

PROFILE OF RESISTANCE

Dorothy Pitman Hughes

writer, activist

"We're getting there. We have a ways to go, though."

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NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY, SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

Background Information

Born: 1938

Dorothy Pitman Hughes was born in Lumpkin, Georgia. When she was a child, her father was nearly killed by the Ku Klux Klan (KKK). The KKK is a White terrorist group that killed many Black people in the south. After her father was hurt, Hughes decided to fight for a better life for Black Americans.

Hughes is best known for her support of women's rights and Black civil rights. She was an author in the 1960s and 1970s.

Hughes' Resistance

As an adult, Hughes participated in the Civil Rights Movement. During the civil rights protests, the police arrested many people. Hughes helped raise money to get them out of jail. Hughes also worked with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X. After her time as a civil rights activist, Hughes worked at women's shelters and child-care centers. She was always helping those in need.

In the 1970s, Hughes teamed up with another woman named Gloria Steinem. Together, they founded the Women's Action Alliance. Their goal was to help all children to feel respected in school.¹ The two women went on speaking tours around the country, and they spoke out against sexism and racism.²

Achievements

Hughes and her friend Gloria Steinem founded *Ms. Magazine*, which was a popular magazine for women in the 1970s. *Hughes is Black, and Steinem is White*, so when they worked together it was a symbol of unity. There is a portrait of Hughes and Steinem in the National Portrait Gallery in Washington, D.C.

Hughes inspired a generation of Black and White activists alike to work together towards progress. Hughes has no plans for slowing down, and still works as a community organizer in Jacksonville, Florida.

¹ Gloria Steinem and Dorothy Pitman Hughes. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://npg.si.edu/object/npg_NPG.2005.121.

² Wilson, C. (2011, January 27). Q&A with author and activist Dorothy Pitman Hughes. Retrieved from <https://www.jacksonville.com/community/mandarin/2011-01-27/story/qa-author-and-activist-dorothy-pitman-hughes#ixzz28kwCTIGF>.

