



James H. Meredith, Civil Rights Pioneer

James H. Meredith joined the US Air Force in 1951, attending basic training at Sampson AFB, N.Y. From then until his discharge in 1960, he waged a campaign against racial discrimination wherever he encountered it in the armed services. After his stint in the Air Force, Meredith returned to Mississippi to apply for admission to the University of Mississippi, an act that led to his being the first African-American to attend the institution. After two years of legal wrangling, he integrated the "Ole Miss" student body in 1962, graduating a year later. Meredith pursued civil rights causes, and in 1966, he was shot while conducting a voting rights march from Memphis, Tenn., to Jackson, Miss. After getting a law degree from Columbia University in 1968, he worked on Wall Street for several years, then ran several businesses. He has also authored numerous books.