Twitter Thread by Brogan Holcombe



Brogan Holcombe
@Brogan_Holcombe

This week’s #SundayScientistShoutout is Betty Reid Soskin (born 1921)!

Soskin is a ranger with the @NationalParkService and at the age of 99, she is still serving as a ranger.

The oldest ranger to ever work as a National Park Ranger!

(1/n)
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Soskin was born in Detroit to Lousisanna Natives with Creole and Cajun backgrounds.

She spent her early childhood in New Orleans, LA until a hurricane/flood caused them to move to Oakland, CA.

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During WWII, Soskin worked as a clerk for Boilermakers Union A-36, a Jim Crow all-black union auxiliary where she assisted Black American workers who had to move frequently.

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After this, Soskin and her husband (Mel Reid) started a small black-owned business (Reid's Records) specializing in Gospel music before moving to Walnut Creek, CA, in the 1950s so their children could attend better schools.

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In Walnut Creek, they were faced with racism after moving into a white suburb

This lead Soskin to became an active member of the Black Caucus of the Unitarian Universalist Assoc. - becoming a songwriter in the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s

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Soskin also served as a rep for CA State Assemblywomen Dion Aroner and Loni Hancock, where she aided in the early planning stages and development of a park to memorialize women’s role on the Home Front during World War II.

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Soskin’s work lead to the formation of the Rosie the Riveter/World War II Home Front National Historical Park was established in 2000 to create a place for people to remember the contributions women made towards WWII efforts.

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Soskin’s increased involvement with this process lead her to become a park ranger for @NatlParkService in her 80s!

She regularly conducts park tours and serves as an interpreter to visitors, explaining its history, sites, and museum collections.

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Soskin has received many awards over her on-going career as an activist and ranger, including

CA Woman of the Year - 1995
Builders of Communities & Dreams by National Women's History Project - 2006

(9/n)
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https://t.co/FVJeY1MWIs



Soskin also received

WAVE award for "Women of Achievement" -2010
National WWII Museum Silver Service Medallion -2016
Robin W. Winks Award For Enhancing Public Understanding of National Parks - 2018

(10/n)
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Soskin also received congressional recognition from Mark DeSaulnier in 2020.

She also released a memoir entitled “Sign My Name to Freedom” in 2018.

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A MEMOIR OF A PIONEERING LIFE

Sign My Name to Freedom







BETTY REID SOSKIN

EDITED BY J. DOUGLAS ALLEN-TAYLOR

Park Ranger Soskin has said (commenting on her life in 2015 at the age of 93)

"Wish I'd had [the] confidence when the young Betty needed it to navigate through the hazards of everyday life on the planet. But maybe…"

[continued]
(12/n)
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"...I'm better able to benefit from having it now – when I have the maturity to value, it and the audacity to wield it for those things held dear."

Another inspiring and motivating #SundayScientistShoutout!

(13/n)
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