



NAACP
Pennsylvania
STATE CONFERENCE

PRESS RELEASE

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NAACP Pennsylvania State Conference Remembers the Life and Legacy of Civil Rights Leader Reverend Cordy Tindell Vivian

The NAACP takes time to remember another civil rights hero who weathered the storm of fighting for justice throughout a history of racism. Rev. C. T. Vivian was a Baptist minister who was a civil rights organizer and field general for Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. While working with S.C.L.C., he was the national director for about eighty-five local affiliate chapters from 1963 to 1966 where he directed protest activities and training in nonviolence as well as coordinated voter registration and community development projects.

After a year pastoring in Chattanooga, Tennessee, Rev. Vivian helped organize a contingent for the 1963 March on Washington. Dr. King's staff invited Rev. Vivian to join him. His civil rights work continued as he became director of the Urban Training Center for Christian Mission in Chicago in 1966 and dean of Shaw University Divinity School in Raleigh, N.C., in 1972.

The work that Rev. Vivian began in civil rights as a student in Nashville would continue for the rest of his life. He went on to focus his priorities in education for African Americans and established a scholarship initiative that would later become known as the Upward Bound Program. "The goal of Upward Bound is to increase the rate at which participants complete secondary education and enroll in and graduate from institutions of postsecondary education." He continued his work in civil rights and in 2012 returned to Southern Christian Leadership Conference where he began in 1961, becoming interim president. In 2013, President Barack Obama recognized Reverend C. T. Vivian for his life-long work in civil rights by awarding him the highest civilian honor in the nation, the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

"The life and legacy of Rev. C. T. Vivian is another civil rights icon that should be written in the books of American History for all to know", stated President Kenneth L. Huston.

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Founded in 1909, the NAACP is the nation's oldest and largest nonpartisan civil rights organization with a mission to secure the political, educational, social, and economic equality of rights in order to eliminate race-based discrimination and ensure the health and well-being of all persons. Its members throughout the United States and the world are the premier advocates for civil rights in their communities. The Pennsylvania State Conference was established in 1934 and pursues the same mission throughout the Commonwealth.