



Pauli Murray was raised on Cameron (now Carroll) Street next to Maplewood Cemetery in Durham, N.C., by her grandparents, Robert and Cornelia Smith Fitzgerald, and aunt Pauline F. Dame. Her grandfather and his brother came to North Carolina from Pennsylvania after the Civil War. Grandfather Robert was a teacher and brick manufacturer in Durham. Her uncle, Richard Fitzgerald, was a very successful brick manufacturer and businessman; he was one of the founding investors in Mutual Savings and Loan.

Her grandmother, born and raised on a plantation in Orange County, also was a teacher, as were her aunts. Education was the mainstay of the family. Her grandmother, born and raised on a plantation in Orange County, also was a teacher, as were her aunts. Education was the mainstay of the family. She tagged along with her aunt who taught at the West End school, and learned to read before she was five. Pauli Murray graduated at the top of her class from Hillside High School, and with honors from Hunter College in New York, but was denied admission to law school at the University of North Carolina in 1938 because of her race, and later, to Harvard University because of her gender. She spent a lifetime working to dismantle barriers of race and gender. In 1940, Pauli Murray was arrested in Virginia for refusing to give up her seat on a bus. From sit-ins to integrate Washington, D.C., lunch counters in the 1940s, through her efforts as a founder of the National Organization for Women (NOW) in the early 1970s, Murray took challenges head-on, while generally avoiding the limelight.

After receiving her law degree at Howard University, she later earned a master's degree in law from the University of California at Berkeley, and was a tutor in law at Yale. She received her doctorate in 1965 -- the first African-American to be awarded this degree. Pauli Murray had a distinguished career as a civil rights lawyer, a professor, a college vice president, and deputy attorney general of California.

After being accused by McCarthyites of Communist leanings, she interrupted her law practice to spend four years researching and writing *Proud Shoes: The Story of an American Family*, about her Durham childhood and her family's history, which was published in 1956. In addition to *Proud Shoes*, Murray compiled a massive reference work on state race laws and published a prize-winning volume of poetry, *Dark Testament and Other Poems* (1970). Her autobiographical *Song in a Weary Throat: An American Pilgrimage* (1987) was published two years after her death.

At age 62, Pauli Murray entered seminary and in 1977, she became the first black woman in the U.S. to become an Episcopalian priest. In performing her first Holy Eucharist at the Chapel of the Cross in Chapel Hill, where her grandmother, a slave, had been baptized, Murray finally believed that "All the strands of my life had come together."