

Ella Baker

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“Strong people don’t need strong leaders.” That is one of Ella Baker’s famous quotes she said during a speech around 1950 to 1960. Ella Baker worked with many famous organizations such as Young Negroes Cooperative League and many more. She also mentored other civil rights leaders such as Diane Nash, Stokley Carmichael, and Bob Moses. Additionally she worked with many known civil rights leaders like Dr. Martin Luther King Jr and women in the black community hoping to stop racism. People believe she is mainly known for these reasons.

Ella Baker was born in Virginia, on December 13, 1903 but she grew up in North Carolina for the rest of her childhood. Ella Baker was deeply influenced by her grandmother’s stories about being a slave and how badly colored people were treated just because of the color of their skin and heritage. Some of the horrible conditions that her grandmother had to go through as slaves were that they had to work all day just to get little to no money in very bad living conditions. These stories helped her understand what social injustice meant and why people wanted to fight against other individuals who would judge others just because of their skin. Even after knowing what Ella’s grandmother had to go through just because she was black her family were still very proud of their skin color and their heritage. Ella had 3 siblings and both her parents were around during her childhood. Sadly Ella’s dad wasn’t at home too much due to work. Ella’s childhood wasn’t hard but she was very determined to make the world a better place for the black community.

Ella Baker went to Shaw University and faced many unfair school policies, such as her not being able to walk to campus with boys and not being allowed to wear silk stockings. Thankfully not soon after these challenging rules Ella Baker graduated as valedictorian in 1927. After Shaw Ella moved to New York and joined the Young Negroes Cooperative League hoping to provide goods and services. Ella became a secretary for the National Arrangement of Colored People and soon after upgraded to the director. Years later she helped form SCLC and worked as its executive director. In 1960 Ella left SCLC to help students organize SNCC acting as its mentor and advisor.

Unfortunately, Ella Baker passed away on December 13 1986, in New York on her 83rd birthday due to complications with Alzheimer's. Ella's funeral service was held at the Abyssinian Baptist Church in New York City. This happened on Friday December 19 1986. She was buried in Oakland, California with many mourning her death. Sadly not too many people at this time knew who she was and what she did because she chose to work behind the scenes and let others into the spotlight.

Ella Baker inspired me because she worked very hard for black women and their communities so they can have all their needs and the same services and supplies like everybody else. Some important things she did were making male dominant companies be more gender inclusive, she worked with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr to try and stop racism, and she participated in the Prayer Pilgrim for Freedom. She is also empowering to others because she is helpful and kind to many black women and their communities. The most important thing I will remember about Ella Baker is that her grandmother's stories inspired her so much to help black

communities so much that she actually did make that happen. I will help Ella's legacy to carry on by telling many people about her.

To conclude Ella Baker was an empowering woman. She was very important to American history and she helped shape the world to what it is today. She worked with many people and organizations to stop a big problem in the world. Even though she was important not too many knew how she was due to her not wanting to take away from others moments. I hope that as time goes by that more people see and know all the amazing work she did for different people who were treated unfairly.