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## Amelia Boynton Robinson, civil rights matriarch, dies at 104





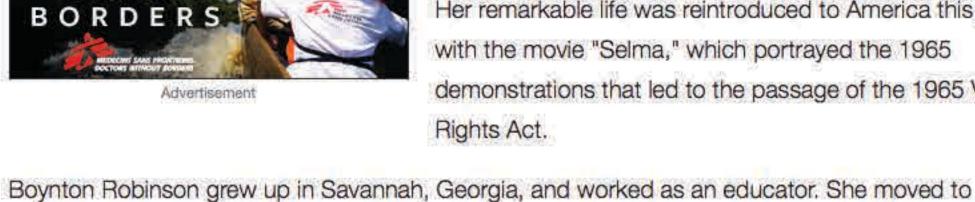
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## Longtime civil rights activist Amelia Boynton Robinson played a pivotal role in Selma,

later

Alabama A photo of her lying beaten unconscious by white troopers shocked the nation

President Barack Obama held her hand as they crossed the Edmund Pettus Bridge 50 years



rights movement immortalized in a photograph taken on

Rights Act.

Bloody Sunday, has died. She turned 104 on August 18, though some in her closest circles insist she was 110.

(CNN) - Amelia Boynton Robinson, a matriarch of the civil

Boynton Robinson suffered a stroke last month and had been hospitalized in Montgomery, Alabama. She died early Wednesday, relatives said.

Her remarkable life was reintroduced to America this year with the movie "Selma," which portrayed the 1965 demonstrations that led to the passage of the 1965 Voting

Alabama in the 1930s with her husband, Samuel Boynton. The couple began fighting for voting rights in the poorest parts of the state entrenched in the thick of Jim Crow.



as headquarters and opened up their home for planning sessions and as shelter for fellow civil rights

efforts in Selma. They let the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee use their insurance office

By the time the civil rights movement gained steam in the 1960s, the Boyntons were leading the

activists. She played a pivotal role in persuading the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. to focus on Selma. Boynton Robinson was among the 600 or so people who attempted to cross the Edmund Pettus Bridge in March 1965 in a protest march from Selma to Montgomery, the state capital. She'd felt anxious that day but felt strengthened by women who had sacrificed so much already, she told me

A wall of white state troopers met the marchers at the bottom of the bridge and unleashed their fury. They fired tear gas and clubbed people in what became known as Bloody Sunday. Boynton Robinson was beaten unconscious. She described the moment many years later in her

"As I stepped aside from the trooper's club, I felt a blow on my arm that could have injured me permanently had it



when I met her last December.

book, "Crossing Jordan."

Alabama. nation. That is how most Americans came to know of her. I had the good fortune to meet her last December when I was invited to watch "Selma" with her at

me she was holding on to see that day.

lay unconscious. Others told me that my attacker had called to another that he had the "damn leader." One of them shot tear gas all over me. The plastic rain cap that Margaret Moore gave me may have saved my life; it had slipped down over my face and protected my nose somewhat from the worst of the fumes." A newspaper photo of her lying on the ground, a middle-aged housewife left for dead, shocked the entire

been on my head. Another blow by a trooper as I was

gasping for breath knocked me to the ground and there I

her home. That was just three months before the 50th anniversary of Bloody Sunday and she told

of the Union speech as a special guest of Terri Sewell, the

A few weeks later Boynton Robinson attended the State

first black woman to represent Alabama in Congress. Sewell said she felt indebted to Boynton Robinson, who had cleared the path for her.

Those who know her say she was a gift in their lives; that she inspired younger generations to carry on the fight.

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In March, President Barack Obama, the nation's first black president, walked over the Edmund Pettus with Boynton Robinson. She was frail and in a wheelchair. The president held her hand as they crossed the Alabama River, a photo of which currently makes up his Twitter page.

What many didn't know is that by then, she had already run as a Democratic congressional

Southern polls. She was courage personified, said Yomi Goodall, a friend and relative. She was inspiration and

died harboring no animosity for anyone, not even those who might have hated her for the color of her skin.

Funeral arrangements have not been announced but the family is planning a ceremony at the

She lived the last decades of her life in Tuskegee, guided, she told me, by her Christian faith. She

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Edmund Pettus Bridge.

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candidate in Alabama, making her the first African-American and the first woman ever to do so. Amazingly, she won 11% of the vote long before federal protection was afforded for black people at

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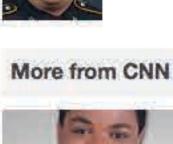


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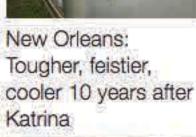
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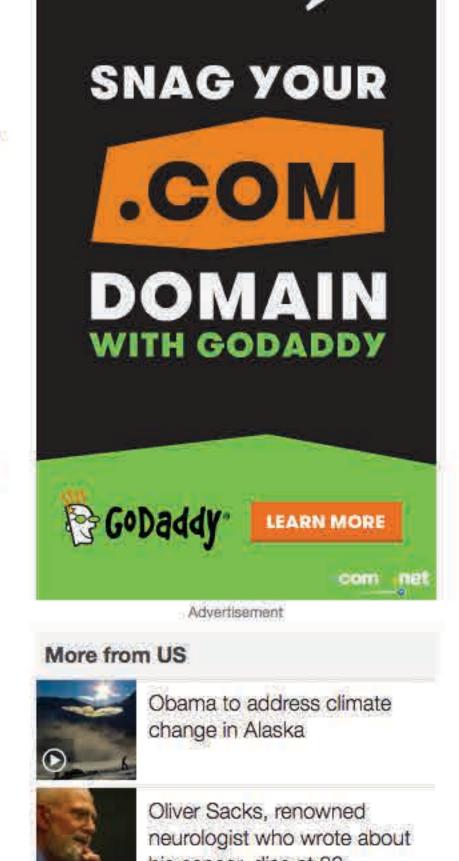
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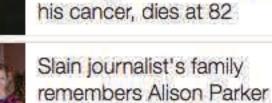


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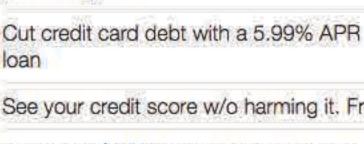
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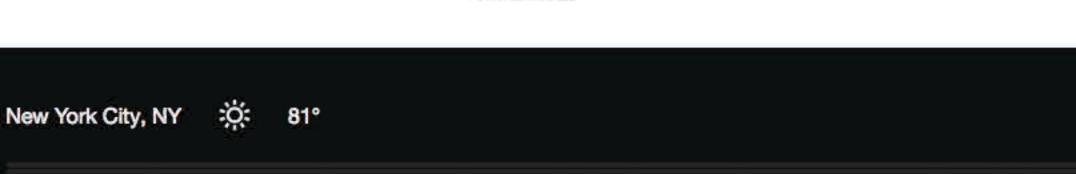
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