

# Forming of the struggle 1963-1978

**By Shauna Rhone**

Additional Contributors:

Milele Chikasa Anana & Jonathan Gramling

**I**n 1963, four Madisonians, Leslie H. Fishel, Jr., Sydney Forbes, Isobel Clark and Francis Morrison, sent a letter to Dean Erwin Gaumnitz, president of the United Givers Fund, to request funds for a feasibility study on the burgeoning population of the city's Black citizens. According to the 1960 U.S. Census, there were 1,489 Black Madisonians, up from a mere 648 ten years earlier. According to the letter, the committee wanted to look at the city's "non-White population and their interrelationship with the White population" for the purpose of determining a need for an "official branch of the National Urban League in Madison."

**B**y the time the study was completed the following year, the Friends of the Urban League, which included a diverse group of people from different cultural and faith communities, had grown to almost 40 members.

**T**he University of Wisconsin was so impressed by the study they emulated it, focusing on Black unemployment and the dropout rate in local high schools. "Parts, if not all, will be adopted and used for graduate student work by the School of Social Work," the group reported to the United Givers Fund executive director Francis X. Morrissey. The study confirmed their belief that the Black population was steadily increasing in Madison.

**"T**he Executive Committee of the Friends of the Urban League feels deeply that Madison will soon exercise a strong pull for disadvantaged people," the report said. "Negroes in great numbers are already on the periphery in Madison and the discontented will move on quickly. We believe that Madison ought to be ready to receive and absorb them as useful and constructive citizens of the community. This is what the Urban League is all about."

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improve.”*

**T**he Givers Fund, now called the United Way of Dane County, initially rejected the group's request for funding, the Capital Times reported, on the grounds that “discrimination as it exists in other communities does not exist in Madison.” However, on February 20, 1968, the National Urban League approved the application of the Friends of the Urban League for affiliation and a movement for justice and education was born in Madison.

**D**uring the group's annual meeting in March 1969, new Madison Urban League president Hilton E. Hanna revealed the group's mission: “that special priority would be given to programs in the areas of job development and employment, education and youth incentives and housing.”

**T**he group struggled to find its mission in the 1970s. The group's first executive director, Nelson L. Cummings, Jr., charged “a good place for Black Power to begin is in the White community. Blacks are not the problem; they are the victims of the problem,” Cummings said at the group's first annual dinner in 1970. He said he spent time in the White community “because that's where the problem is. People don't understand the scope of our problem and what we're trying to do. The Madison Urban League is going to turn Madison around, and we won't be satisfied with anything less,” he told the crowd of about 425 attendees.

**D**irector Myron Robinson, who succeeded Cummings in 1971, announced an initiative to dispel the group's image as an organization for the Black upper-class. “People all over are asking what the Urban League

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**stands for and I think you will find (then national director) Whitney Young speaking to the need for new directions and increased emphasis on helping the poor help themselves," Robinson told the Wisconsin State Journal. He also said the group's membership would become more multiracial in order to be more inclusive in its solutions.**

**D**uring its first four years, the League's operating budget increased from \$27,000 to almost \$80,000, its membership increased from 89 to 161 and the staff increased from two to 12 members. League President Merritt Norvell touted the group's "programs we can say are relevant to the community," including a job development and placement program; a Work Incentive Plan, which was a precursor to today's Welfare to Work job program for welfare recipients and a program to train Blacks for jobs in the construction trades.

**W**ith the passage of the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) in 1973, in the next year the Urban League was able to expand the employment and training programs it was able to offer the community.

**I**n 1974, the League collaborated with city and county officials after a League investigation forced the city to address its discriminatory hiring practices. The city, under pressure of losing federal funding, more than tripled the number of employees of color. For example, the Madison Fire Department increased its minority workforce from one to five. "The central fact of the moment," according to Myron Robinson, "is that minority and disadvantaged people represent the deepest interests of labor, government, education and the whole of American society."

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*Charles M.*

*Hill, Sr., Board*

*President, 1974*

**I**n an effort to increase its welfare-to-work mission, the League sponsored 21 women to learn secretarial skills in 1974 through the League’s Secretarial Skills Building Program. By that year, the membership roster grew to 207 with a budget of more than \$200,000. Yet, then-President Charles M. Hill, Sr. warned, “...this is hardly the time for complacency....we must find a new reservoir of commitment and resources to meet these challenges”of soaring unemployment, a sagging economy and ‘unprecedented inflation.’”

**T**he League moved from its first office at 31 South Mills Street into its current location at 151 East Gorham Street in 1976. Donations from board members and other friends of the Madison Urban League helped secure the downpayment for the converted home.

**I**n 1977, Executive Director Robinson was succeeded by James C. Graham, Jr. With Graham, the board and Urban League staff continue to persue their mission in four key areas: economic development and employment, education, housing and social welfare. New programs included a tutorial program to help students receive their GEDs, an ex-offenders reintegration program and an apprenticeship program for skilled labor jobs.

**I**n an interview with the Capital Times in 1978, Graham said a stated goal for the Urban League was “to bring a sense of community in the city. I think the Urban League, working in conjunction with other organizations, can bring that feeling to Madison.”

# Finding Our Niche 1968-1978

**T**he decade of the 1980s was a tumultuous time for the nation and for Madison. Executive Director James Graham Jr. recounted the country's sad state in his annual address: "In this year, we have seen the attempted assassination of (then NUL president) Vernon Jordan, Jr. (shot by avowed racist Joseph Paul Franklin while visiting Fort Wayne, Indiana); the rapid acceleration of the Ku Klux Klan and its ilk; the first "race riot" in almost twenty years (in Miami after the police killing of motorcyclist Arthur McDuffie) a lynching in Alabama; the acquittal of Klan members in North Carolina; overt disobedience to desegregation orders by public officials; the avowals of current national office holders to dismantle affirmative action and, of course, the budget cuts in social welfare, housing and employment."

**T**hose governmental budget cuts forced the League to return to its original partnership between business and community leaders "to provide service to the newly urbanized poor," said League president Erroll Davis, Jr., who led the group from 1980-82.

**D**uring the League's 12th annual dinner in 1981, speaker and outgoing United Way executive director Ralph Dickerson said, "No single neighborhood can stand by itself. Unifying the community is the strategic issue for the 1980s. It requires all of us to work together in the private, public and university sectors if our future is going to be successful."

**B**y 1982, Graham heeded the NUL national conference's call for "new strategies for changing times." The rapid growth of the city's Spanish-speaking population from the Cuban Mariel boatlift settlers put a strain on the employment picture.

*In a 1980 speech,  
MUL Director  
James Graham,  
Jr. recounted  
a tumultuous  
year that saw  
the attempted  
assassination of  
Vernon Jordan, the  
first "race riot"  
in almost twenty  
years, a lynching  
in Alabama; the  
acquittal of Klan  
members, and  
disobedience to  
desegregation.*

**H**e saw the League "at the forefront of the fight for equality and justice ... Now, as we enter the decade of the eighties, public support has eroded, government grants and subsidies are being drastically reduced and/or eliminated and there is much greater competition from our traditional allies for the same dollars."

**T**he League responded with beginning and intermediate clerical skills training programs that utilized area business as internship sites to help ready workers because "the only real job growth in Madison is clerical," Graham said. Companies like IBM, American Family Insurance, CUNA, Oscar Mayer, Wisconsin Power & Light, M&I, First Wisconsin National Bank and EDS Federal Corp. all contributed equipment for the program.

**T**he Urban League also created the Cuban-Haitian Employment Program during this period that led to the beginning of several partnerships with Centro Hispano. The Urban League staff held office hours at Centro Hispano's Fairchild Street offices.

**T**he Urban League experienced a major funding crisis on September 30, 1983 when CETA funding came to an end and the League was forced to end four programs. In spite of the funding crisis, the Urban League was still able to establish the Single Parent Employment Program in 1983 to give young single parents more marketable skills for self-sufficiency.

**T**he Madison Urban League scored a great coup when Betty Franklin left the presidency of the local NAACP chapter to become its new director in 1984. Her first goal was to bring the League's books out of the red.

*Long before it  
became an official  
holiday, the Urban  
League observed  
Dr. Martin Luther  
King Jr.'s birthday  
as an agency  
holiday for which  
the staff received  
a paid day off. In  
January 1985, the  
Urban League  
held its first  
King Community  
Breakfast at the  
South Madison  
Neighborhood  
Center.*

**U**nder her leadership, the Urban League secured state funding for the Transition to Independence Program, a comprehensive social service/ employment program for single parents. It also successfully competed for Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) funding for a clerical skills training program that included a word processing lab in the newly-renovated basement of the Gorham Street offices and the Summer Youth Employment Program that offered employability skills training and paid work experience to African American teenagers.

**P**resident Darl Drummond praised the ULGM board in 1985 for “assuming greater responsibility and leadership in identifying ways to advance the mission of the League. We have turned many corners in a short period of time.” The Capital City Quarterly newspaper also debuted in 1985 “and gave the Madison Urban League’s services and programs even greater visibility” including kudos from the national office, wrote Executive Director Franklin in her annual report.

**L**ong before it became an official holiday, the Urban League observed Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s birthday as an agency holiday. In January 1985, one year before the King Holiday became law, the League held its first King Community Breakfast. It was held at the South Madison Neighborhood Center and featured the “Cooks of South Madison,” which included Blossom Maiden and the late Anna Mae Walker. Many of those who helped cook were later instrumental in setting up the Urban League Guild. In 1986, due to the event’s success, it was moved to Edgewood High School, where it is still held today. And in the late 1980s, the Outstanding Young Person Award was established, which at first honored academically achieving African American students before later expanding to include all students of color.

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Centro Hispano.  
All of these efforts  
benefitted from  
the efforts of  
many community  
volunteers.*

**By 1987, Franklin had helped restore the organization's solvency and rejuvenated its empowerment programs. She cited five citywide issues the League tackled that year: the Madison Metropolitan School District's integration plan, a growing number of racial incidents, the status of minority achievement in the school district, sensitivity training for service providers and the high rate of Black youth entering Corrections. Franklin-Hammonds said "we will continue to serve, inspire and advocate for improved conditions in our community." During this time, the Madison Urban League Guild was reactivated and continues in service today in its fundraising mission.**

**The good news for the League's 20th anniversary in 1988 was plentiful. Beginning in 1986, the agency had begun to establish a system of educational support programs at Madison middle schools. Project Jamaa worked with sixth and seventh graders and the Pre-Employment Program (which collaborated with Centro Hispano) worked with eighth graders. Our educational support programs have benefitted greatly from the many volunteers who have worked as tutors, mentors and in other capacities in our schools.**

**During this period, the Urban League obtained a dramatic increase in its funding from United Way of Dane County and, for the first time, was granted funding from the city of Madison's Office of Community Services and Dane County Dept. of Human Services. Yet, it lost its clerical skills training program due to arguments that training programs were best operated by technical colleges and institutions.**



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**“The Urban League is a multiracial, multicultural organization,” she said. “While common knowledge may be that we only work with Blacks, our clients know differently.” Reflective of this was the Multicultural Agency Training Program, which was designed with Centro Hispano and United Refugee Services to provide racial sensitivity training to the staff of area human service agencies. During its run, more than 50 agencies received the training and the program eventually received a National Urban League award.**

**Board chair Joseph R. Thomas announced a capital fundraising campaign for location renovation to begin April 1989. Other highlights for the year included The Capital City Quarterly continued to publish; the Education Initiative published a “Report on the Academic Achievement of Black Students” for the 1987-88 school year; membership recruitment resulted in 51 percent over the financial goal and the League celebrated the year with a benefit concert by Sweet Honey in the Rock.**

**The Report on the Academic Achievement of Black Students was a prodigious event for the city of Madison. While it was anecdotally known for years, this report conclusively proved that there was an academic achievement gap for African American students. Not only did it provide a rationale for the youth programs that the League was operating, but it also led to the creation of the Madison Metropolitan School District’s equity and diversity efforts under the leadership of Dr. Virginia Henderson. Also through Project Involve, a pilot program housed at Lincoln Elementary School, the League helped establish parent-school liaisons at many MMSD elementary schools.**

# Building Strategic Partnerships 1988-1998

**B**y the time National Urban League president John Jacob took the stage at the local chapter's 20th anniversary in 1988, he said the tide had started to turn for Blacks. "There are Blacks today in positions of power that were unthinkable" a few decades ago, he said, and because of civil rights struggles by the Urban League and others, there also exists a "mass of educated skilled Black middle-class people. Education is not only a survival issue for Black people, it is a survival issue for America," Jacob said, noting that almost all jobs in the near future will require some education beyond high school. "Otherwise," he said, "they are doomed to sweeping up the offices of the White kids who go to college."

**T**he chapter's offices in 1989 were filled to capacity with progressive programs and community meetings on neighborhood improvements. That year, a major undertaking began to make the former kindergarten and photographer's studio look and operate more like an office befitting the good works of the Madison Urban League. A \$105,000 fundraising campaign was held and received donations from corporations like Wisconsin Power & Light, First National Bank and Pepsi-Cola Bottling Co. and organizations like Women in Focus. For president Betty Franklin-Hammonds, one donation was particularly special.

**"T**he most heartwarming thing was a call from one of our former clients who is now a professional painter at the university," she told the Capital Times. "He said he'd give us 10 hours of work and paint the inside of the building. He wanted to give something back." Not only did the agency renovate the inside of its building, but it also restored the façade of the building — including the windows — to its original appearance. The agency won several awards from area historic preservation groups for its efforts.

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**The League provided direct services to 534 city and county residents in 1989, from counseling and tutoring to investigating claims of housing and employment discrimination. "In addition to direct services, we reached over 10,000 residents through the Community Advocacy Program," Executive Director Franklin-Hammonds and board chair Joseph R. Thomas said in a joint statement.**

**By this time, the Urban League had entered a partnership with Wisconsin Power & Light (now called Alliant Energy) to award the YES (Youth Enhancement Scholarship) Scholarship to deserving African American students from Wisconsin Power & Light's service area.**

**The summer of 1991 saw the creation of a five-month employment program for youths ages 11 to 14. The purpose of the program was to provide a productive alternative for pre-teens who lived in the Truax-Wright, Webb-Rethke and Baird-Fisher public housing complexes.**

**"We realize that while we have made enormous progress in serving our constituents, we are forever faced with the challenge of how to serve our constituents and keep abreast of emerging needs," said outgoing Executive Director Franklin-Hammonds in her 1992 State of the League release. The theme for the 24th anniversary celebration was "Madison's Future: It's Up To You."**

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**I**n 1992-1993, as part of the communitywide effort spearheaded by Dr. Richard Harris, Jerry Smith and others, Stephen Braunginn and the League’s Program Planning Committee advocated for the creation a South Madison middle school. Madison Middle School 2000 opened in 1994 and was changed to Wright Middle School in 1996 when its facility was built on Fish Hatchery Road.

**I**n 1993, Johnny Mickler, Sr., League president and CEO announced the Single Family Rent to Own Program, a partnership with Firststar Bank (Now US Bank) and the Wisconsin Affordable Housing Corporation. The new program directly competed with the city’s Affords Housing program, which offered homes to middle-class residents. The program purchased, renovated and leased quality affordable single-family homes to the working poor. For example, a house on Few Street was purchased for \$42,000 and \$35,000 worth of improvements were completed. At the end of a 15-year lease-to-own period, the qualifying families would take ownership of the equity in the house. Five homes were purchased and renovated during the first year.

**T**hen-Firststar vice president Dennis Sandora said “the trend in providing affordable housing is for businesses to align themselves with not-for-profit businesses. We sought out the Urban League in this venture because of their reputation in the community.”

**B**oard chair Stephen H. Braunginn dedicated the 27th annual dinner in 1995 to four League members who passed that year: founder Rev. James C. Wright, Rev. Charles Garel, Orlando Bell and Joe Thomas. “All of those who strive for equality in our community hold these giants in our spirits as we continue our struggle for quality and affordable housing, for quality education, for jobs that pay a decent wage and have health benefits and for safer neighborhoods.

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**Their work shall not have been done in vain," said Braunginn. League President and CEO Mickler reported the previous year's annual dinner "was the most successful in the history of the agency." The Guild's annual Black and White Ball and fashion show also began that year.**

**T**he ULGM received an award in 1996 from the national office for its work in improving racial relations in the city. Mickler told the Capital Times, "The award recognizes what we have done to help bridge issues and concerns of races in Madison." The Multicultural Agency Training Program, a joint project with Centro Hispano, United Refugee Service and American Indian Art Shegonee, provided sensitivity training to local agencies serving people of color.

**K**enneth Baldwin, board chair, praised a nationwide initiative to expand the League's role in improving student performance. The national office announced in 1997 the formation of a nationwide coalition of churches and civic, professional and social organizations called the Campaign for African American Achievement. National President Hugh Price said the coalition's goal was to "ensure that teachers and school administrators in every local community are held accountable for the performance of their students. Local chapters will act as the facilitator and organizer of community efforts to solve local problems through shared vision, goals and strategies."

**I**n 1998, Baldwin reported "while there have been some minor setbacks this year (including the search for a new president/CEO), the Urban League continues to provide high quality programs and services." Interim president/CEO Charles L. Sims praised the year's highlights, including the job services network program, a saving and investing workshop, the League's Rent-To-Own program winning a HUD partnership award and the activation of 10 teen peer educators for the League's AIDS/HIV program.

# Working To Close The Gaps: 1998-2008

**A**t the turn of the new century, The Urban League of Greater Madison continued to push its mission of education, employment and empowerment.

**“**The Urban League is actively working with the Madison School Board and Superintendent Art Rainwater to develop strategies to improve African-American student achievement and the graduation rate,” ULGM president and CEO Stephen Braunginn said in a 2000 interview with the Capital Times. **“**While we continue to face many challenges, we also have so much to be proud of.”

**I**n 2000, the Urban League entered into discussions with United Way of Dane County about its middle school programming. Through these discussions, the Urban League, in conjunction with United Way of Dane County and the Madison School Community Recreation Program, transformed Project Jamaa into the Schools of Hope middle school tutoring program. Now including Centro Hispano and numerous other community partners, the Schools of Hope middle school project operates in nine Madison middle schools and two Sun Prairie Middle Schools with expansion into the Oregon school district planned for Fall 2009. A pilot expansion into La Follette High School is also planned for Fall 2008. The program has now touched the lives of over 6,000 middle school students.

**T**he Urban League’s network of community allies, including Inacom Information Systems, also increased in 2000 with the implementation of the national PowerUP initiative to increase Internet access in more communities. Through this initiative, the Urban League helped set up computer labs at several community centers.

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**League established the Fatherhood Responsibility Program, one of Wisconsin's first to address the needs of low-income non-custodial fathers. The program combines employment services with parenting education and peer support in order to build parenting skills and nurture father-child relationships.**

**A**lso new in 2000 was a partnership with the Centers for Prevention and Intervention and the Madison Equal Opportunities Commission to bring the national program Study Circles on Race to ignite dialogue on social and political issues throughout the city.

**I**n 2001, the Madison Community Foundation and retired UW-Madison professor J. Marshall Osbourne donated matching grants of \$30,000 and \$40,000 respectively to establish an endowment for ULGM youth services. The total starting funds totaled more than \$80,000. "The Urban League of Greater Madison has demonstrated the leadership we want to see," said Kathleen Voit, MCF president.

**J**ust as quickly as it started, the Study Circles on Race were broken a year later by a dispute over financing. Despite winning a national award for race relations from the U.S. Conference of Mayors, then-Mayor Sue Bauman objected to the cost and wanted the program to expand from 170 participants to 1,000 with a city allocation of \$10,000. ULGM was paid \$74,500 to initiate the program in 2000. Eventually, the city of Madison decided to run the program and not renew its contract with ULGM and the Centers for Prevention and Intervention.

**I**n 2002, the Urban League found itself tangling with another city: Fitchburg. When the cities of Madison and Fitchburg decided to divide and dissolve the Town of Madison, many community members found racism in a

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**plan that revealed Fitchburg's plans to not annex parts of the town where poorer residents lived. "The Urban League stands by its position that by choosing annexation, Fitchburg is cherry-picking," League president Steve Braunginn told the Capital Times. Fitchburg's plans were approved.**

**I**n 2003, The Urban League and Madison's AIDS Network used grant money from the Wisconsin HIV AIDS Program and the Wisconsin AIDS Fund to create the MOCA (Men of Color Access) program for support groups for homosexual men. Braunginn said in an interview, "We want to help African-American men gain a foothold on their own health issues."

**I**n 2004, the Urban League underwent a communitywide strategic planning process. Business, educational, governmental and community leaders were enlisted in an effort to determine where the agency should focus its efforts. As a result of the process, the agency shed some of its social service components and focused more on initiatives that would promote economic self-sufficiency in the African American community.

**A** new job training program started in 2004 was also groundbreaking for the city and the Urban League. The Medical Administrative Training Program allows students to learn skills in the emerging of health care. Career training opportunities include medical receptionist, medical records clerk and coding specialist, among others. Program sponsors include Dean/St. Mary's, Meriter Hospital, Physicians Plus, UW Medical Foundation, UW Hospitals and Clinics, WPS and Danenet, a computer training and support agency. Credits from the training program are also transferable to Madison Area Technical College.

**2**005 saw the dawn of ULGM's most ambitious project: an \$8 million economic development one-stop center, to be located at the Villager Mall site in South Madison.



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to be located  
in the current  
Villager Mall.  
The new facility  
will include  
a Workforce  
Solutions Center,  
other tenants, and  
much more.*

Plans include an Urban League Workforce Solutions Center, training and education facilities for other Urban League programs, other non-profit tenants, a cultural lobby that honors the Urban League's history, and the Urban League's administrative offices. Today, the League is nearly halfway to its goal of \$5 million. Then League board Vice President Chuck Taylor believes the project will exceed expectations. "If the community will rally behind us," Taylor told the Capital Times, "it will become a reality."

Current ULGM president and CEO Scott Gray told the Capital Times during a 2005 interview the key to the League's success is expanding and focusing on its mission. "We have to be more results-oriented," Gray said. "The NAACP works on social justice. We want to work on economic justice issues." Board chair Derrell L. Connor emphasized the League's commitment to this strategy again in 2007. He described a three-point program focused on college readiness and career development, workforce development, and equity development. President/CEO Gray celebrated the expansion of the Medical Administrative Training Program from 15 to 40 participants per year and expanding the Schools of Hope math tutoring program to Sun Prairie. "But we know that our work is unfinished," said Gray.

Earlier this year, "The State of Black Madison 2008: Before the Tipping Point" was released, a comprehensive look at the status and challenges facing African Americans living in Madison and Dane County. Representatives from Asset Builders of America, the Charles Hamilton Houston Institute, the Genesis Community Development Corporation, The Madison Times and 100 Black Men joined the Urban League of Greater Madison in examining these important issues. "These discussions revealed a great need to create a comprehensive and collaborative strategy to help African Americans achieve economic success," Gray said in the report's Forward. "We invite all people of goodwill to answer our call to action."

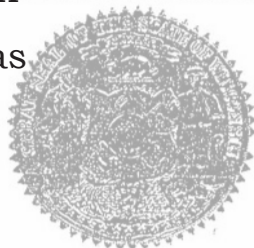
## FOUNDING MEMBERS OF THE URBAN LEAGUE OF GREATER MADISON

Don W. Anderson  
 Charles Arnold  
 Geraldine M. Berg  
 Stuart B. Crawford  
 Jerry Davis  
 Leslie H. Fishel, Jr.  
 Sydney Forbes  
 Marvin Foster  
 Mrs. J.E. Guy  
 Hilton Hanna  
 Mrs. Fred Harrington  
 Rev. Nicholas Katinas  
 Robert Lee  
 Kathy Mann



TO ALL TO WHOM THESE PRESENTS SHALL COME:  
 I, DOUGLAS LAFOLLETTE, Secretary of State of the State of Wisconsin and  
 Keeper of the Great Seal thereof, do hereby certify that the annexed copy of  
 Articles of Incorporation (Filed October 27, 1957) of  
 MADISON URBAN LEAGUE, INC.

has been compared by me with the record on file in this Office and that the same is  
 a true copy thereof, and of the whole of such record; and that I am the legal custodian  
 of such record, and that this certification is in due form.



In Testimony Whereof, I  
 have hereunto set my hand and affixed  
 the Great Seal of the State of the City  
 of Madison, on July 13, 1978.

*Douglas La Follette*  
 DOUGLAS LAFOLLETTE  
 Secretary of State

John McGrath  
 Mae Mitchell  
 Donald R. Murphy  
 Gretchen Pfankuchen  
 Walter Polner  
 Lee Roberts  
 Karl Schmidt  
 Clyde Selix  
 Dimetra Shivers  
 Stanley Shivers  
 William Bradford Smith  
 Carl Waller  
 Rev. James Wright

## PAST EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS & PRESIDENT/CEOs

Nelson Cummings 1968-70  
 Myron Robinson 1970-76  
 Jennifer Clifton Lee (Acting Director) 1977  
 James C. Graham, Jr. 1977-83  
 Eugene Johnson (Acting Director) 1983-84  
 Jonathan Gramling (Acting Director) 1983-84  
 Betty Franklin-Hammonds 1984-92

Jonathan Gramling (Acting Director) 1992-93  
 Johnny Mickler, Sr. 1993-97  
 Charles Sims (Interim Director) 1998  
 Stephen Braunginn 1998-2004  
 Edward Lee (Interim President/CEO) 2004-05  
 Scott Gray 2005-present