

Rights Leader Is Mourned With Awe

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By MURRAY SCHUMACH

Among the thousands who came without printed invitations to pay final tribute to Whitney M. Young Jr., the respect was close to awe.

They stood in line for hours outside Riverside Church, staring across the sunlit Hudson, seldom talking, and then usually in murmurs.

They filled the galleries and then the overflow chambers, where, eyes fixed on an empty stage or a maroon curtain, they listened to the singing of Leontyne Price, the eulogies of clerics, on loudspeakers. Even schoolchildren, caught up in the hush, were orderly.

Those who could not get into the massive church stood in a packed, decorous throng on the far side of Riverside Drive, waiting for the coffin to be carried from church to hearse, joining in sorrow with the black-clad family.

"The police didn't even know where to start the line when I came," said Ted Ackerman, who arrived at the church at 6 A.M., when the mist was still low over the New Jersey shore, to be first in line. A 25-year-old junior high school teacher in New Rochelle, N. Y., where the Youngs live, he had gone to high school with Mr. Young's older daughter, Marcia, now Mrs. Robert Coles.

"I never thought to ask for a ticket to the service," he said.

About half an hour before the service began, the line outside, mostly black and middle-aged, stiffened with embarrassment. At that time, members of the immediate

family of the civil rights leader stepped from a limousine on Riverside Drive, apparently planning to enter the church there.

The huge doors were still closed. As the family stood in a tight cluster at the curb, a policeman spoke nervously into his walkie talkie. "Tell someone to open the front doors." Nothing happened, the family re-entered the car, was driven around the corner and entered by the Claremont Avenue door.

As ushers fed hundreds of persons downstairs into overflow halls, a group of schoolchildren huddled outside one of the rooms, undecided whether to wait for their teacher, to look for their teacher or just fall in with the adults.

"We'll miss everything if we just stay here in the hall," said one, as the lush voice of Miss Price, singing "Climb Every Mountain," filtered up to them by loudspeaker from what is usually a theater.

They pushed ahead into the room, expecting to see someone on the stage. The silence of the audience quieted them. They found seats and remained until the end.

Nearly half an hour after the service had ended, Luis Mercada, principal of Public School 75, at West End Avenue and 96th Street, was still trying to round up the last of his 70 pupils.

"I'm still shy two pupils," he explained. "I know they must be somewhere here."

A quick flurry swept among the church ushers shortly before the service began. A monsignor, accompanying Cardinal Cooke,

asked where the vesting room was for the Cardinal. No one seemed to know. Ushers scurried about and the Cardinal vanished. A short time later, in cassock and red skull cap, he made his way to the altar.

"The Cardinal has to get dressed in all kinds of places," the monsignor said. "He's had to dress in corridors."

Security was a delicate matter. Notables were numerous. And the crowd, while sympathetic, was often close to important personages. After the service, for instance, the crowd from the church milled on the sidewalk outside the church, spilled into the street, and became commingled with those who had waited outside. The police tried to clear a path for funeral cars, but were reluctant to raise their voices or use force.

"The deceased was so well liked," said Deputy Chief Inspector Arthur B. Hill, who was in uniform, though not on duty. "The police try to keep things orderly and yet give the people an opportunity to mourn their loss, to grieve."

The mood of the service was captured in an exchange at the information booth nearly an hour after the last organ selection. A young black woman asked a middle-aged white woman if there were any more programs of the service. The white woman handed her a program, saying:

"This is the last one. Take it."

"No. I couldn't take it. It's yours."

"Please take it. That's what this is all about."