



Dec 15, 2021

Celebrating the life and work of Bob Moses



Bob Moses 1935-2021

*Dear Bob Moses,
Before I went
to Mississippi
I had heard
You were there
But soon you left.
Your name was Moses
And the people became
Too used to following you.
You were wise enough
Not to want to be followed;
But to want the people
To create their own path
By walking it.
Leading ourselves
As you knew
Is the only way
For us
To finally get somewhere.
But oh. Bob Moses.
What teachings you were kind
Enough
And stubborn enough
To leave behind,
And so I learned to
Share
What I learned from you:
Forget martyrdom,
Leave the fray before
The people begin
To argue over you.
The world is filled
With many vineyards
In which to labor.
Look deeply in the valley
In which your talent and spirit
Have found rest
And energy.
Flow with that as your offering.
Oh our Moses
How you taught us
A freedom of being
Far beyond
The chaos and sadness
Of Mississippi.
You blessed us by being
Without category.
By being yourself.
The eternal mystery
That all true pioneers
Of spirit
Endlessly are.*

Rest in our gratitude.

Alice

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Returning to Normal in Education is Not Good Enough

Bob Moses, July 2021, published in The Imprint News on Aug 24, 2021

As a nation, we stand with bated breath — waiting for public schools to reopen and for “a return to normal” while ignoring that for many, normal is not only not good enough, it was also never really good.

Historical inequities and disparities in our public schools, as across all our public systems, operate along a constitutional fault line — an embedded caste system — that we need to find our way across. It is a fault line that is not only about race: class, identity and disabilities also block the path to equal educational opportunity for millions of students. Just like the right to vote in the 20th century, the lack of equal access to a quality education in the 21st century threatens to limit the future life choices for too many young people.

As a nation, the time has come to embrace quality education as the constitutional right that it should be, guaranteeing that all young young people have full access to the social, economic and political opportunities that a democracy promises its people. But nothing will change for these children and youth if we continue to rely on federal education policies that emphasize rigid testing and *(continued p 2)*

from Ben Moynihan, interim exec. director, Algebra Project Inc.

*On July 25, 2021, at age 86, Bob Moses laid his “earned insurgency” down and joined the ancestors. For so many of us, Bob’s life, spirit and work represents the best of what his friend in struggle Dr. Vincent Harding aptly framed as the centuries-long “River of Black movement...(which) is at its heart a profoundly human quest for transformation, a constantly evolving movement toward personal integrity and toward new social structures filled with justice, equity and compassion.” * We at the Algebra Project are grateful for the outpouring of condolences, gratitude, love, and support in honor of Bob since his passing. (continued p 5)*

New National Science Foundation Research Awards

The Algebra Project is a partner on two new awards: (1) with Aurora Graf (PI) of Educational Testing Service, on collaborative problem solving as a new approach to classroom assessment; and (2) for a team including Bill Crombie, Algebra Project, and Alan Shaw (PI), Brian Lawler and Deepa Muralidhar at Kennesaw State Univ., Clayton County, GA, to study computational thinking with an NSF Computer Science for All grant. *(continued on pages 4, 6)*

Celebrating the life and work of Bob Moses...

Returning to Normal in Education is Not Good Enough (continued from p 1)

...punitive accountability structures, while paying little attention to insuring that teachers are well supported, and that all students have access to high-quality structured opportunities to learn.

History keeps talking back to us, if only we would listen. Mandating improved achievement without providing the resources to accomplish it has failed to ensure equitable opportunities. This pattern of under-resourcing and underserving local schools in communities where there are children and families who most need public education to work, and work well, is not the return to the “normal” we need.

But rather than a piecemeal state-by-state approach, states need the federal government to take leadership and make up for past injustice. We need Congress to hear community voices and level the playing field for them by investing directly in those schools and districts most in need. Join me in asking President Biden, Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona, and your congressional leaders to stand with students being left behind, the teachers who work with them, and education advocates crying for justice for them to champion a federal civil rights bill for education, akin to the Civil Rights Act of 1957.

Like that historic bill, the 14th Amendment offers a constitutional platform for bold legislation to promote and protect education as a civil right, rectifying the structural inequities that have resulted in the existing disparities in our public schools, inequities that keep paying tragic dividends for children and their families on every front.

Since the civil rights movement, when I fought for the right to vote, it has been clear to me that limiting access to education is a subtext of efforts to suppress civil rights. In 1963, as field secretary with the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), I was registering sharecroppers in Mississippi to vote. A federal judge asked us why we were registering illiterates, the implication being that it did not make sense to register the uneducated, just as it did not make sense to teach those who were being enslaved to read a generation earlier. (continued)



*Algebra Project Director of Professional Development
Bill Crombie with teachers in Broward County, FL*

Robert Moses elected April 2021 to the American Academy of Arts & Sciences

Robert P. Moses (1935-2021)

AREA
Social and Behavioral Sciences

SPECIALTY

Education

ELECTED

2021

Bob Moses was born and raised in Harlem, NY, where he attended public schools. Moses directed the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee's Mississippi Voter Registration Project from 1961-1964; was co-Director of the Council of Federated Organizations 1962-1964, and was a lead organizer for the 1964 Mississippi "Freedom" Summer Project, parachuting Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party to 1964 National Democratic Convention in Atlantic City. A MacArthur Foundation Fellow 1982-1987, he used his fellowship to begin the Algebra Project, which uses mathematics as organizing tool for quality education for all children in America.

<https://www.amacad.org/person/robert-p-moses>

Memorial services held this Fall...

Aug 9: Florida International Univ. mourns the passing of Bob Moses, President Mark B. Rosenberg

<https://news.fiu.edu/2021/the-university-mourns-the-passing-of-bob-moses,-civil-rights-leader-and-fiu-colleague>

Sept 25: Bob Moses Celebration of Life, the Moses Family, the Young People's Project, MIT and Algebra Project, St. Mary's of the Annunciation Church, Cambridge, MA

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v0hhTkybKw>

Nov 11: Celebrating the Life of Robert P. "Bob" Moses, Tougaloo College, Veterans of the Mississippi Civil Rights Movement, One Voice, and the Institute for Democratic Education in America: <https://youtu.be/wmlagJB9Mcg>

Returning to Normal in Education is Not Good Enough (continued from p 2)

...A federal judge asked us why we were registering illiterates, the implication being that it did not make sense to register the uneducated, just as it did not make sense to teach those who were enslaved to read a generation earlier. In the '60s, voting was our organizing tool to demolish Jim Crow and achieve political impact. Since then, for me, it has been algebra. What's math got to do with it? — you ask. Everything, I say.

Amidst the planet-wide transformation we are undergoing, from industrial to information-age economies and culture, math performance has emerged as a critical measure of equal opportunity. We can see the collateral damage of inequities in math education in the way that students are tracked into dead-end math courses and how that tracking is then used to deny them other opportunities because they cannot demonstrate the required math competencies on standardized tests. Simply look at how the failure to complete math requirements is strongly correlated with not completing either high school or post-secondary education. Math also can be a collateral opportunity. By elevating math, alongside reading and writing, as an essential literacy, we can substitute raw old pre-COVID normal for a new one, where students get the space they need to operate as active problem solvers and claim their place inside information-age technologies and economies.

Math also can be a collateral opportunity. By elevating math, alongside reading and writing, as an essential literacy, we can substitute the old pre-COVID-19 normal for a new one, where students get the space they need to operate as active problem solvers and claim their place inside information-age technologies and economies.

But, like happiness, education must be pursued. Students and teachers currently encapsulated in the inequities and disparities of the current public education system, like the sharecroppers before them, must be deeply involved in crafting the opportunity structures that will be needed to deliver 21st century math literacy. The nation needs a federal civil rights rights bill for education, one that opens up the funding and policies needed to assure full access for all students who are currently being left out of the critical literacies that will be required to thrive in the 21st century.

Spanish translation by Melissa Adams-Corral and students at California State University - Stanislaus,
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1eusxUDVKh4ImTO-SX4jnm5-l7QbqEgbpSKbAlJFgBcw/edit?>

Retrospective Lens

I met Dr. Moses in 9th grade, where I was a part of the Algebra Project's first cohort at Lanier High School, Jackson, MS. Dr. Moses exposed us to the “real world” of mathematics. The approach that he took pushed us far beyond the walls of our classroom. As one of our very first experiences under Dr. Moses' pedagogy, we took a bus ride through our community. He asked us to take pictures of the places we visited, and we all looked at each other, wondering “What does this have to do with math?” After all, these were the streets and buildings that we saw day after day growing up. But step by step, we learned that there was mathematics and method evolving from everything we were experiencing. We learned to use our own language, what he called “Intuitive Language” or “People Talk” to describe the larger world of mathematics that exists in our own neighborhoods. Little by little we delved deeper into the regimented language of mathematicians — the algebraic equations, geometric patterns, calculus, and mysteries of the universal language of math. Dr. Moses took us on a journey, and through exploration, we evolved as mathematicians and scholars. This ignited a desire to further my studies in STEM.

**Whitney Brakefield, doctoral candidate in Data Science and Engineering
at the University of Tennessee**

New NSF Research Award: New Approaches to Classroom Assessment—Collaborative Problem Solving

The collaboration of the Algebra Project and Young Peoples' Project (YPP) with Educational Testing Service (ETS) is continuing with a new NSF award to study and develop assessments of collaborative problem solving. This research continues a decade-long collaboration facilitated by Michael T. Nettles, Senior Vice President and Edmund W. Gordon Chair for Policy Evaluation & Research. Over the years, Dr. Nettles has convened large meetings of researchers, teachers and others to discuss design and development of assessments that improve equity in education. He continues to convene a virtual discussion group every Monday morning focused on collaborations supporting K-12 math education in Broward County Public Schools, with local, national and international colleagues.

In 2016, a team led by ETS cognitive psychologist E. Aurora Graf received an NSF Discovery Research grant to develop a learning progression for the concept of function in a partnership with the Algebra Project and YPP. Algebra Project 9th graders from several sites participated, and youth focus groups led by YPP assisted in review and revision of test items. This collaboration was important because when students from schools in low-income communities, often students of color and English Language learners, are left out of fundamental research, the findings may not represent them and may even misinform policy and practice. This project was completed last year. An expanded team, led again by Aurora Graf of ETS, with Jessica Andrews-Todd, ETS Research Scientist, the Algebra Project, Charlenne DeLeon of YPP, Cheryl Eames and Tammy Voepel of Southern Illinois Univ. at Edwardsville and Yvonne Lai of Univ. of Nebraska-Lincoln, has begun a new four-year study.

Collaborative problem solving is a valued 21st century skill that can enhance learning outcomes. Learning progressions, which are models of how student thinking develops within a domain, have potential to provide actionable information to teachers to guide instruction. Facilitation may support collaborative problem solving and make visible student thinking with respect to learning progressions. In this project, the team will address questions about how collaborative problem solving, learning progressions, and facilitation interact in the development of students' mathematical learning. The work affords an opportunity to advance equitable access to high-quality education for all students by enhancing the quality of instruction for students lacking opportunities to learn key concepts of mathematics because of the inequitable structures of education in the country. The project team anticipates that their work will generate resources and findings for future work, such as a version of the learning progression that can be used by teachers to interpret student work and information about how students and facilitators can use online collaborative technology in support of mathematics learning and assessment.

The project team will integrate learning progression assessment tasks into an online collaborative learning and assessment platform. The tasks focus on the concept of function, a foundational area of mathematics, and are designed for students in Grades 9 through 12. Students will engage with the tasks in four phases: first, they will solve a task individually. Second, they will revisit that task as part of a 3- or 4- person team in a collaborative environment. Some team discussions will be facilitated by near-peer mentors. Third, the teams will present their results to the class. Students will engage in a whole class discussion with facilitation and wrap up by the teacher. Finally, students will respond individually to a conceptually similar task. Discourse will be coded using both domain-specific and domain-general coding schemes that identify cognitive, social, and facilitation practices during team collaboration and class discussion; results will attend to both the focus and the development of ideas over the course of discussion. The project will also feature a professional development component for teachers and youth facilitators.

From Ben Moynihan (continued from p 1)

I am grateful to Bob's wife Janet Jemmott Moses, M.D., as well as to Maisha, Omo, Taba, Malaika and the entire Moses family for sharing Bob with us all. We at the Algebra Project also are thankful for the countless collaborators and donors who have energized us all in "making a way out of no way" for the Algebra Project over the course of four decades, and for encouraging us to press forward in this moment.

Prescient in his focus, Bob created opportunities for the transformation of people and communities - from the voting rights organizing he and folks did in the 1960s with local people in Mississippi, to the Movement lessons Bob applied to growing the Algebra Project since the 1980s. Now we carry on in our efforts to ensure that the people most affected by and struggling to change deep societal problems are centrally involved in designing and carrying out solutions. As Bob counseled, our work is to cultivate a consensus among students, teachers, parents, community organizers, school leaders, researchers, mathematics educators, mathematicians and more to build effective opportunities that secure math literacy, thereby bringing hope to our students, to our communities, and to our country.

Like so many of us, Bob also amplified hope and a sense of purpose in me personally. I met Bob in the spring of 1989, just before I turned 24, at a Civil Rights Movement conference at Dartmouth College. I had just returned from six-months study of West African hand drumming in Senegal. I recognized his name from books about the Mississippi Summer Project, as I had been brought up with a family story that my African American and European American birthparents might have met while volunteering in the Summer Project of '64. While that dimension of my story later took another turn, Bob and I stayed in touch.

In the summer of 1991, Bob asked me to join the Algebra Project and we developed an experiential African Drums & Ratios Curriculum for 4th and 5th graders, wedding African diasporic drum making and drumming for students to have another "way in" to learning key math concepts of factors, multiples and ratios. As the Algebra Project expanded across the country in the mid-1990s, Bob asked me to get involved in operations. Working with Bob and the Algebra Project team has been central to my life for 30 years.

Since Bob's passing, the Algebra Project team has embarked on a transitional journey to renew our organization and enhance our capacities for advancing this struggle for math literacy. As you will read in the updates and testimonies in our Fall 2021 newsletter, Bob has been an elder, a teacher, a leader, and mentor for countless students, teachers and collaborators.

Kahlil Gibran's The Prophet chapter "On Work" resonates with these stories illustrating the impact of Bob's calling to organize local people of all ages to reconstruct our life circumstances:

*You work that you may keep pace with the earth and the soul of the earth.... Always you have been told that work is a curse and labour a misfortune.... You have been told also that life is darkness, and in your weariness you echo what was said by the weary. And I say that life is indeed darkness save when there is urge, and all urge is blind save when there is knowledge, and all knowledge is vain save when there is work, and all work is empty save when there is love; and when you work with love you bind yourself to yourself, and to one another, and to God. ...Work is love made visible.***

Bob's exemplary life inspires us all to work together to ensure K-12 students have the structured opportunities needed to secure math literacy - not only for their participation in the Information Age, but also in order to eradicate racism from education in the United States of America. It remains for all of us, younger and older together, to respond to Bob's call. Thank you again for your support of the Algebra Project, thereby enabling us to find our way in the larger "river of movement".

Ben Moynihan, Interim Executive Director, Algebra Project Inc.

**Vincent Harding, 1981, There is a River: The Black Struggle for Freedom in America.*

With special thanks to Jamarria Hall for his reminder of the power of this work.

*** Kahlil Gibran, 1923, The Prophet*

NSF Research Award: Middle Schoolers' Understandings of Mathematical and Computational Logic

Bill Crombie, Director of Algebra Project Professional Development, is collaborating with Alan Shaw, Assistant Professor Computer Science, Brian R. Lawler, Associate Professor of Mathematics Education, and Deepa Muralidhar, Lecturer in Computer Science, at Kennesaw State Univ. Crombie, Shaw and Lawler are leading a research study in collaboration with Clayton County Public Schools, just South of Atlanta, GA, which focuses upon the learning of computational thinking, supported by a Computer Science for All award from the National Science Foundation. This project engages students in a majority African American and Latino/a middle school in computational thinking, using a new simulation and modeling application implemented through the Algebra Project five-step pedagogy. The work seeks to develop a remedy for the fact that many low performing students lack contextual understanding of the symbols they are taught to manipulate in math classes. The research will show how the use of various types of computational thinking can increase conceptual understanding, visual reasoning, and representational logic.

This research will study the extent to which this type of simulation and modeling application can enable teachers and middle school students to use visual reasoning and spatial logic when analyzing mathematical functions. After sharing experiences that use mathematical and computational logic, students will work in small groups with near peer mentors and tutors to solve problems. They will also learn to use Python scripts and functions to aid in their analyses.

The study will use a specific type of Python-based microworld that combines enactive-iconic representations with the Algebra Projects five step pedagogy: (1) students experience a shared event; (2) students examine the event by representing it pictorially, then (3) with everyday language, (4) through an agreed upon regimentation of everyday language, and (5) through iconic and conventional symbolic representations and equations. The microworld provides students with enactive-iconic and diagrammatic mathematical constructions that they can manipulate to examine mathematical features and logical structures. The research builds on findings of a 2016 NSF exploratory research grant that middle school students developed a greater understanding of core mathematical ideas, as well as a sense of ownership and engagement, with a similar application.

Selected Tributes

National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, LifeTime Achievement Award

<https://www.nctm.org/Grants-and-Awards/Awards/Lifetime-Dedicated-to-Social-Justice-and-Equity/>

Math Literacy as a 21st Century Civil Right, Room 212 Photography, National Council of Teachers of Mathematics 2021 annual meeting <https://youtu.be/HeflMcBz3wl>

Remembering Bob Moses, Margaret Burnham, The Nation

<https://www.thenation.com/article/activism/bob-moses-obituary-sncc/>

Bob Moses: the Fullness of the Man, Charles M. Payne, The Nation

<https://www.thenation.com/article/activism/bob-moses-sncc-mississippi/>

Bob Moses' Pioneering Fight for Voting and Education Rights, Nicholas Lemann, The New Yorker

<https://www.newyorker.com/news/daily-comment/bob-moses-pioneering-fight-for-voting-and-education-rights>

President Joe Biden's statement on Bob Moses' passing

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/07/26/statement-of-president-joe-biden-on-the-passing-of-civil-rights-leader-bob-moses/>

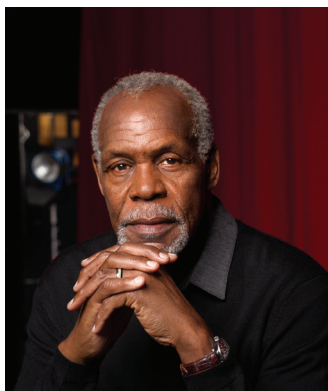
Bob Moses embodied collective struggle for Black freedom and human liberation

Barbara Ransby, Truthout

<https://truthout.org/articles/bob-moses-embodied-collective-struggle-for-black-freedom-and-human-liberation/>

Bob Moses tribute, Ernie Cortes, Jr., Industrial Areas Foundation, <https://vimeo.com/581979506>

(continued p 7-8)



The Algebra Project salutes Danny Glover for his forthcoming Jean Hersholt Humanitarian Award from the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences Board of Governors. This award is in recognition of his work as a “lifelong community activist, his efforts for worldwide justice have inspired others to follow his leadership. He has been a particularly strong advocate for economic justice and access to health care and education in the United States and Africa. He has served as a Goodwill Ambassador for the United Nations Development Program and is currently a UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador.” Among his many pursuits, Danny has served on the Algebra Project Board of Directors since 2000 and, with Bob Moses, has co-led the national Quality Education as a Constitutional Right campaign since 2005. He will receive the award during the annual Oscars celebration on January 15th, 2022 in Los Angeles.



Algebra Project Board and Staff in February 2020

Left to right: Bill Crombie (Dir. of Professional Development), LaDon Love (Vice Chair), Danny Glover (Director), Bob Moses (President), Herb Brown III (Treasurer), B.J. Walker (Director), Khari Milner (Chair), Ben Moynihan (Dir. of Operations), Margaret Burnham (Secretary), Edwige Kenmegne (Dir. of Finance & Accounting)

Algebra Project Consultants

Greg Budzban (Curriculum Developer & PD Specialist) , Nell Cobb (PD Specialist), Frank E Davis (Consultant for Evaluation & Research), Mitch Koshers (Koshers & Co., CPAs), Michael Soguero (National Outreach), Sara Weinberg (PD Specialist), Mary M West (National Research Coordinator)

Selected Tributes *(continued from p 6)*

Ethical People Can Be Effective, United States of Anxiety, WNYC

<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/ethical-people-can-be-effective/id1155194811?i=1000530787049&l=nb>

Remembering Bob Moses, civil rights hero and Cambridge legend, Harvey Silverglate, WGBH

<https://www.wgbh.org/news/commentary/2021/11/12/remembering-bob-moses-a-civil-rights-hero-and-a-cambridge-legend>

Math Literacy, Civil Rights & Lemonade, Jonathan Osler, <https://www.jonathanosler.com/bob-moses>

Bob Moses, Crusader for Civil Rights and Math Education, Dies at 86, New York Times

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/25/us/bob-moses-dead.html>

Selected Tributes *(continued from p 7)*

Remembering Bob Moses: If we can do it, then we should, Cliff Freeman, Boston Univ. and the YPP
<https://www.bu.edu/wheelock/remembering-bob-moses-if-we-can-do-it-then-we-should>

Remembering Bob Moses, William McCallum and Kristin Umland, Illustrative Mathematics
<https://illustrativemathematics.blog/2021/11/03/remembering-bob-moses/>

Robert Parris Moses 1935-2021, by Jonathan Greenberg (8/13/21)
Fierce Urgency, Institute for Nonviolence & Social Justice, Univ. of San Francisco
<https://usfblogs.usfca.edu/fierce-urgency/2021/08/13/robert-parris-moses-1935-2021/> and video
https://usfblogs.usfca.edu/fierce-urgency/files/2021/08/ELDERS_Bob-Moses_Stand-Back-Up_20210729-1.mov

We thank our many contributors and are grateful for your continued support as we steward Bob Moses' vision of raising the floor of mathematics literacy for all children in America! Please contact us c/o ben@algebra.org or call 1-617-491-0200 with any questions. Online gifts via Just Giving: <http://www.justgiving.com/thealgebraprojectinc> or Benevity Causes: <https://causes.benevity.org/causes/840-223137788>

Checks may be made payable to: The Algebra Project, Inc., 99 Bishop Allen Drive, Cambridge, MA 02139. The Algebra Project, Inc. is a 501c3 tax-exempt, non-profit organization, Federal Tax ID # is 22-3137788. Gifts are tax-deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law.

Thanks again for your generous support, with gratitude to:

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The Willow Springs Foundation
The John Doar Foundation
Jean M. Entine
The Johnny Carson Foundation
AIDS Healthcare Foundation
Halis Family Foundation
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Fran Skwira and Joan Wynne
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Mary Trucker
John Roberts
Calla Cofield
Tiffany Smith
Thomas Potter
John Muller
Nzinga Tull
Jim Marshall
The Family Folk Chorale
Cheryl Thompson
Walter Syrek
& many more
thanks!