

**From the Office of Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator**

**Smithsonian Institution Marks 50th Anniversary of the Montgomery Bus
Boycott With New Traveling Exhibition**

**September 5, 2009 thru January 3, 2010
Reginald F. Lewis Museum of African American History
(www.africanamericanculture.org)
830 E. Pratt Street, Baltimore , Maryland 21202**

381 Days: The Montgomery Bus Boycott Story, a four-year traveling exhibit, commemorates the 50th anniversary of Rosa Parks' arrest and the bus boycott that followed. Developed by the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service (SITES) in collaboration with the Troy University Rosa Parks Library and Museum, and generously underwritten by AARP, the exhibit explores these crucial, historic events, which ignited the national Civil Rights Movement. 381 Days, dedicated to the indelible spirit and memory of Mrs. Parks (1913-2005), premieres at the Alabama State Capitol in Montgomery on Dec. 2, with an opening reception on Dec. 1, also at the Capitol.

Parks' arrest on Dec. 1, 1955, the catalyst for Montgomery's citizens to take action, is only a fraction of the story. 381 Days examines the contributions and dedication of Montgomery's black community, which made the boycott successful. The exhibition is a multidimensional collage of photographs, quotes and historical texts that bring this story to life and convey the dynamic energy of the movement.

"Rosa Parks' extraordinary act was a profound turning point in the civil rights movement," stated Anna Cohn, director of the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service (SITES). "We are extremely proud to share this American story of the courageous people of Montgomery who forced a segregated bus system to open its doors to equality."

Four days after Parks' arrest, 50,000 people united for a one-day boycott of city buses. Following its massive success, organizers formed the Montgomery Improvement Association (MIA), electing a young Martin Luther King Jr. as its president, and devised a strategy of grassroots organization and legal challenges that eventually broke the city's ability to maintain segregated buses after 380 more days of the boycott.

During the boycott, a group of attorneys led by Fred Gray attacked the practice of segregation in public transit, recruiting four women as plaintiffs who, like Parks, had been arrested or harassed for refusing to give up their bus seats. *Browder v. Gayle* claimed that state and city segregation ordinances denied the plaintiffs equal protection of the law under the 14th Amendment. In November 1956, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled Montgomery's segregated bus seating unconstitutional. The boycott ended once the ruling took effect.

381 Days also looks at the impact of the boycott's success across the country and around the world. As the first major victory against legalized segregation, the strategies used in Montgomery were adapted by a new generation of activists dedicated to nonviolent protest.