



# Anne Moody

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*We were like an angry dog on a leash that had turned on its master. It could bark and howl and snap, and sometimes even bite, but the master was always in control.*

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## Quick Facts

- \* Born in 1940
- \* African-American Civil Rights activist and writer
- \* Her autobiography, *Coming of Age in Mississippi*, was published in 1968

## Biography

Anne Moody was born on September 15, 1940 in Wilkinson County, Mississippi. She is the daughter of Fred and Elmire Moody, and the oldest of nine children. Moody felt the pains of racism at an early age. She had to clean houses as a child to help her family to afford food and clothing. She attended segregated schools, where she received good grades.

After graduating from high school, Moody received a basketball scholarship to Natchez Junior College, which she attended in 1961. At Natchez, she became involved in the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), SNCC (Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee) and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). She went on to continue her education at Tougaloo College, where she received a Bachelor of Science degree upon graduation in 1964.

After the lynching of Emmitt Till, Moody’s civil rights activities intensified. In 1964, she served as a civil rights coordinator at Cornell University. She was involved in the famous Woolworth lunchroom sit-in and participated in the March on Washington, where Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. gave his famous “I Have a Dream” speech. Through her civil involvement, Moody developed a close professional relationship with Reverend King.

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## Biography continued

Moody married Austin Stratus and they had a child named Sascha; she was divorced in 1967. Although she was thoroughly involved in the civil rights movement, she broke away because she had doubts about the direction of black liberation. Moody later said, "I realized that the universal fight for human rights, dignity, justice, equality and freedom is not and should not be just the fight of the American Negro or the Indians or the Chicanos. It's the fight of every ethnic and racial minority, every suppressed and exploited person, everyone of the millions who daily suffer one or another of the indignities of the powerless and voiceless masses."

Moody describes herself as a reluctant writer. She says, "In the beginning I never really saw myself as a writer. I was first and foremost an activist in the civil rights movement in Mississippi. When I could no longer see that anything was being accomplished by our work there, I left and went North." Moody has two major published works, *Coming of Age of Mississippi* (1968), and *Mr. Death: Four Stories* (1975), as well as a number of uncollected short stories. In 1969, *Coming of Age of Mississippi* received the Brotherhood Award from the National Council of Christians and Jews and the Best Book of the Year Award from the National Library Association. Her short story, "New Hopes for the Seventies" received the silver medal from *Mademoiselle* magazine.

Moody is most recognized for her autobiography, *Coming of Age in Mississippi*, which examines the issues of the awakening civil rights movement, the youth movement and the emergence of her feminist consciousness. This narrative depicts the lives of black people in rural Mississippi and the conflicts discrimination creates. It is a compelling story, reflecting the style of Moody's writing: angry, blunt, and incredibly powerful.

Moody resides in New York and grants no interviews nor does she appear publicly. Little is known about the details of her life after her two main works, but she is currently working on a book entitled *The Clay Gully*.



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## Selected Bibliography

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