

# Her Life's Greatest Moment

Marian Anderson (1897 – 1993), the black American contralto who deserved and won worldwide acclaim as a concert soloist, didn't simply grow great – she grew great simply. In spite of her fame, she remained the same gracious, approachable lady, never one to “put on airs.” She was a beautiful model of humility.

Once, a reporter interviewing Anderson asked her to name the greatest moment in her life. She had many big moments, including:



- The night conductor Arturo Toscanini announced: “A voice like hers comes once in a century.”
- In 1956, her autobiography, *My Lord, What a Morning*, was published, and became a best seller.
- In 1958, she became a United States delegate to the United Nations.
- The time she gave a private concert at the White House for the Roosevelts and the King and Queen of England.
- In 1963, she was awarded the coveted Presidential Medal of Freedom.

Which of these big moments did she choose? None of them.

Anderson quietly told the reporter that the greatest moment of her life was the day she went home and told her mother she wouldn't have to take in washing anymore.

Charles R. Swindoll, author, educator and senior pastor of the Stonebriar Community Church in Frisco, Texas, refers to this incident in Anderson's life in his book, *Growing Strong in the Seasons of Life*. “Some folks go to great lengths to hide their humble origins,” he said. “We often think we should mask the truth of our past, lest people think less of us – especially if our today is much more respectable than our yesterday. But the truth is, when we peel off our masks, others are usually not repelled; they are drawn closer to us. And frequently, the more painful or embarrassing the past, the greater is others' appreciation and respect. Marian Anderson's candid remark simply increases our admiration of her.”

Marian Anderson never forgot that her roots reached back into poverty. No amount of public acclaim ever caused her to forget that her mama took in washing to put food in little Marian's tummy. And she didn't hide it.

The next time we are tempted to believe our own stuff, let's just look back at the place from which we came, and thank God for the journey He has brought us on.

*God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble (James 4:6).*

– Beecher Hunter