



**National
Urban League**

To Be Equal #36

September 5, 2012

Women of Power at Forefront of National Urban League Movement

Marc H. Morial
President and CEO
National Urban League

"If the first woman God ever made was strong enough to turn the world upside down all alone, these women together ought to be able to turn it back, and get it right side up again!"
Sojourner Truth

At the start of a new school year, millions of women and mothers are working overtime to prepare their children to return to the classroom. I thought this would be a good time to remind ourselves of the many simultaneous roles that women, and especially women of color, play in uplifting our families, our communities and our nation.

Women have always been at the forefront of the Urban League Movement. Ruth Standish Baldwin joined Dr. George Edmund Haynes in 1910 as founders of this organization. The National Council of Urban League Guilds, under the current leadership of Guild President, Ms. Frankie M. Brown, is celebrating its 70th anniversary this year. Considered the heart and soul of the Urban League Movement, the Guild was started in New York City in 1942 by Mrs. Mollie Moon. Through its 85 chapters across the United States, the Guild plays an instrumental role in connecting the League with its communities, and its members contribute thousands of volunteer hours annually.

Women are also leading the National Urban League into its second century of service and empowerment. The CEO's of some of our largest affiliates are women, including Arva Rice in New York, Nancy Flake Johnson in Atlanta, Esther Bush in Pittsburgh, Maudine Cooper in Washington, DC, Patricia Coulter in Philadelphia and Andrea Zopp in Chicago.

In addition, the National Urban League Young Professionals (NULYP), our cadre of volunteers aged 21-40, is also headed by Ms. Brandi R. Richard. Our NULYP members are the next generation of leaders inside and outside the Urban League movement; and contribute thousands of dollars and volunteer hours to local Urban League affiliates.

Brenda W. McDuffie, President and CEO of the Buffalo Urban League was one of 11 "Women of Power" honored at the recent National Urban League Conference in New Orleans. Ms.

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McDuffie has devoted her life to community service and she has led the Buffalo Urban League for the past 14 years. Others chosen as 2012 Women of Power are Louisiana's United States Senator, Mary Landrieu; Deborah Elam, Vice President, General Electric; Kim Fields, actress and television director/producer; Ohio Congresswoman Marcia L. Fudge; April Holmes, athlete and global motivational developer; Dr. Debra B. Morton, Senior Pastor, Greater St. Stephen Full Gospel Baptist Church, New Orleans; Natalie Randolph, head football coach at Calvin Coolidge High School and the first female high school football coach in Washington, DC; Sally Ann Roberts, News Anchor at WWL-TV in New Orleans; Laysha Ward, President Community Relations and the Target Foundation; and last but not least, my mother, Sybil Morial. My mother has not only nurtured two New Orleans mayors – her husband, the late, Ernest “Dutch” Morial and me – she has also distinguished herself as an outstanding educator, community activist and businesswoman. Like so many of our Women of Power, Sybil Morial overcame numerous racial and gender barriers to achieve her goals, serve her community and inspire others.

There is no doubt, America would not be as strong as it is today and the National Urban League Movement would not be the force for empowerment that it has become without the indispensable leadership of countless Women of Power.

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