

New Urban League President Urges Black Middle Class to Help Black Poor

Calls 'Global Realignment of Work and Wealth Bigger Culprit' Than Racism

Special Awards for Corporate Support to Black Causes Go to Officials From Philip Morris, Merrill Lynch, Disney World and Ford Motor Co.

INDIANAPOLIS — Hugh B. Price, newly installed President and CEO of the National Urban League, proposed recently a new era of social activism led by the Black middle class and aimed at alleviating the problems of the African American poor.

He said: "As marvelously as the market economy works for most Americans, it has all but collapsed for inner city folk."

In his keynote address to the League's 84th Annual Conference, Price acknowledged that racism had played a major role in creating a large Black underclass, but he added: "The global realignment of work and wealth is, if anything, the bigger culprit. We who serve must be clear-eyed about these color-blind economic trends if we're to be genuinely helpful to our folk."

Price, who three months ago had been a Vice President at the Rockefeller Foundation, said the civil rights movement had been "a huge success in many respects. It unquestionably placed those of us with solid educations, ample family support, personal drive and a healthy dose of luck on the up escalator economically," he said.

Price suggested major fund-raising programs, sparked by the 113 Urban League affiliates in cities around the nation, that would create a national Youth Development Fund. This fund, he said, would seek matching grants for youth service programs from business, government and foundations.

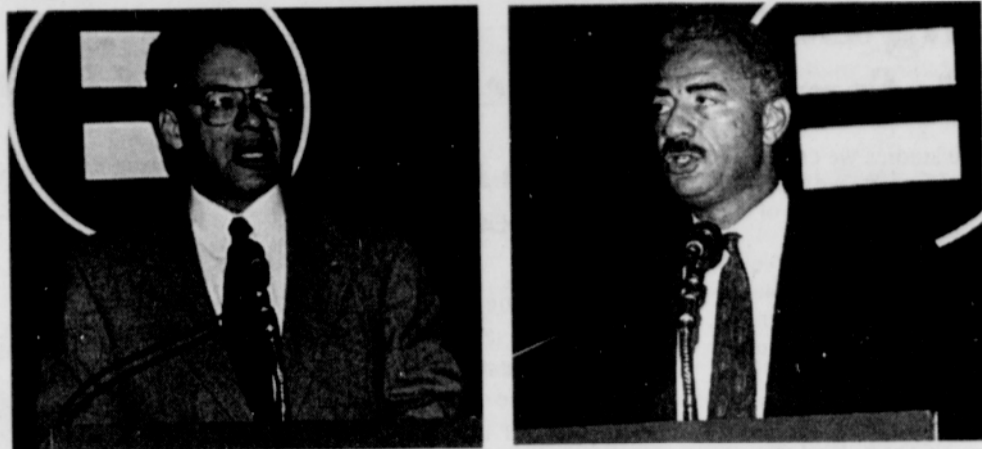
Price called his program a "renewed emphasis on our sisters and brothers and children in greatest need."

He said: "The way I see it, this would not be a politically contentious, race-based approach. Instead, it's a more palatable alternative which recognizes that poor people of all races need decent jobs."

The League's new president told the delegates, "We must concentrate with laser-like focus on those critical areas where we can leverage our unique strengths for greatest impact."

Price identified three critical areas as: "the education and development of children," helping "poor families to become economically self-sufficient," and "encouraging racial inclusion so that African Americans can participate fully in the mainstream economy."

During his keynote address, Price also touched on the controversy around the NAACP-sponsored Black summit that included a wide variety of Blacks, including some associated with serious criticism of Jews.



NEWLY APPOINTED NATIONAL URBAN LEAGUE PRESIDENT Hugh B. Price (left) addresses recent 84th Annual Conference. At right is George L. Knox, III, Vice President, Corporate Public Affairs, Philip Morris Companies Inc., accepting the League's Donald H. McGannon Award.

He told the conference delegates: "Our allies should understand that serious-minded African Americans must be free to discuss the acute pain afflicting our community. Even if that means conferring with those with whom we vehemently disagree on other issues."

Price said: "Many whites of goodwill have accompanied us on our long journey for racial, social and economic justice. None have matched the Jewish community as long-distance runners in the civil rights movement."

"Just as we denounce misleading media stereotypes of African Americans, it is morally repugnant as well to impugn an entire people, especially long standing allies, like Jews, because of the unconscionable behavior of some of them," Price said.

The Indianapolis conference drew thousands of participants, among them many distinguished speakers, including: the First Lady, Hillary Clinton, who addressed the League Conference from Washington by interactive television; Robert B. Reich, Secretary, U.S. Department of Labor; Reed E. Hundt, Chairman, Federal Communications Commission; Alexis M. Herman, Assistant to the President of the U.S.; Deval L. Patrick, Assistant U.S. Attorney General for Civil Rights and Lani Guinier, the lawyer and friend to the Clintons who was the President's first nominee for the civil rights position.

Other speakers included authors George Fraser and Ellis Cose. Fraser wrote "Success Runs in Our Race: The Complete Guide to Effective Networking in the African American Community," while Cose authored "The Rage of a Privileged Class: Why Are Middle-Class Blacks Angry?"

In other conference events, the organization's prestigious Donald H. McGannon Awards were presented to Dr. Westina L. Matthews, Vice President, Philanthropic Programs, Merrill Lynch & Co., Inc., and to George L. Knox, III, Vice President, Corporate Public Affairs, Philip Morris Companies Inc.

Accepting his award, Knox said: "As the league enters an exciting new era under Hugh Price's leadership, I want to assure you that our historic partnership will continue. It's stood the test of time and it is needed as never before in this time of testing."

Earlier in the conference, during the Herbert H. Wright Awards Breakfast, Price called Philip Morris "an exemplary corporate citizen...a soul mate of the Urban League movement for a long time."

Sponsored by Philip Morris for the fourth straight year, the Herbert H. Wright Awards to corporate employees who help make their companies good corporate citizens went this year to Helen B. Love, Urban Programs Manager, Corporate Affairs Office, Ford Motor Company and to Bob Billingslea, Corporate Director, Urban Affairs, Disney Worldwide Services, Inc.

The late Herbert H. Wright, a former community relations executive, had helped to make Philip Morris a leading corporate supporter of African American organizations and causes.

Warren Jackson, President of Circulation Experti, an advertising agency, and a former associate of Mr. Wright, gave a personal remembrance of Wright as "a hell-raiser who cared deeply for his people." Jackson said Wright had "made it possible" for many minorities to follow his lead inside corporate America.



HERBERT H. WRIGHT AWARD WINNERS were Bob Billingslea (center), Corporate Director, Urban Affairs, Disney Worldwide Services, Inc. and Helen B. Love (right), Manager, Community Affairs, Ford Motor Company. Warren G. Jackson (left), President, Circulation Experti, and an associate of the late Mr. Wright, spoke of Wright's efforts to get corporate support for Black causes.



TWO CONTEMPORARY AUTHORS were among the several speakers at the League's Annual Conference: George Fraser (left), author of "Success Runs in Our Race: The Complete Guide to Effective Networking in the African American Communities," and Ellis Cose, who wrote "The Rage of a Privileged Class: Why Are Middle-Class Blacks Angry?"

Information Just A Phone Call Away

• Mercy Ships International, an interdenominational Christian organization, has just added a new steamer to its U.S.-based fleet of Mercy Ships. The Mercy Ships take health care and development programs to underdeveloped areas of the world. For an information and opportunities brochure, call 1-800-772-SHIP. (News USA)

• Negative Population Growth, made up of scientists and concerned citizens, believes efforts to solve world social and environmental ills will be futile without stopping population growth and then reducing the number of people on the planet. For more information or to become a member of Negative Population Growth, call them at 201-837-3555. (News USA)

• Passive energy-saving devices, developed by Energy Automation Systems, Inc., have helped more than 60,000 businesses save tens of millions of dollars in electricity costs. EASI technologies also help reduce pollution and America's dependence on foreign oil. For more information about EASI products or an EASI dealership, call 615-822-7250. (News USA)

• There are numerous adaptive home and mobility aids to help seniors and the disabled maintain independent, active lifestyles. Catalogs directed to consumers with special needs, such as the adaptABILITY catalog, feature products which make day-to-day living easier and more comfortable. For a free copy of the adaptABILITY catalog, call 1-800-288-9941. (News USA)

• Prepaid calling cards, which feature a preset number of long distance minutes, permit discount pricing and eliminate delays and problems associated with credit cards. One of the deepest discounters, Business Network Communications, charges 89.4 cents for a three-minute call on the BNC Corporate Calling Card. Information on the BNC card is available by calling 1-800-204-5050, Ext. 56. (News USA)

• Miniature track lighting offers some bright new ways to shed light in your world. A new Trac 12 low-voltage system features 3/4-inch-wide track and 1 1/2-inch-long lights that can be placed anywhere. For a free catalog from Juno Lighting, Inc., call 708-827-9880. (News USA)

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