



Martin Luther King, Jr.: A Biography (Greenwood Biographies)

Roger Bruns

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There has been recent controversy in the African American community about youth and their lack of appreciation for the gains of the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s. This stellar biography is a superb introduction to the foremost leader of the civil rights movement. The story and historical context will be eye-opening for students and a good refresher for others who are too young to have remembered the events. In a gripping narrative style, the biography traces the young Martin, the son and grandson of formidable preachers, to his calling as a minister too, but one who would take on the entrenched racism of the South, and North, through a nonviolent movement that changed the course of American history.

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King's story is compelling, starting from his early nurtured family life in an insular community of blacks in Atlanta. His education at Morehouse College, Crozer Theological Seminary, and Boston University and courtship of Coretta Scott lead into the early days of the civil rights movement and King's leadership role in the major marches, demonstrations, boycotts, and sit-ins that took place, mainly in the South. Critical insight into the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations is given as King negotiates with the presidents for equal rights for blacks. The violent reactions against and hatred of many whites for those seeking racial justice are still shocking today. Against the backdrop of beatings, killings, bombings, threats, and imprisoning, King is portrayed as driven to lift up all Americans, even if it meant martyrdom.

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