



Cornell William Brooks

Former President & CEO, NAACP & Professor, Harvard Kennedy School

A fourth-generation ordained minister, civil rights attorney, social justice activist, coalition builder and writer, Cornell Brooks served as the 18th President and CEO of the NAACP. While there, he led the organization in securing 11 victories against voter suppression in 12 months. As a speaker, Brooks has picked up the mantle of the powerful orators that have influenced him, including Dr. Martin Luther King. His moving keynotes inspire audiences to broaden their perspectives, expand their definition of inclusion and diversity, eliminate inequality and honor the history and ever-evolving mission of the civil and human rights movement.

A graduate of both Head Start and Yale Law School, Brooks is a champion of the transformative power of education and considers himself “a grandson, heir and a beneficiary” of the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* decision argued by NAACP litigator Thurgood Marshall. He was called to the ministry while studying political science at Jackson State University, later becoming a Martin Luther King Scholar and earning a Master of Divinity from the Boston University School of Theology. Prior to joining the NAACP, Brooks was the president of the New Jersey Institute for Social Justice and worked as a civil rights attorney, housing and social justice advocate and as a fourth-generation minister in the African Methodist Episcopal Church. He also followed in the footsteps of his grandfather by running for Congress as an impassioned voice for public education, fiscal responsibility and affordable healthcare. He attributes his interest in healthcare to his father's experiences as a physician in an African American community struggling with disparities in care. Brooks served for many years on the East Orange Hospital Board of Trustees and lead the NAACP's national agenda to improve the health and well-being of African American families and families of color.

Upon leaving the NAACP, he became the Hauser Professor of the Practice of Nonprofit Organizations and Professor of the Practice of Public Leadership and Social Justice at the Harvard Kennedy School. He is also Director of The William Monroe Trotter Collaborative for Social Justice at the School's Center for Public Leadership, and Visiting Professor of the Practice of Prophetic Religion and Public Leadership at Harvard Divinity School.

Brooks was most recently visiting professor of social ethics, law, and justice movements at Boston University's School of Law and School of Theology. He was a visiting fellow and director of the Campaign and Advocacy Program at the Kennedy School's Institute of Politics in 2017.



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Moving, motivating, informative and insightful, Brooks brings both a proud personal heritage and a thought-provoking vision to the podium. He also explores new horizons such as the role of technology in achieving diversity and promoting diversity as a "cause" for cause marketing. Ever-aware of his own life-changing experience inspired by a powerful speaker, Brooks views each engagement as having the potential to transform and touch the hearts and minds of his audience.

Topics:

- Healthcare Disparity & Economic Opportunity
- Unless Black Lives Matter, All Lives Can't Matter
- The Legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King
- The Global Village: Standing up for Tolerance & Inclusion