

# THEN & NOW

## WHATEVER HAPPENED TO ... ?

GLORIA  
RICHARDSON



Gloria Richardson works for New York City's Department of Aging.  
[1963 PHOTO]

Time has not dimmed the activism or straightforward opinions of "Glorious Gloria" Richardson, the charismatic heroine of the 1963 civil rights protest that she led as head of the Cambridge Non-Violent Action Committee in the Eastern Shore city.

Considered by some to be a second Harriet Tubman, it was Richardson who educated then-Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy that the civil rights movement was not just about desegregation but also poverty and joblessness.

Richardson, who will be 85 in May, lives in an East 14th Street apartment near New York City's Union Square. She is still working as a contract manager for the city's Department of Aging and is active in union affairs.

"I keep saying I'll retire, but I keep putting it off," she said in a telephone interview the other day.

"I don't think there is a movement anymore," Richardson said when asked about the current state of the civil rights movement. "This Supreme Court is backward and extremely right-wing. They did a job on affirmative action and will certainly go after *Roe v. Wade*."

She said she's disturbed about the lack of activism in the country.

"The current generation has no memories or [realization of] what the struggle for civil rights was like. Look, is there an anti-war movement like we had in the '60s? What are the college students doing? They are certainly not like those of the '60s. Where is their activism?" Richardson said.

While acknowledging that gender and race are a major component of this year's presidential race, Richardson said she is not supporting Barack Obama because she feels he lacks the depth and background.

"This election shouldn't be about the first black or female president. The issues they should be fighting for are jobs, better schools and health services for all Americans," she said.

The mother of two, and grandmother and great-grandmother, visits Cambridge once a year and keeps an eye on things by reading the weekly City Council minutes.

"There are now three black city councilmen in Cambridge, and that's a big change," she said.

[FREDERICK N. RASMUSSEN]