



Student Name:

Class Period:

Date:

Meet the Originals

Texas Originals is a radio series about people who made an impact on Texas. You can hear it online and on radio stations around the state. Read or listen to the episode on Barbara Jordan. Then, answer questions about it.

Barbara Jordan 1936–1996

In July 1974, as the Watergate hearings took place, one voice stood out expressing faith in American ideals. That voice—deep, measured, and unmistakable—belonged to Texas Congresswoman Barbara Jordan. "My faith in the Constitution is whole," Jordan declared, "it is complete, it is total. And I am not going to sit here and be an idle spectator to the diminution, the subversion, the destruction of the Constitution." Jordan's words electrified Congress and a national televised audience, and helped bring about President Nixon's resignation.

Jordan was born in Houston's Fifth Ward in 1936, and attended segregated schools until she enrolled at Boston University Law School.

In 1966, Barbara Jordan began her historic political career when she became the first African American woman elected to the Texas Senate. Six years later, she won election to the U.S. House of Representatives, becoming the first African American woman from a southern state to serve in the body.

Jordan mastered the art of political compromise, but never wavered in her commitment to the Constitution.

In 1979, Jordan retired from elective office to begin a teaching career, after being diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. When she died, in 1996, her burial in the Texas State Cemetery marked yet another first: she was the first Black woman interred there.

Check for Understanding: Answer the questions below based on evidence from the episode on Barbara Jordan. Refer to the text included above if needed.

1. What was historic about Barbara Jordan's election to the Texas Senate in 1966?
2. How did Jordan claim the national spotlight in 1974?

Going Further: Write or discuss your answer to the question below, supporting your answer with evidence from the episode or additional information you have learned in class.

3. **Taking a Position.** Using the context of the rest of her quote, what does the word "diminution" mean?