

John lewis

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A member of the Democratic Party, Lewis was first elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1986 and served 17 terms. The district he represented included most of Atlanta. Due to his length of service, he became the dean of the Georgia congressional delegation. He was one of the leaders of the Democratic Party in the House, serving from 1991 as a chief deputy whip and from 2003 as a senior chief deputy whip. He received many honorary degrees and awards, including the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2012.

John Robert Lewis was born close to Troy, Alabama, on February 21, 1940, the third of ten children of Willie Mae (n?e Carter) and Eddie Lewis. His parents were sharecroppers in rural Pike County, Alabama, of which Troy was the county seat. His great-grandfather, Frank Carter, had been born a slave in the same county in 1862, and lived until Lewis was seven years old.

After writing to King about being denied admission to Troy University in Alabama, Lewis was invited to meet with him. King, who referred to Lewis as "the boy from Troy", discussed suing the university for discrimination, but he warned Lewis that doing so could endanger his family in Troy. After discussing it with his parents, Lewis decided instead to proceed with his education at a small, historically black college in Tennessee.

Lewis graduated from the American Baptist Theological Seminary in Nashville, Tennessee, and was ordained as a Baptist minister. He then earned a bachelor's degree in religion and philosophy from Fisk University, also a historically black college. He was a member of Phi Beta Sigma fraternity.

As a student, Lewis became an activist in the civil rights movement. He organized sit-ins at segregated lunch counters in Nashville and took part in many other civil rights activities as part of the Nashville Student Movement. The Nashville sit-in movement was responsible for the desegregation of lunch counters in the city's downtown. Lewis was arrested and jailed many times during the nonviolent activities to desegregate the city's downtown businesses. He was also instrumental in organizing bus boycotts and other nonviolent protests to support voting rights and racial equality.

During this time, Lewis said it was important to engage in "good trouble, necessary trouble" in order to achieve change, and he held to this credo throughout his life.[28]

While a student, Lewis was invited to attend nonviolence workshops held at Clark Memorial United Methodist Church by the Rev. James Lawson and Rev. Kelly Miller Smith. Lewis and other students became dedicated to the discipline and philosophy of nonviolence, which he practiced for the rest of his life.[29]

When CORE gave up on the Freedom Ride because of the violence, Lewis and fellow activist Diane Nash arranged for Nashville students from Fisk and other colleges to take it over and bring it to a successful conclusion.[37][38]

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