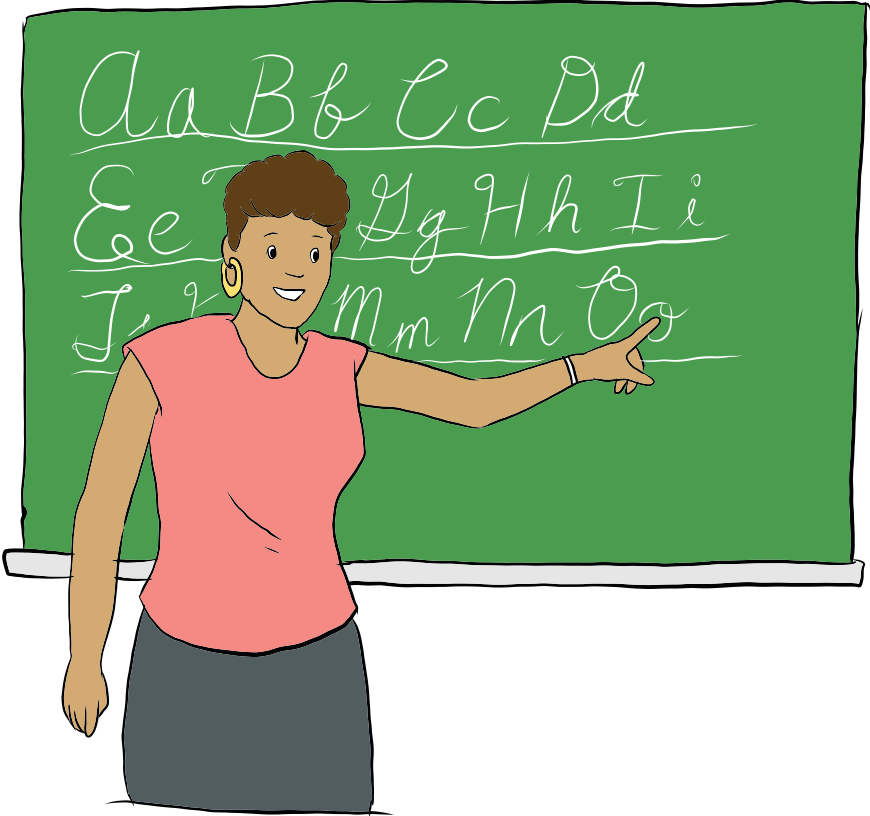


Dorothy Cotton

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Dorothy Cotton was the definition of a true “shero”. What’s a “shero” you may ask? A shero is a woman hero who is admired for her courageous qualities. Dorothy Cotton wasn’t afraid to get into trouble while standing up for people’s rights. She taught people how to pass unfair voting tests and helped them register to vote, even though at the time it was very difficult. She was a peaceful protestor, and believed in using her words and not her fists.

Dorothy Cotton was a civil rights activist, educator and leader. She was born in 1930 in Goldsboro, North Carolina. Her mother died when she was only three years old and she and her sisters had to be brave from a young age while being raised by their abusive father. Dorothy was a very smart woman. She went to school at Virginia State University and then Boston University. Her high school teacher helped her to get into college and Dorothy was able to earn a Master's Degree. As she continued down her path, she gained more and more confidence along the way. She died in 2018 in Ithaca, New York. Yes, that's right, Dorothy Cotton lived the last part of her life in Ithaca, New York (right where this book is being written!) and worked for Cornell University for many years.

Most of Dorothy's greatest accomplishments happened during the Civil Rights Movement. She taught thousands how to read, write and count so that they could vote. Dorothy did this because at the time there were unfair voting tests that used ridiculous questions like, "Do you know how many bubbles are in a bar of soap?", in order to stop African Americans from voting. She was a member of many organizations and was a leader in most of them. She was the only woman on Dr. Martin Luther King's executive committee and started the Citizen Education Program with him to educate and inspire others to vote. She even wrote a book called, If Your Back's Not Bent, about her life and her work with Dr. King. Dorothy Cotton felt strongly about everyone having an equal voice. She taught others about peaceful protesting in order to be heard, but most importantly she stressed that in order to be heard, you had to vote.

Dorothy also helped in the fight against **segregation**. Segregation meant that African Americans and white people weren't allowed to do the same things or go to the same places. Dorothy Cotton organized marches and protests against segregation. During one protest, the police came and beat up the people marching. Dorothy was one of the people beaten, and she developed hearing problems in her left ear because of it. She continually put her safety at risk to help others achieve the rights they deserved. Due to her efforts and the efforts of others who were a part of the **Civil Rights** Movement, African Americans were granted many of the same rights that only white Americans previously enjoyed.

Dorothy Cotton was a hard worker and spent her life working with people from all walks of life. She lent her courage to people all over the world. Dorothy worked with protestors from South Africa all the way to Israel to help them **overcome** struggles and get the rights they deserved. She overcame the obstacles that stood in the way of African Americans and women and still found time to fight for others. Dorothy Cotton always fought for what she wanted and this is what made her a true shero!!