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Democracy Dies in Darkness

OBITUARIES

Alabama Senator Charles Langford; Rosa Parks's Lawyer

By From News Services and Staff Reports

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Charles Langford, 84, a former Alabama state senator who was a lawyer for Rosa Parks and the organization that launched the historic Montgomery bus boycott, died Feb. 11 at his home in Montgomery. No cause of death was reported.

Mr. Langford's niece, Audrey Anderson, said he died in his sleep. She said he had recently seen a doctor for a bad cold but had worked in his law office last week.

Mr. Langford, a native of Montgomery, received a bachelor's degree from Tennessee State University and a law degree from Catholic University. He passed the Alabama State Bar in 1953 and opened a law practice in his home town. He soon became involved in legal battles that shaped Alabama, including representing Parks after she was arrested in 1955 for refusing to give up her seat on a Montgomery bus to a white man.

Her arrest inspired the Montgomery Improvement Association, then led by the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., to launch the boycott and pursue litigation that led to the U.S. Supreme Court ending desegregation on public transportation.

In 1964, Mr. Langford represented Arlam Carr Jr. in a lawsuit that desegregated Montgomery's public schools, and he represented black legislators in a lawsuit that ended the flying of the Confederate battle flag on the state capitol dome in 1993.

Along with his legal work in the civil rights movement, Langford had a long career in the Alabama legislature, representing Montgomery's 26th Senate District. He was elected twice to the Alabama House of Representatives before going to the Senate in 1982. He served five terms in the Senate before retiring in 2002.

Survivors include a sister.

