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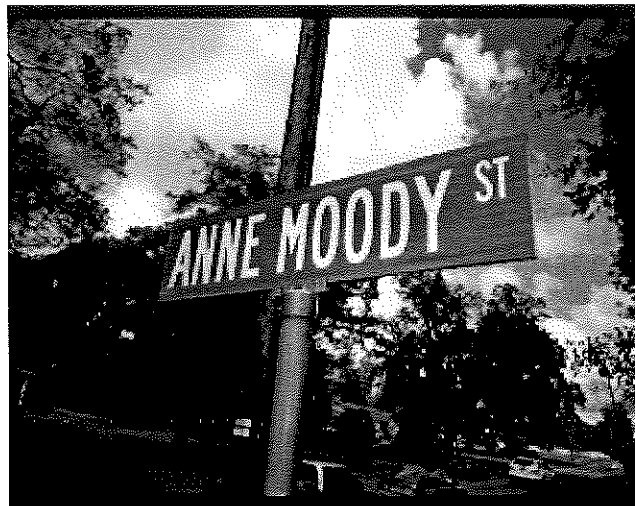
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Q&A on Anne Moody and the Anne Moody History Project

By Roscoe Barnes III, PhD
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#AnneMoody
#ComingOfAgeinMississippi



Note: *This post originated as an interview I had in October with a writer for an online publication. She submitted the questions to me via email and I promptly answered each of them. And that's when things became strange. The writer, to my surprise, seemingly disappeared. I sent her a number of emails but did not get a reply. I tried to call and also left messages with her publication. Still, there was no reply. After giving the matter some thought, I decided to withdraw the material and share it here on my blog. I hope you find it interesting, insightful, and useful. Feel free to ask me any question.*

Could you explain what the Anne Moody History Project is?

The Anne Moody History Project (AMHP) was established in March 2017 by four staff members (all volunteers) of MTC/Wilkinson County Correctional Facility (WCCF) as a community service endeavor in public history for Wilkinson and Amite Counties. Its aim is to honor Anne Moody by

promoting and helping to preserve her legacy as a noted author, civil rights pioneer, and historical figure in Mississippi. I serve as chairman of the group, which now has five members. Our motto is: "Keeping Her Legacy Alive."

How did you begin it?

It all started when I walked in on a conversation between my colleagues, Emma Taplin and Lavern Taylor. They were talking about Anne Moody's contributions to the civil rights movement and her sacrifices in the fight for freedom and justice for all people. They also noted, with serious concern – and apparent sadness – that she had not received the recognition she deserved.

Then, almost in unison, they said, "We need to do something. We need to do our part in honoring her legacy. We need to tell people about her story."

We later spoke to our colleague, Ruby Dixon, and she agreed that we must act. After some brainstorming, we created the Anne Moody History Project (AMHP) as a community service endeavor to promote and help preserve the legacy of this civil rights pioneer. We agreed that our mission would be to keep her legacy alive. Later, Michelle Higginbotham joined the team.

What do you hope to accomplish with it?

The AMHP's mission is to honor Moody's memory and keep her legacy alive through programs and activities that educate the public about her achievements as a civil rights activist, her work as an author, and her life history as a native of Mississippi. The AMHP seeks to be a source of learning for students, churches (and other religious institutions), and the general public on the significance of Moody's historic contributions. In this capacity, it is believed, the AMHP can help to foster a better understanding of race relations and diversity in the south and other parts of the United States.

In an effort to promote Moody's history – and reach a wider audience -- I established accounts and began sharing her history on a number of social media platforms, which include Twitter, Tumblr, LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram, ChronicleVita. My writings on her history are also shared on ResearchGate, Figshare.com and Academia.edu.

I created the blog, **Roscoe Reporting** (<https://roscoereporting.blogspot.com>), where I blog about her on a regular basis. Her page on my blog is located here: <https://roscoereporting.blogspot.com/p/anne-moody.html> I'm proud to say that at this writing, I have more original content on Anne Moody online than any other source in existence.

I should also mention that we use the following hashtags in our online postings: #AnneMoody #ComingOfAgeInMississippi

Why is Anne Moody relatively obscure and her perspective of the Civil Rights Movement is not very well known?

To be clear, Moody is cited in the literature, and quite a few papers have been written about her. However, despite the amount of academic citations she has received, she is often omitted (or forgotten) during Black History Month. To be honest, there are certain names that we see over and over each year during Black History Month. Many lesser known heroes are simply not mentioned.

Why Moody is relatively obscure is a mystery to me. I'm also surprised given the fact that her book, *Coming of Age in Mississippi* (Dial, 1968), has remained in print since it was first published on Dec. 3, 1968. Even so, I can speculate about the reason for the apparent obscurity.

1. Following the publication and success of her book, she left the United States and moved to Europe. The book had made her an overnight sensation. Unfortunately, she found it hard to cope with her celebrity status. Feeling overwhelmed by it all, she moved to another country and stayed there for about 10 years. She was out of sight, and therefore out of mind, so to speak.

2. She stayed away from her home state of Mississippi for many years because of the threats and trauma of the civil rights movement. As Jackie Robinson wrote in his famous column, "**She Can't Go Home Again**" (<https://roscoereporting.blogspot.com/2019/08/what-jackie-robinson-had-to-say-about.html>).

During her absence, other civil rights pioneers were celebrated, but she was not. Movies were made and books were written about Medgar Evers, Fannie Lou Hamer, as well as James Chaney, Andrew Goodman and Michael Schwerner. Not a single book was written and promoted about Moody.

3. With the exception of her book, *Mr. Death: Four Stories* (Harper & Row, 1975), she did not publish any other books. She had many manuscripts for books that were never published. I can only wonder how her reputation might have grown if she had published and promoted her work throughout her lifetime.

4. While she occasionally spoke at universities, she apparently did not hit the speaking circuit and travel throughout the United States as a popular speaker.

5. One significant thing that occurred is the fact that she experienced mental health issues later in life and had to be hospitalized. She became somewhat of a recluse.

6. For some reason, no one took an interest in her story. No one at the time bothered to write a biography. No one made a movie or created lecture series. No one in her hometown even bothered to recognize her in any way. Whenever I mention her name to graduates of HBCUs, they say, "Who is she?" They say they never heard of her. Surprisingly, I got the same response in her hometown. This could also indicate that her book is no longer being read in high schools or colleges in many places.

I would like to think that things are changing. Thanks to the Anne Moody History Project, its supporters, and the power of the press, the internet/social media, more and more people are now talking about Moody. Some are rediscovering her, and many are reading her for the first time. None of this is by accident or chance. What is now happening is actually the aim of AMHP. The recognition she is now receiving is the result of a vibrant and focused campaign designed to keep her legacy alive. In other words, we don't want her to be forgotten.

For a look at our promotion strategy, see my article, "Promoting Anne Moody: A 21-Point Plan for Sharing Her Story, Honoring Her Memory, and Keeping Her Legacy Alive." See it here or by following this link: <https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.5134810.v1>

For more information:

See the **Anne Moody page** here. Questions about the Anne Moody History Project may be directed to Roscoe Barnes III, Ph.D. via email at doctorbarnes3@gmail.com or roscoe.barnes3@yahoo.com. For updates on Anne Moody history and the on-going work of this community service project, simply follow this blog or follow AMHP on Twitter (@AnneMoodyHP). #ComingOfAgeinMississippi