Rosa Parks, famed Civil Rights activist, passed away October 24, 2005. Ms. Parks was an African American woman who fought for what she believed in. One day in December 1955, at 42 years old, she got on the bus to go home. She was tired, her feet hurt, and she had worked hard all that day. She took the only seat available on the bus it was located one seat in front of the “Colored” section. A few stops later a white man got on the bus and insisted that she move. She refused, knowing that she had done her best that day, and was not going to give up her bus seat to a man younger than she was.

She later said that if the man had been elderly she would have given up her seat, not because he was old and “white” but because it just common decency to let the elderly have a seat. Ms. Parks went to jail that day. The arrest and conviction of this brave woman sparked a movement that changed history. She was the boot that kicked open the door of segregation and it led to the Civil Rights Movement.

Her passing marked the first time an American woman was allowed to lay in state, though it took a Congressional Act to do so, and she was the second African American to lay in state. In my Native culture being called a warrior is one of the highest respects you can pay to someone. Ms. Parks stood up for not only for herself, but for all of her African American people. She had some of the qualities that I think are most important in a warrior, like strength and bravery.

Her life was not always easy, but lived her life like a warrior, always fighting for what she knew was right.