

History Snapshots

W.W. LAW (1923-2002)

Lesson Topic

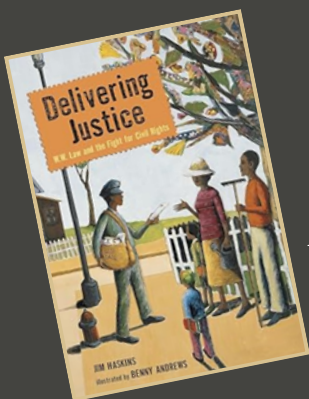
**Civil Rights
Movement in
Savannah, Georgia.**

Georgia Standards

**SS8H11 Evaluate
the role of Georgia
in the modern civil
rights movement.**

Lesson Picture Book

**Delivering Justice:
W.W. Law and the
Fight for Civil Rights
by Jim Haskins**



*Lesson derived from the
GHS online course,
"Unveiling the Past:
Integrating Picture Books,
Community Voices, and
Archives in Teaching
Challenging Histories."*



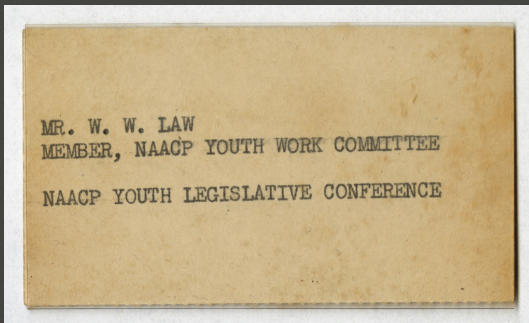
W.W. Law, Civil Rights Leader of Savannah, GA

Westley Wallace Law was born in Savannah. As the president of the Savannah Chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) from 1950 to 1976, Law led a courageous and unremitting campaign to desegregate the city. Law served in World War II before graduating from what is now Savannah State University. Inspired by Pastor Ralph Mark Gilbert, Law led the legal battle to desegregate public schools, held weekly mass meetings at Savannah churches, wade-ins at segregated Tybee Beach, and sit-ins at lunch counters and restaurants. The protests culminated in an 18-month boycott of Broughton Street merchants that forced White leaders to desegregate on October 1, 1963, eight months ahead of federal civil rights legislation requiring such action. This success prompted Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to declare that Savannah was "the most desegregated city south of the Mason-Dixon Line."

Materials

- [Downtown Savannah Historic District Map](#)
- [Delivering Justice: W.W. Law and the Fight for Civil Rights by Jim Haskins Book](#)
- [Georgia Historical Society W.W. Law Primary Sources](#)
- [Photo of W.W. Law Tombstone](#)
- [Savannah Beach Wade-In Historical Marker](#)
- [Primary Source Credibility Form](#)

GHS Primary Sources



Lesson Introduction

Show the [headstone of W. W. Law from the Laurel Grove South Cemetery](#). Have students think about and discuss what kind of person he might have been from the words on his headstone. *“I was the result of a composite contribution. I tried not to have a big ending, but rather, to live my life doing the best that I could each day, because a good name is rather to be chosen than great riches. A man is poor, not because he doesn’t have money, but because he doesn’t have enough vision in his head and heart.”*

Direct Introduction

Read [Delivering Justice: W. W. Law and the Fight for Civil Rights](#) aloud to the class or have the students watch the read-aloud on the Promethean board. The teacher will place the story in the context of Savannah, GA during the Civil Rights Movement time frame.

Teacher will review the student strategies for investigating challenging histories with the class:

- Seek Multiple Sources.
- Evaluate Credibility
- Engage Critically

Guided Practice

Create small groups of 4-5 students, depending on class size. Provide each group with a copy of the book, [Delivering Justice: W. W. Law and the Fight for Civil Rights](#), and an envelope of the [W.W. Law Primary Sources set](#).

Have students look at the Downtown Savannah Historic District map. As students read through the book, have them mark the location of sites relevant to W.W. Law’s life and decide which primary source(s) connects to which location(s). If a location cannot be found on the map, have students create a callout box along the bottom of the map to note the information.

Upon completion, groups will complete the credibility form, evaluating the author’s and/or institution’s credibility of the primary and secondary sources.

Independent Practice

Teacher will lead student into a whole group moderated discussion over the small group activity and journal prompt questions:

- Teacher will have a spokesperson for each group share their observations, reflections, and questions.
- Teacher will allow individual students to pull from their journal thoughts to discuss the complexities of the Civil Rights Movement, explicitly in Savannah, GA.