

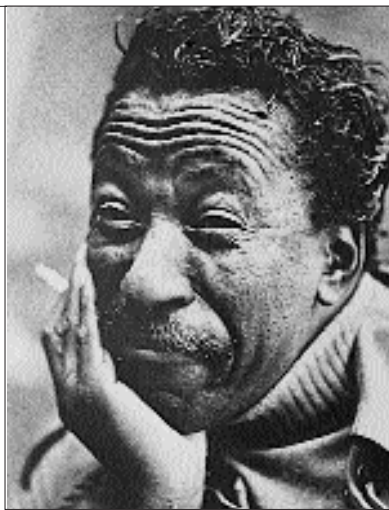
*For many reasons,
he's a man
for all seasons*

This photographer, writer, composer, and poet showed his determination for living from the moment he came into the world in Fort Scott, Kansas, on November 30, 1912. As a newborn he showed no signs of life until the doctor immersed him in cold water. Having already faced death and won, Gordon Parks was ready to show everybody what else he could do.

As a boy, Gordon found that racism shaped his life far more than did the poverty in which he was raised. Fortunately this intelligent, sensitive, and creative youngster heeded his brother's advice to "fight with his brain" rather than with his fists.

In 1928 Gordon's mother died, and before long Gordon was living on the street, working days in a diner and sleeping nights on a trolley. He kept pushing forward because of his desire for an education and his burning need to express himself by painting, sculpting, composing poems, and writing music. His talents and energy seemed to have no bounds.

Before long Gordon discovered a new love: photography. His dedication to mastering the camera soon earned him a grant from the Julius Rosenwald Fund to study photography. He chose to study at the Farm Security Administration, where he learned that his powerful



photography could be rendered even stronger with accompanying essays.

Throughout his career he battled racial prejudice, but he secured work as a professional photographer and writer, which earned him international acclaim. In 1968 Warner Brothers-Seven Arts opted to film his *The Learning Tree*, and invited him to take part. As the producer of this project, Gordon earned the distinction of being the first black director of a major motion picture, the first black screenwriter, and the first black composer for a major film. He went on to direct several more movies.

Mr. Parks has received countless awards and honors for his creative work. Today he resides in Paris, where he continues his writing and photography. His is a flame that will not be extinguished.

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How did Gordon Parks' song "No Love" actually bring him love? At the Kansas State Historical Society you can discover this and more about this prolific artist; our Library and Archives staff will be happy to help you. Call them at 913-272-8681.