.montgomeryboycott.com/>

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