

## Burns, an Activist

Helen Keller once stated, "Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much." She means that more results occur if we work together with others than if we work by ourselves. There are some people in the world that don't need to be asked for help; instead, they automatically lend a hand. People like this make the world a better place to live. They are examples of moral courage and show others that there is nothing wrong with helping out a stranger or neighbor. One person that has shown an immense amount of moral courage in her life is Lucy Burns through her actions and organizations. In 1913 women could vote in nine states, yet they weren't taken seriously by Washington Politics. Lucy Burns assisted in the change of this. Alice Paul and Lucy Burns rallied and paraded in the streets.. Therefore, they showed others tactics that they had absorbed from the English suffragettes (Pullen). This aided their cause. I personally think that it was a noble idea to share the methods that they used with others, so the suffrage movement would continue on with impressive schemes. Furthermore, they organized parades during significant presidential events. For instance, when President Woodrow Wilson showed up for his inaugural ceremony, he expected a crowd to greet him; however, they were watching a parade of more than 5,000 women that were led by Inez Milholland on horseback. The crowd became infuriated and attacked the suffragists while the police didn't do much to defend them. The headlines raised more awareness and compassion than they had ever received before (Pullen). Admittedly, the suffrage movement took tons of courage. Also, Lucy Burns was one of the first people to picket the White House. Manifestation is the fact that Burns, Katherine Morey, and Mabel Vernon gathered at the White House to picket. They held a banner that quoted

President Wilson and had no other comments. When the police noticed, one called, 'The little devils! Can you beat that?' One of the police was about to arrest the women when another objected, 'My God, man, you can't arrest that. Them's the president's own words!' They decided to arrest them any way, and when Burns demanded to know the charges, a hassled police man said, 'We don't know what the charge is yet. We'll telephone you that later' (Sagan 77). Granted that, I believe that the police had no right to arrest the women since they were quoting the president and there were no other comments on the banner. Clearly, being a suffragist was, indeed, a stressful job, yet Lucy Burns and countless others kept with it and enjoyed the feeling of triumph when women were finally able to vote.

Furthermore, Lucy Burns showed her moral courage in her organizations and the awards she received. First, Lucy won an award for her valor in the course of numerous arrests and prison hunger strikes. In this situation, she got an award from the Pankhurst's Women's Social and Political Union. After receiving this award, she left England where she had been at the time, to go help with this cause in America (Angela). In spite of the pain caused by being arrested and participating in hunger strikes, Burns kept fighting for women's right to vote. Second, she joined with Alice Paul to fight for a constitutional amendment. In other words, they were trying to make women being able to vote in the U.S. a law. Admittedly, this would have taken a great deal of time and loads of painstaking work. I know if many had been her, they probably would have given up the cause by now; consequently, women's suffrage might still be an issue today. Third, Burns and Paul founded an organization together. In this case, it was called the Congressional Union for Women's Suffrage, and it became the National Women's Party

three years later. Lucy also helped organize political campaigns and was the editor of the Suffragist. She was arrested six times and was in jail more than any other activist (Angela). Due to the fact that Burns dedicated her life to fight so women could vote, women should take advantage of this and vote when they are old enough.

In addition, Lucy Burns has had a gigantic impact on me. Because of her, I will vote as soon as I'm eighteen. As an illustration, I'm only fourteen, so I'm not old enough to vote, but Burns has imbued me to do so when I'm older. Granted that, it would be an insult to her memory if I abused my privilege to vote, for she fought quite hard to obtain it. Also, Lucy Burns helped me to recognize that I too can be morally courageous. For example, I could stand up for my rights by petitioning and defending my case. I could also help others out by lending a hand when it's needed. Admittedly, I've never been a leader; however, after reading about Lucy Burns, I plan to stand up for my prerogatives just like she stood up for women's suffrage. Finally, she helped me comprehend that anything is possible. For instance, I could be president if I truly wanted to or I could figure out how to solve global warming. All I have to do is put my mind to it and never give up. After all women probably wouldn't be voting today if it wasn't for Lucy Burns and her unions. Evidently, Lucy Burns had an enormous impact on my life because I now realize that I could be morally courageous like her.

Ultimately, through her proceedings and associations, Burns showed moral courage in the fight for women's right to vote. Like Helen Keller said, we must work with others to get things done. Lucy Burns did this in the fight for women's suffrage. So, when it comes time to vote, make sure you cast your ballot. It is the least you can do to commemorate Lucy Burns and other suffragists' memories.

## Works Cited

Angela and Rebecca. Home Page. 15 May 2007 <<http://www.pocanticohills.org/womenenc/burns.htm>>.

Pullen, Suzanne. "Women with Strength of Steel." San Francisco Chronicle. (15 February 2004):

24. Power Search. Private Residence, Phoenix, AZ. 28 February 2008 <<http://find.galegroup.com/ips/start.do?prodId=IS>>.

Sagan, Miriam. Women's Suffrage. California: Lucent Books, Inc., 1995.