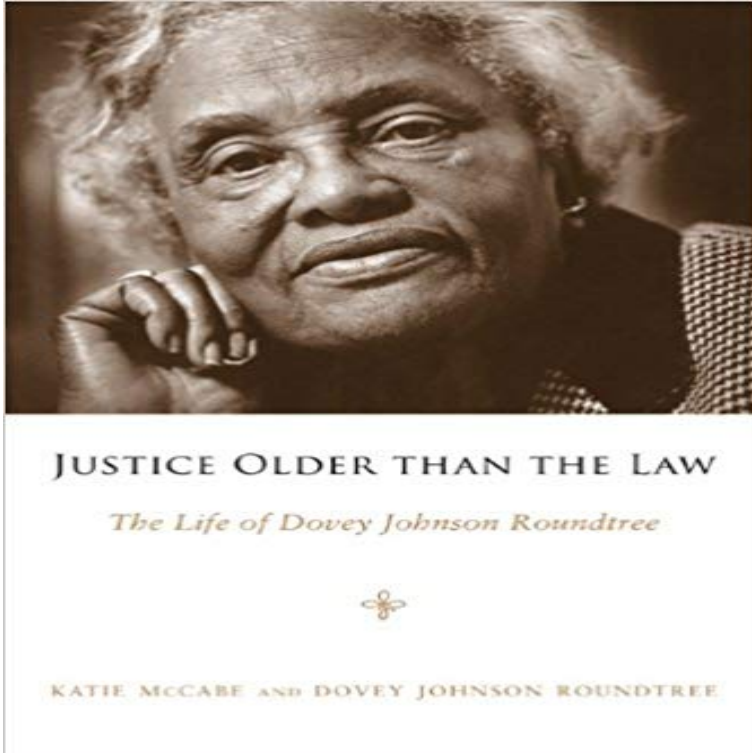


## Justice Older than the Law: The Life of Dovey Johnson Roundtree (Margaret Walker Alexander Series in African American Studies)



From the streets of Charlotte, North Carolina, to the segregated courtrooms of the nations capital, from the white male bastion of the World War II Army to the male stronghold of Howard University Law School, from the pulpits of churches where women had waited for years for the right to minister-in all these places Dovey Johnson Roundtree (b. 1914) sought justice. Though she is a legendary African American figure in the legal community of Washington, D.C., she remains largely unknown to the American public. Justice Older than the Law is her story, the product of a remarkable, ten-year collaboration with National Magazine Award winner Katie McCabe. As a protege of Mary McLeod Bethune, Roundtree became one of the first women to break the gender and color barriers in the United States military. Inspired by Thurgood Marshall and James Madison Nabrit, Jr., at Howard University Law School, Roundtree went on to make history by winning a 1955 bus desegregation case, *Sarah Keys v. Carolina Coach Company*. That decision demolished separate but equal in the realm of interstate transportation and enabled Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy to combat southern resistance to the Freedom Riders campaign in 1961. At a time when black attorneys had to leave the courthouses to use the bathrooms, Roundtree took on Washingtons white legal establishment and prevailed. She led the vanguard of women ordained to the ministry in the African Methodist Episcopal Church in 1961 and merged her law practice with her ministry to fight for families and children being destroyed by urban violence. Hers is a vision of biblical and social justice older by far than the law, and her life story speaks movingly and urgently to our racially troubled times.

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