

## REV. JESSE L. JACKSON, SR.

**BIOGRAPHY**

During his lifetime of public service, Rev. Jesse L. Jackson, Sr. has become an icon of our religious, political, social, and cultural lives. Having magnetized people of every profession, social position, and cultural persuasion for more than forty years, the Presidential Medal of Freedom winner has been at the vanguard of the civil and human rights movement in every locality and to every nationality. His two historic bids for the Presidency of the United States compelled civil rights icon and former U.N. Ambassador Andrew Young to call Reverend Jackson the “moral conscience of our times.” A master of the zeitgeist, his formation of the Rainbow Coalition has prompted countless others to tout him as “the Great Unifier.”

Born on October 8, 1941 in Greenville, South Carolina, Rev. Jackson was a gifted student-athlete who was recruited to play professional baseball by the Chicago White Sox, opting instead to attend Big Ten powerhouse the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana on a football scholarship. Later transferring to North Carolina A&T State University, he continued his collegiate football career while simultaneously falling under the tutelage of legendary scholar-theologian and former U.S. Peace Corps Director, Rev. Dr. Samuel Proctor. Feeling him best suited for the ministry, Rev. Dr. Proctor convinced him to accept a Rockefeller Foundation Grant to pursue a master's degree at the University of Chicago's Chicago Theological Seminary. It was then, in 1965, that the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. hired him to join his staff and head up the fledgling economic development arm of his organization S.C.L.C., Operation Breadbasket, thus, prompting him to join the Civil Rights Movement full time.

In the intervening years, Reverend Jackson's position at the forefront of the fight for the civil, economic and human rights all people has impacted the national and global community in an astonishing fashion. Dubbed the "Country Preacher" and the "Great Communicator", Rev. Jackson has tirelessly traveled the length and breadth of this nation and world and is recognized as one of the foremost preacher/orators of the age. From "I am somebody" to "Our time has come" to "If your mind can conceive it and your heart can believe it, then you can achieve it" to "Keep hope alive", his sloganeering has had a transformative effect upon the culture. Top-rated television judge, Greg Mathis and countless others credit his youth rallies as primary inspirational tools that convinced him and them to get in, return to or stay in school. He has registered more voters than any person in American history and his historic bids for the Presidency of the United States have changed the cultural and political landscape of this country: in his 1984 campaign he won 3.5 million votes, registered over two million new voters and helped enable the Democratic Party to regain control of the U.S. Senate in 1986; in his 1988 run he doubled his vote tallies, winning seven million votes and registered more than two million others.

A highly respected world leader, Rev. Jackson has acted many times as an international diplomat appealing for and winning the release of Americans held captive in Syria, Cuba, Kuwait, Iraq and Kosovo. Freed American P.O.W. Shoshanna Johnson stated that while in captivity she and

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her fellow captives wondered aloud, "Do you think Jesse will come and get us?" In a nod to his unique ability to build unprecedented bridges of understanding between people, in 1997 Rev. Jackson was appointed by President Bill Clinton and Secretary of State Madeleine Albright as "Special Envoy of the President and Secretary of State for the Promotion of Democracy in Africa."

Rev. Jackson's list of accomplishments has continued to lengthen. In 1991 he became only the second living person in American history to be given the honor of having his likeness placed on a U.S. Post Office pictorial cancellation postal stamp. Twice, he has been invited to London to lead the largest marches in the world: once, in 1985, to call for the end of apartheid in South Africa; and for the second time, in 2003, to appeal to world leaders to halt the march to the war in Iraq. He has been a perennial occupant on the Gallup List of the Ten Most Respected Americans for more than twenty years. A recipient of the prestigious NAACP Spingarn Award, he has received honors from hundreds of grassroots and community organizations and has been awarded more than 40 honorary doctorate degrees. Additionally, he frequently lectures at many of the nation's premier colleges and universities including: Howard; Yale; Princeton; Morehouse; Harvard; Columbia; Stanford; and Hampton University. A noted media personality Rev. Jackson has hosted "Both Sides with Jesse Jackson" on CNN and the WORD Network's "UP FRONT with JESSE JACKSON." He is the author of two books and the co-author of two others with his son, U.S. Representative Jesse L. Jackson, Jr. : Keep Hope Alive (South End Press, 1989); Straight From the Heart (Fortress Press, 1987); Legal Lynching: Racism, Injustice, and the Death Penalty (Marlowe & Company, 1996); and It's About The Money! (Times Books / Random House, Inc., 2000).

In the spring of 2004, Rev. Jackson launched his radio show *Keep Hope Alive™ with Reverend Jesse Jackson.* Nationally syndicated by Premiere Networks, the two-hour weekend talk program broadcasts live on Sundays from 5 - 7 a.m. PT in more than 40 markets. Each week, Rev. Jackson connects with millions of listeners as he guides them through today’s most important topics and issues. For more information, please visit <http://www.keephopealiveradio.com/>.

While at North Carolina A&T, Rev. Jackson met and married his college sweetheart, Jacqueline Lavinia Brown in 1962. They have five children and six grandchildren. The Jacksons reside in Chicago and Washington, D.C.

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