



Carl Maxey: A Fighting Life (V. Ethel Willis White Books)

Jim Kershner

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A finalist for the 2009 Washington State Book Award.

Carl Maxey was, in his own words, 'a guy who started from scratch - black scratch.' He was sent, at age five, to the scandal-ridden Spokane Children's Home and then kicked out at age eleven with the only other "colored" orphan. Yet, Maxey managed to make a national name for himself, first as an NCAA championship boxer, and then as eastern Washington's first black lawyer and renowned civil rights attorney who always fought for the underdog. During the tumultuous civil rights and Vietnam War eras, Carl Maxey fought to break down color barriers in his hometown of Spokane and throughout the nation. He participated in Freedom Summer in Mississippi and made national headlines with lurid murder cases and outrageous war-protest trials, including the tumultuous Seattle Seven trial. He even took his commitment to justice and antiwar causes to the political arena, running for the U.S. Senate against the powerhouse Senator Scoop Jackson. In "Carl Maxey: A Fighting Life", Jim Kershner explores the sources of Maxey's passions as well as the price he ultimately paid for his struggles. The result is a moving portrait of a man called a "Type-A Gandhi" by the "New York Times" and whose own personal misfortune only spurred his lifelong, tireless crusade against injustice. Jim Kershner is a journalist for "The Spokesman-Review" in Spokane.

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