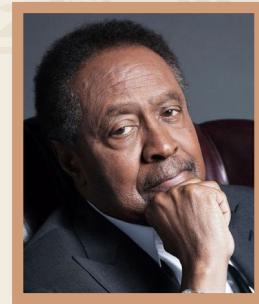


2021 NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

Human and Civil Rights Award Winner

■ DR. CLARENCE JONES



He 2021 NEA President's Award, established by the National Education Association to officially recognize those whose life's work advances the cause of human and civil rights, could not have a more fitting recipient.

Dr. Clarence Jones helped advance Martin Luther King Jr.'s dream of societal change with the power of the written word.

As King's speechwriter, confidant, and personal counsel, Clarence Jones was not only a witness to history... he played a pivotal role in creating two of the most iconic documents in the fight for equality.

Jones attended Boston University (BU), where theological educator Howard Thurman popularized Gandhi's philosophy of non-violent passive resistance: a philosophy embraced by BU doctorate alum King.

Jones later joined King's inner circle as general counsel for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, traveling with him to Jim Crow Birmingham in 1963. There, while advocating for voting rights, King was arrested for engaging in the democratic principle of peaceful protest. It was Clarence Jones who had the foresight to take King's written response to his detainment, and get it widely circulated to the press.

Thanks to Jones, the celebrated "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" created a paradigm shift in America's perception of racial injustice.

This seminal moment set the stage for perhaps the most important oration in the struggle for equality and Clarence Jones was there.

He contributed to American history by co-authoring, on the eve of the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, the first draft of the legendary "I Have a Dream" speech.

Now at 90 years young, Jones continues Martin Luther King Jr.'s legacy. He is a key figure in preserving the copyright of the world-changing speech, famously negotiated a peaceful end to the Attica prison uprising in 1971, and has become one of the nation's foremost authorities on the history of African enslavement and the rise of White Supremacy.

To this day Dr. Jones continues to remain a social justice warrior, helping to establish the Dr. Clarence B. Jones Institute for Social Advocacy at his high school alma mater, Palmyra High School in New Jersey.

Dr. Clarence Jones is a living testament to the notion that Black Words Matter.