

Profiles in Black History**John Hope Franklin: He Has Helped Shape History as Well as Report It***By Ella Mae Gaines McFarland*

An informative and influential historian in America is Dr. John Hope Franklin. In his 90-plus years, he has experienced, written about, lectured and advised presidents and other prominent persons on the condition of race relations in this country.

In 1934 he dialogued with President Franklin D. Roosevelt on racial issues. Sixty-three years later, in 1997, he was appointed head of President Bill Clinton's Initiative on Race. In between he aided Thurgood Marshall's preparation for arguing *Brown v. Board of Education* and testified against the nomination of Robert Bork to the Supreme Court in 1987. He earned the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1995.

Dr. Franklin, an authority on African American history, has written 20 books on the subject, including his best seller, *From Slavery to Freedom* (1947), which sold more than 3.5 million copies. He also has 100 articles to his credit.

In his autobiography, *Mirror to America*, Franklin's life and this nation's racial transformation in the twentieth century are intertwined. They serve as a powerful reminder of the extent to which the racial problems remain. There is no "crystal stair" living in a world restricted by laws defining race as well as creating obstacles, disadvantages, and even superstitions regarding race, many of which are still in place today.

Great leaders he mentioned in his memoirs included Arthur Springarn, one of NAACP's founders; Medgar Evers, the Mississippi NAACP leader who was murdered during the 1960s; A. Philip Randolph, whose call for a mass demonstration in 1941 led President Franklin D. Roosevelt to issue an order against racial discrimination; and Chester native Bayard Rustin, who was mainly responsible for the March on Washington in 1963.

In the witch hunt that followed World War I, private homes and offices were raided and searched. The race riots during that time in Chicago, Washington, East St. Louis, Omaha, Tulsa, and Rosewood showed our society at its worst. Dr. Franklin lost his father in the Tulsa riot.

In his early 90s now, Dr. Franklin continues to win our respect as he makes an impact on the history he writes about. Much of what he records, he has seen personally. But he also has time to help others in their writing. When I wrote to him for some advice on my own book, he gladly replied with worthy comments.

We still need the Dr. Franklins of the world. Racism is still evident, as in school imbalance, jobs and economics, and housing discrimination. And, as Dr. Franklin states, we cannot have a healthy and wholesome society as long as the young Black male is alienated from equal opportunity.

**Dennis Courtland Hayes Becomes Interim President of NAACP**

With the departure this month of Bruce Gordon as President of NAACP, the General Counsel of the organization, Dennis Courtland Hayes, has assumed its leadership as Interim President. According to the NAACP's website,

Dennis Hayes hails from the State of Indiana where he attended the then segregated Indianapolis' Crispus Attucks High School, later desegregated because of the decision in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*. In 1973, he received a Bachelor of Science degree in History from Indiana University-Bloomington and his Jurist Doctorate in 1977 from Indiana University School of Law.

From his private practice of law in Indianapolis, where he specialized in civil rights litigation, the NAACP recruited him in 1985 as an associate in its New York headquarters' legal department and in 1990, selected him to serve as its chief legal officer.

Mr. Hayes has devoted lifelong commitment to public interest causes. In addition to his duties at the NAACP, he contributed his talents to board or committee responsibilities for the American Judicature Society, the Public Justice Center of Baltimore, and the Columbia Sportsmen's Association in Maryland. He is a contributing author of publications, ranging from magazine articles to civil rights training materials.

**Darrell Jones Receives Two Honors**

President Darrell V. Jones was honored twice in recent weeks. On February 25 he was a recipient of an "Ebony Excellence" award by Faith Tabernacle Church in Chester. This was the first year the Ebony Excellence awards, in celebration of Black History Month, have been given by Faith Tabernacle Church.

Darrell was also the honoree at the Annual Banquet of the Eliza A. Parker Charity Royal Court #28, Order of Cyrenes. The event was held at Temple Baptist Church, Chester, on March 3.