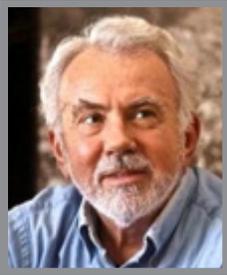


# Human and Civil Rights Award Winner

## ◆ Dr. Charles Prickett ◆

### Carter G. Woodson Memorial Award



Attorney, lecturer and Civil Rights Activist Dr. Charles Prickett has dedicated a lifetime to the service of others... living proof that the personal is political.

The seeds of Prickett's social engagement were sown as a teenager in Carbondale, Illinois during the early 1960's. As a high school student, he participated in surveying local businesses to root out racially discriminatory practices, sparking his desire to work towards liberty and justice for all. Joining the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) chapter while attending Southern Illinois University, Prickett

bonded with like-minded individuals of all backgrounds dedicated to positive change.

Inspired by Dr. King's dream of an America judged only by content of character at the 1963 March on Washington, Prickett put his character to the test, taking part in one of the nation's most important youth movements known as "Freedom Summer".

In 1964, Prickett and thousands of young people ventured south to Mississippi on what some would deem an impossible mission, correcting decades of inequity in the lives of African Americans. Armed only with the passive resistance teachings of Gandhi, the Constitution, and love in their hearts, these brave volunteers risked life and limb to provide remedial education in the form of "Freedom Schools" and give the sons and daughters of slaves the ultimate tool of emancipation: the right to vote.

This was not checkbook philanthropy; Prickett lived amongst the people and worked as an educator in the "schools", the term often being defined as gathering under a tree shielding an unforgiving August sun. Hundreds of children and adults travelled from far and wide to gain the gift of literacy, but the programs went beyond "the three 'R's". Wisdom was also imparted about Black history, the ultimate challenge to Jim Crow.

Prickett was on the front lines, registering hundreds to exercise the democratic process at the polls, in a state notorious for denying access with racist literacy tests, poll taxes, and of course blocking the ballot with the bullet. His work occurred in the Mississippi that took the life of Civil Rights icon Medgar Evers months earlier, and brutally murdered his peers Andrew Goodman, James Cheney, and Michael Schwerner that same fateful summer. Nevertheless, Prickett persisted.

Whether getting Black farmers access to federally subsidized farming programs to share America's bountiful harvest, marching over the Edmund Pettus Bridge to Selma alongside Dr. King to guarantee voting rights, or working with Fannie Lou Hamer and the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party to insure "Black voices mattered" at the 1964 National Convention, Prickett was always there heeding the call. To this day, he continues touring the nation's schools to speak about his book, Remembering Mississippi Summer, and screening the 1964 documentary film he helped create "A Regular Bouquet", vividly displaying to a new generation the power personal connection has to affect lives.

Dr. Charles O. Prickett: sounding freedom's ring for many summers to come.