BY SHELLEY MOORE



# FYES ON THE PRIZE

ho is Moses Wright? Few people would answer that black trivia question correctly. Nor would most people know anything about Diane Nash, Bob Moses or Jimmy Lee Jackson. But each of those people played a direct role in changing the course of black — and white — American history.

They are among the many unsung heroes of the civil rights movement, and their story is told in "Eyes of the prizes: America's Civil Rights Years, 1954 - 1965," a six-part television series to be aired weekly on PBS stations stations throughout the country, beginning January 21st. Through a wealth of old film footage and recent interviews with some of the movement's key participants, this documentary recounts the evolution of the struggle for desegregation in extensively researched detail. It is a moving examination of a proud but turbulent era.

It is difficult, even in this careful account, to determine the exact starting point of the civil rights movement. Some say it was when the Supreme Court first ordered school desegregation in the famous "Brown vs. Board of Education" case of 1954. Others say it was when Emmett Till was murdered for "sassing" a white woman in Mississippi a few months later. Nationwide press attention was drawn to the murder trial, where Till's 65-year-old uncle stood up and identified the alleged white murderers from the witness stand.

That very brave man was Moses Wright.

Still others time the beginning of the movement with Rosa Parks' refusal to give up her bus seat to a white person, triggering the renowned Montgomery, Alabama bus boycott in 1965. At the church rally after the first day of the boycott, an unknown 26-year-old minister addressed the crowd. This young man stirred his audience with an impassioned speech. The Martin Luther King, Jr., legend was born.

he series is full of many other little known details about the history of the movement. People who lived through it all, as well as those too young to remember, will undoubtedly learn a lot from this series that they had never known. They will learn, for example, that white women offered rides to black women walking to work. They were shunned by family and friends for doing

Shelley Moore is a frequent contributor to Dawn Magazine

so. They will learn that Minnie Jean Brown, one of the "Little Rock Nine" who desegregated Central High School, was expelled for dumping a bowl of chili on the head of a white student who taunted her in the cafeteria.

They will learn that the boycott of downtown Nashville lunch counters, which refused to serve blacks, ended when a student pointedly asked the mayor, on the steps of City Hall, if he thought segregation was right. Self-consciously, he admitted it was not. That bold student was Diane Nash. They will also learn that young whites from the north were recruited to do civil rights work in the south by a young man seeking to draw more attention to the movement from the press and the federal government. That shrewd young man was Bob Moses.

Aside from learning a bunch of facts, viewers will experience a great deal of emotion at certain poignant moments. There is no other black face in sight when one of the "Little Rock Nine," a girl, walks alone to school surrounded by a large jeering crowd of whites. Myrlie Evers recalls the night of horror when her husband Medgar, the Mississippi NAACP leader, was shot in cold blood at their doorstep. When the police arrived, she "just wished she had a machine gun to mow them all down."

The Freedom Riders, who were sent to Mississippi's state penitentiary, slept on cold steel beds in their underwear after guards forced other black inmates to take away their mattresses. One of those other inmates reportedly broke down and cried.

In addition to the unknowns, the movement's foremost participants reflect on their past experiences, too, including Andrew Young, Stokely Carmichael, Ralph Abernathy, Coretta Scott King and even George Wallace, formerly one of the staunchest segregationist governors in the south. The filmmakers were granted interviews with a number of the movement's other "non-heroes," as well.

he last segment of "Eyes on the Prize" recounts the onagain-off-again effort to conduct the protest march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama, after a young man protecting his mother in a demonstration was killed by a state trooper. That young man was Jimmy Lee Jackson. It was 1965, a year of transitions. The

Continued on Page 11

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Madeleine Moore

EDITOR

ART DIRECTOR

Kelvin Wall ADVERTISING REPRESENTATIVE

> William E. Hickman ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Cecil R. Forster, Jr. ASSOCIATE EDITOR

PRODUCTION COORDINATOR

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS
Susan Shorter
Milana Walter Frank

GRAPHICS
George Rodriguez

Executive Offices
628 North Eutaw St.
Baltimore, MD 21201
301-728-8200

## **Executive Sales Offices**

Dawn Magazine 295 Madison Avenue New York, NY 10017 212-679-5152

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# CONTENTS

# FEATURE STORY A DAWN EL CLUS EL ERY A DAWN EL PEREZ OURSINS LA RES

# Secret Wars In Africa . . . . 8

Who's Paying the Bill?
By Pete Carey

# SPORTS

# The Big But Honest Win . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 4

"Can You Win In College Sports Without Cheating?"

By Richard E. Lapchick



By Westina Matthews

# FOOD FOR THOUGHT



# A Sumptuous Resolution for the New Year . 10 By Susan Shorter

# CONSUMERS



# 

Fresh Fruit Video Spots . . .

Coming Soon to a Grocer Near You

# ENTERTAINMENT

# 

America's Civil Rights Years
By Shelley Moore



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