

Julian Bond gets NAACP top honor

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The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People National Board of Directors announces that its Chairman, Hon. Julian Bond, will be the 94th recipient of the Spingarn Medal, the NAACP's highest honor. Bond will receive the award during the NAACP National Convention in New York City July 16 at the annual Spingarn Dinner as the Association continues celebrating the 100th anniversary of its founding.

The Spingarn Medal, instituted in 1914 by the late Joel E. Spingarn, then NAACP Chairman, is awarded for the highest or noblest achievement by an American of African descent during the preceding year or years.

"Chairman Bond's record of service and leadership is legendary and inspiring," said NAACP President and CEO Benjamin Todd Jealous. "He has suffered and survived many attacks from extremists, but has always stood strong. His passionate oratory, deep thinking, political savvy and sense of humor make him a unique scholar-statesman of our time and an omnipresent soldier in the struggle for equality on many fronts."

Bond has served as Chairman of the National Board of the NAACP since 1998, being re-elected most recently Feb. 21.

Having been on the cutting edge of social change since 1960, Bond has faced jail for his convictions and being an active participant in the movements for civil rights and economic justice. In his student days as founder of the Atlanta student sit-ins at Morehouse College, he directed three years of nonviolent anti-segregation protests that won integration of Atlanta's movie theaters, lunch counters and parks. He was arrested for sitting-in at the then-segregated cafeteria at Atlanta City Hall. He was also co-founder of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, becoming its Communications Director and later working in voter registration drives in rural Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi and Arkansas.

He was prevented from taking his seat in the Georgia House of Representatives in 1965 by members

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who objected to his opposition to the Vietnam War. He was re-elected to his own vacant seat and un-seated again, and seated only after a third election and a unanimous decision of the United States Supreme Court. He would become a veteran of both chambers, putting in more than 20 years of service in the Georgia General Assembly.

Co-chair of a challenge delegation from Georgia to the 1968 Democratic Convention, Bond was nominated for Vice-President of the U.S. but had to decline because he was too young. He was the first African American to be nominated for vice president of the United States.

Last April Bond was named a "Living Legend" by the Library of Congress and in 2002 received the prestigious National Freedom Award from the U.S. Civil Rights Museum, which honors individuals who have made significant contributions in civil rights and who have laid the foundation for present and future leaders in the battle for human rights.

With his bold, distinguishable voice he has narrated numerous documentaries, including the Academy Award winning "A Time For Justice" and the prize-winning and critically acclaimed series, "Eyes On The Prize," that chronicles the American civil rights era of the '50s and '60s. He was a commentator on America's Black Forum, the oldest black-owned show in television syndication, while his poetry and articles have appeared in numerous publications.

Affectionately known as "the dean of civil rights," Bond is frequently interviewed on news shows, hosted NBC's *Saturday Night Live* in 1977 and even had a small appearance in the critically-acclaimed movie *Ray* in 2004.

Bond serves as Chairman of the Premier Auto Group PAG (Volvo, Land Rover, Aston-Martin, and Jaguar) Diversity Council and is on the boards of People for the American Way, the Southern Poverty Law Center and the Council for a Livable World, and the advisory board of the Harvard Business School Initiative on Social Enterprise, among others.

The holder of 25 honorary degrees, he is a distinguished professor at American University in Washington, DC, and a professor of history at the University of Virginia.

The purpose of the Spingarn Medal is to call attention to distinguished merit and achievement among Americans of African descent, serve as a reward for such achievement and stimulate the ambition of youth of African descent. A nine person committee manages the Spingarn Medal selection process. The committee's decision is final in all matters affecting the award.

To date, 93 Spingarn Medals have been awarded, recognizing achievements in a range of

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fields.

Medalists include Dr. Benjamin S. Carson, U.S. Rep. John Conyers (D-MI), former U.S. Secretary of State Colin L. Powell, media personality Oprah Winfrey, baseball hall of famer Henry "Hank" Aaron, Vernon Jordan, U.S. Rep. John Lewis (D-GA), William H. Cosby, Jr., Maya Angelou, Virginia Governor L. Douglas Wilder, Rev. Jesse Jackson, Percy E. Sutton, the late Gordon Parks, John Hope Franklin, the late Judge Leon Higginbotham Jr., the late Carl Rowan, NAACP Chair Emeritus Myrlie Evers-Williams, businessman and publisher Earl G. Graves, Sr., Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., artist Jacob Lawrence, Rosa Parks, opera singer Leontyne Price, the late Judge Constance Baker Motley, Judge Robert L. Carter, the late Oliver W. Hill, Sr.

Founded in 1909, the NAACP--the nation's oldest, largest and most widely-recognized grassroots-based civil rights organization—is celebrating its 100th anniversary this year. Its more than half-million members and supporters throughout the United States and the world are the premier advocates for civil rights in their communities, conducting voter mobilization and monitoring equal opportunity in the public and private sectors.