

Gloria Richardson Bar Association

Gloria St. Clair Hayes Richardson (born May 6, 1922) is best known as the leader of the **Cambridge Movement**, a [civil rights](#) struggle in [Cambridge, Maryland](#) in the 1960s.

She was saluted as one of the six "Negro Women Fighters for Freedom" featured on the stage of the [March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom](#) in August 1963. Like most of the other women that day, she was not permitted to speak.^[1] By the summer of 1964, Richardson resigned from the Cambridge Nonviolent Action Committee, partly due to weapon wielding police and National Guardsmen.^[2]

See also

- [American Civil Rights Movement \(1955-1968\)](#)

References

- Levy, Peter. *Civil War on Race Street: the Civil Rights Movement in Cambridge, Maryland* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2003)
 - Foreman, Anita K. ([1]), *Gloria Richardson: Breaking the Mold*, *Journal of Black Studies*, Vol. 26, #5. May 1996, pp. 604–615.
 - Harley, Sharon. *Chronicle of a Death Foretold: Gloria Richardson, the Cambridge Movement, and the Radical Black Activist Tradition*, Bettye Collier-Thomas and V. P. Franklin, editors.
 - *Sisters in the Struggle: African American Women in the Civil Rights-Black Power Movement* [New York University Press](#), 2001, pp. 174–196.
 - Trever, Edward K. *Gloria Richardson and the Cambridge Civil Rights Movement, 1962-1964*. Thesis: M.A., Morgan State University, 1994.
 - Fitzgerald, Joseph R. *Days of Wine and Roses: The Life of Gloria Richardson* (an as yet unpublished doctoral dissertation for [Temple University](#)), 2005.
1. [Jump up ^ "Civil Rights Pioneer Gloria Richardson, 91, on How Women Were Silenced at the March on Washington" *Democracy Now!*, August 27, 2013](#)
 2. [Jump up ^ http://www.theatlantic.com/infocus/2013/02/50-years-ago-the-world-in-1963/100460/#img33](#)

External links

- [Official website](#)
- [Cambridge MD, Movement 1962-1967, Civil Rights Movement Veterans](#)

Gloria Richardson (born 1922) was a civil rights activist and leader of the Cambridge Movement in Cambridge, Maryland, in the 1960s. Richardson received a B.A. in sociology from Howard University in 1942. The Cambridge Movement began as a civil rights effort, with activists from outside the region and black Cambridge residents sitting in at segregated movie

theaters, bowling alleys and restaurants. The movement evolved into a battle for the economic rights of Cambridge citizens, many of whom were faced with low wages and unemployment. She helped organize the Cambridge Nonviolent Action Committee, the only non-student-led affiliate of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. The Cambridge Movement's focus on social justice and its use of armed self-defense tactics have been cited as signaling the beginning of the Black Power phase of the civil rights movement. Richardson has worked for the National Council for Negro Women, Harlem Youth Opportunities Unlimited and Associated Community Teams, and the New York City Department for the Aging.

Image: Original caption: 10/2/63-Cambridge, MD-Mrs. Gloria Richardson, chairman of the Cambridge Action Committee, is shown during her press conference today. Mrs. Richardson said that Negroes will shift their integration drive to schools and industry, to give Cambridge officials a chance to come up with an alternative to the defeated Public Accommodations Law. Copyright: Bettmann/Corbis.



Gloria Hayes Richardson was born on May 6, 1922 in Baltimore, Maryland to parents John and Mabel Hayes. During the Great Depression her parents moved the family to Cambridge, Maryland, the home of Mabel Hayes. Young Gloria grew up in a privileged environment. Her grandfather, Herbert M. St. Clair, was one of the town's wealthiest citizens. He owned numerous properties in the city's Second Ward which included a funeral parlor, grocery store and butcher shop. He was also the sole African

American member of the Cambridge City Council through most of the early 20th Century.

Gloria attended Howard University in Washington at the age of 16 and graduated in 1942 with a degree in sociology. After Howard, she worked as a civil servant for the federal government in World War II-era Washington, D.C. but returned to Cambridge after the war. Despite her grandfather's political and economic influence, the Maryland Department of Social Services, for example, refused to hire Gloria or any other black social workers. Gloria Hayes married local school teacher Harry Richardson in 1948 and raised a family for the next thirteen years.

When the civil rights movement came to Cambridge in 1961 in the form of Freedom Riders, the town was thoroughly segregated and the African American unemployment rate was 40%. Gloria Richardson's teenage daughter, Donna, became involved with the Student Non Violent Coordinating Committee's (SNCC) effort to desegregate public accommodations. Gloria, however, refused to commit herself to non-violence as a protest tactic.

When the SNCC-led protests faltered in 1962, Gloria and other parents created the Cambridge Nonviolent Action Committee (CNAC) which became the only adult-led SNCC affiliate in the civil rights organization's history. CNAC enlarged the scope of grievances to include housing and employment discrimination and inadequate health care. Richardson was selected to lead CNAC.

This Richardson-led effort differed from most other civil rights campaigns of the era. It took place in a border state rather than the Deep South. It addressed a much wider array of issues rather than the one or two that motivated other campaigns. Since Richardson and her followers refused to commit to non-violence as a philosophy or a tactic, CNAC protests were far more violent and confrontative. Protests in 1963, for example, prompted Maryland Governor J. Millard Tawes to send in the Maryland National Guard. The Guard remained in the city, which was effectively under martial law, for nearly a year. The Cambridge Movement also drew the attention of U.S. Attorney General Bobby Kennedy who unsuccessfully attempted to broker an agreement between Cambridge's white political leaders and Richardson's CNAC.

By the summer of 1964 Richardson resigned from the Cambridge Nonviolent Action Committee citing her exhaustion from leading nearly two years of continuous demonstrations. Richardson, who had divorced Harry Richardson in the late 1950s, married freelance photographer Frank Dandridge. The

couple moved to New York City with Richardson's younger daughter Tamara.

Although she maintained ties with Cambridge and with the local movement, Gloria Richardson never lived in Cambridge again.

Sources:

Peter Levy, *Civil War on Race Street: The Civil Rights Movement in Cambridge, Maryland* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2003); Jeff Kesseloff, *Generation on Fire: Voices of Protest from the 1960s: An Oral History* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 2007); <http://www.abbeville.com/civilrights/washington.asp>.



*Gloria Richardson and Protestors facing
National Guard Troops
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