



## **Whitney M. Young, Jr.** Past President, National Association of Social Workers (1969–1971)

Whitney M. Young, Jr., widely recognized as the co-author of President Lyndon B. Johnson’s War on Poverty, was an American civil rights pioneer who spent much of his life working to end employment discrimination and transforming the National Urban League into a leader in the civil rights movement and beyond.

Mr. Young received a master of social work in 1947 from the University of Minnesota, and began working for the Urban League of St. Paul. Young was appointed executive director of the Urban League of Omaha, Nebraska in 1950 and in 1954 was named dean of Atlanta University’s School of Social Work, where he acquired a formidable reputation as an administrator and fundraiser.

In 1962, Mr. Young became president of the National Urban League. In that position he initiated unique programs to combat the ills of racism and poverty in America.

Throughout his life, Mr. Young remained professionally and personally committed to the struggle for equality

for African Americans. The National Urban League, with Young at the helm, was drawn into the thick of the civil rights struggles of the 1960s, registering voters and planning and participating in the March on Washington in 1963. He was also, notably, an advisor on race relations to Presidents Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon.

As president of the National Association of Social Workers (1969-1971), Mr. Young took office at a challenging time in America with the uncertainty of a commitment to the War on Poverty and to ending the war in Vietnam.

A founder of the Urban Coalition, whose purpose was to focus the attention of the country on the problems of the cities, Mr. Young authored two books, *To Be Equal and Beyond Racism*. In 1967, Mr. Young was featured on the cover of *Time Magazine*. And in 1969, he received the nation’s highest civilian award, The Medal of Freedom.

At the time of his accidental death in 1971, he was the president of the National Association of Social Workers.

***“Every man is our brother, and every man’s burden is our own.  
Where poverty exists, all are poorer. Where hate flourishes, all are corrupted.  
Where injustice reigns, all are unequal.”***

***“I am not anxious to be the loudest voice or the most popular.  
But I would like to think that at a crucial moment, I was an effective voice of the voiceless,  
an effective hope of the hopeless.”***