



FREEDOM  
FIGHTERS  
PORTRAITS



# JOAN TRUMPAUER MULHOLLAND

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A **civil rights figure** of South US



# EARLY TRIGGERS

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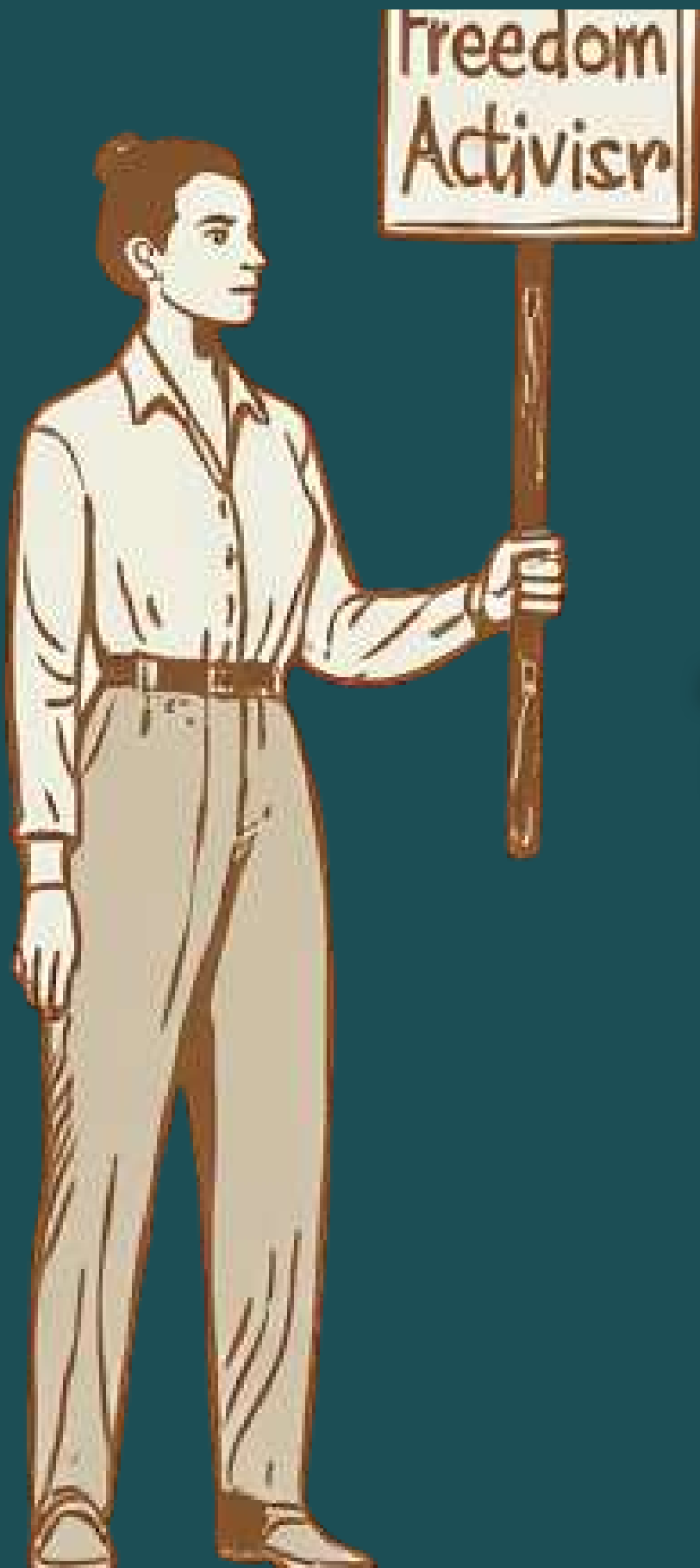


Joan Trumpauer Mulholland was born in 1941 and grew up in Arlington, Virginia, in a conservative environment, at a time when **Jim Crow laws imposed racial segregation in the United States.**

**Her activism began in a religious and academic setting:** in the late 1950s, the group she belonged to discreetly organised meals that Black students also attended, despite the risks associated with local laws and the climate of political violence.

# SIT-INS & FREEDOM RIDERS

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At Duke University, she quickly **became involved in non-violent actions against segregation**, participating in protests targeting businesses that still enforced separate seating.

In 1961, she joined the **Freedom Riders**, activists who travelled across the South by bus to challenge segregation on interstate transport and at railway stations. That same year, she took part in sit-ins in Mississippi (including at Woolworth's in Jackson). The crackdown was immediate: she was **arrested along with other activists and imprisoned for nearly two months.**

# AT THE HEART OF THE MOVEMENT

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When she enrolled at Tougaloo College (Mississippi) in 1962, Joan became the first white student at this historically Black institution. This choice placed her at the heart of the movement and **brought her into a network of activists and leaders, including Martin Luther King and Medgar Evers.**

In 1963, she helped organise the **March on Washington**. By this time, she had already participated in more than 50 sit-ins and demonstrations. But this trajectory exposed her to direct danger: family breakdown, assaults and death threats; **she was targeted in particular by the Ku Klux Klan.**



# A LIFE OF COMMITMENT

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Back in Virginia, Joan **continued to speak to young people and local organisations**. Her career was distinguished by its consistency and the level of risk she had accepted: a white woman engaged in direct action, long identified as a target by supremacists.

In 2015, she received official recognition, including **the Freedom Award from the National Civil Rights Museum**, and **remains today a leading voice** on the methods and experience of the civil rights movement.

*“Don’t wait for change, **be the change.**”*

***Joan Trumpauer Mulholland***

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