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A Mission from God: A Memoir and Challenge for America

James Meredith

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“I am not a civil rights hero. I am a warrior, and I am on a mission from God.” —James Meredith

James Meredith engineered two of the most epic events of the American civil rights era: the desegregation of the University of Mississippi in 1962, which helped open the doors of education to all Americans; and the March Against Fear in 1966, which helped open the floodgates of voter registration in the South.

Part memoir, part manifesto, *A Mission from God* is James Meredith’s look back at his courageous and action-packed life and his challenge to America to address the most critical issue of our day: how to educate and uplift the millions of black and white Americans who remain locked in the chains of poverty by improving our public education system.

Born on a small farm in Mississippi, Meredith returned home in 1960 after nine years in the U.S. Air Force, with a master plan to shatter the system of state terror and white supremacy in America. He waged a fourteen-month legal campaign to force the state of Mississippi to honor his rights as an American citizen and admit him to the University of Mississippi. He fought the case all the way to the Supreme Court and won. Meredith endured months of death threats, daily verbal abuse, and round-the-clock protection from federal marshals and thousands of troops to became the first black graduate of the University of Mississippi in 1963.

In 1966 he was shot by a sniper on the second day of his “Walk Against Fear” to inspire voter registration in Mississippi. Though Meredith never allied with traditional civil rights groups, leaders of civil rights organizations flocked to help him complete the march, one of the last great marches of the civil rights era. Decades later, Meredith says, “Now it is time for our next great mission from God. . . . You and I have a divine responsibility to transform America.”

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