



James Meredith

By Patrice Howard

James Meredith, born June 25, 1933, grew up in Mississippi continually faced with oppression and discrimination. Even as a child James had high hopes and dreams for his future. When in high school he stated, “I want to be a man, run for governor of the state of Mississippi, and get a degree from the University of Mississippi, in reverse order.” He set his goals high and was determined to achieve them.

After leaving Mississippi in 1950 to go to another high school and to serve in the Air Force for nine years, from 1951 to 1960, he returned to Mississippi to attend college with the full intent of enrolling at the University of Mississippi. He began his quest after attending Jackson State College for a quarter. There he decided to apply to the University of Mississippi. He said that it was his constitutional right to attend the university and that he planned to enter the University of Mississippi for the good of his people, his country, his state, his family, and for himself.

After many court cases and battles with the state and with the governor, the President of the United States, John F. Kennedy issued a proclamation in September 1962 that court orders will be obeyed and he authorized the U.S. Marshall's to escort James into the school to register. James registered on September 20, 1962. Riots and out of control behavior broke out, but James made his way up to the campus. Throughout his stay at the University of Mississippi, James was escorted to class. He made the statement that the first year that he attended was not nearly as dangerous for him personally as the two years in Mississippi before he was able to gain admission.

James Meredith is an astounding person. He showed great pride in his country and in his fellow men, by standing up for what he believed in. He did what he thought was right and he wouldn't let anything get in his way. He is still striving to better the lives of his people and culture today.