

By The Associated Press

LAGOS, Nigeria, March 11—Whitney M. Young Jr., executive director of the National Urban League, who focused his efforts in the civil rights movement on getting jobs for blacks, died here today while swimming. He was 49 years old.

Mr. Young was here for a conference to increase understanding between Africans and Americas. The cause of his death was not immediately known, but a heart attack was considered a possibility. An autopsy is scheduled.

The black leader had been swimming in the heavy surf with Ramsey Clark, former United States Attorney General; William W. Broom, Washington bureau chief for Ridder Publications; their wives, and Thomas Wyman, a Polaroid vice president.

"Ramsey pulled him out of the water and we gave him mouth-to-mouth resuscitation," Mr. Broom said.

**An Articulate Leader**

By THOMAS A. JOHNSON

"The only criterion by which I want to be measured is whether or not I have helped to improve the economic, political, health and social future for black people—not on the basis of how many white people I curse out."

This is where the urbane and articulate civil rights leader, Whitney Moore Young Jr., placed himself on the black revolution's scale of militancy.



Whitney M. Young Jr.

A man who was often perturbed by the frequent references to himself as a "moderate," Mr. Young once said:

"There is no such thing as a moderate in the civil rights movement; everyone is a radical. The difference is whether or not one is all rhetoric or relevant."

10 years on the national scene, an impressive record as a national black leader who moved with unusual ease among corporate heads, politicians, the black poor and many of those blacks who talked about armed revolution.

As executive director of the

Mr. Young carved, in some **Continued on Page 41, Column 1**

THE NEW YORK TIMES,



United Press International

Whitney M. Young Jr. and other Negro leaders conferring in 1964 with President Johnson. From left: Roy Wilkins, James Farmer, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Mr. Young and Mr. Johnson. They discussed problems of poor.

Continued From Page 1, Col. 5

National Urban League since 1961, he converted the 60-chapter and basically middle-class-oriented social work group into one of the nation's primary non-government forces working toward the self-sufficiency of the black American poor. The organization now has 98 chapters, and its professional staff grew under Mr. Young from 300 to more than 1,200.

#### Persuasive Abilities

Due to a great extent to Mr. Young's own highly persuasive abilities—his voice, most often quiet, carried just a slight reminder of his Southern background — the National Urban League has in recent years conducted rehabilitation programs among the black poor averaging some \$55-million a year.

Harold R. Sims, the assistant executive director of the league, was appointed acting executive director, pending the appointment of a permanent Urban League head by the organization's board of directors. He said yesterday that funeral arrangements were incomplete.

Traveling with a reporter from his home in New Rochelle to his mid-Manhattan office, Mr. Young once remarked when the train moved swiftly through Harlem:

"I think to myself, should I get off this train and stand on 125th Street cussing out Whitey to show I am tough? Or should I go downtown and talk to an executive of General Motors about 2,000 jobs for unemployed Negroes?"

He went downtown. He also went to Washington, to Houston, to Detroit and to wherever his seven-day work schedule took him while he spoke, persuaded, advised and argued with a widely disparate group of Americans on behalf of what he considered a more just and a more sensible nation.

To angry black youths in riot-ready slums, the 6-foot 2-inch 200-pound, former social work professor would say:

"Personally, I am not non-violent, but I'm not a fool either, I can count. I know you can't fight a tank with a beer can or destroy a regiment with a switch. White racists are not afraid of our firepower but they are afraid of our brain, our political and our economic power."

To magazine editors and publishers at a Waldorf-Astoria luncheon, Mr. Young urged "a massive educational program on the basics of democracy," adding "for white people."

Last summer Mr. Young criticized the Nixon Administration as being "sort of like Jell-O."

"You really can't get hold of it," he said. "It's what I call white magic, you know, now you see it, now you don't."

But four months later, after growing angry one day at reports that the Administration was preparing to spend millions to bail out some industrial giants in financial trouble, Mr. Young called the President's Urban Affairs Council and demanded to talk to them. The result was that Mr. Young

talked to Mr. Nixon and his Cabinet, impressing on them as a group the continued need for money for the poor.

This has resulted, the chairman of the Urban League's board, James Linen, said yesterday, in a Federal grant of \$28-million to the league for rehabilitative programs and for running the organization's 30 veterans' centers across the country.

Mr. Young served on seven Presidential commissions and had worked closely with President Lyndon B. Johnson.

One observer, who had watched the Johnson-Young relationship develop over the years, noted that they got along because they were both "consummate politicians and skillful horse traders."

One of Mr. Young's two trips to South Vietnam, when he served as a team of Americans observing the national elections there, was reportedly done to pay a debt to Mr. Johnson. The civil rights leader's first trip to South Vietnam was to interview black servicemen there.

#### Strongly Against War

Mr. Young came out publicly, and strongly, against the war in Vietnam, some two years ago, as dividing the nation and using funds that could best be spent in the urban centers.

The official, whose closely cropped temples were showing a salt-and-pepper gray, never swerved during his decade as a national figure from his support of a racially integrated America and from his concept that massive funds must be spent to solve the racial problems.

In both his widely read books, "To Be Equal" and "Beyond Racism," plus a weekly syndicated column, emphasized his central themes.

Racial separation, he contended, is the major cause of the racial dilemma. His urging that the nation begin a "Domestic Marshall Plan" for the

poor was considered a definite influence on the war on poverty that followed.

Mr. Young, a quiet, reflective man, known by associates to possess an infectious sense of humor, often said that in order for the back wheels of a wagon (black people) to catch up with the front wheels (white people) "something had to happen to the wagon."

#### Equal Sign on Button

The official, a well-tailored man who was never without a button that had an equal sign on his lapel, was born on July 31, 1921, in Lincoln Ridge, Ky. His father was the president of Lincoln Institute, a boarding high school for blacks, and his mother was a teacher.

Graduating from the school at 14, he later took a B.S. degree from Kentucky State College with the intention of going into medicine.

During World War II he served as a first sergeant with an anti-aircraft artillery unit in Europe. In the Army, where he saw both the "problems" and "potential" for race relations in America, he changed his mind about a career as a doctor and decided to go into social work.

Mr. Young took an M.A. degree in social work from the University of Minnesota in 1947 and went to work immediately for the St. Paul Urban League as director of industrial relations. Three years later he moved to Omaha to become executive secretary of the league in that city, where he stayed until 1954, then became the dean of the School of Social Work of Atlanta University.

"Whitney was one of the strongest links between the university and the community," said a long-time associate, who remembered that Mr. Young helped to form Atlanta's Committee for Cooperative Action. The group made up primarily of

business and professional men, sought to organize that city's varied black interests for social and political actions, and they also formed patrols for the blacks districts when threatened by white violence.

To blacks who complained about Mr. Young's "radicalism" of some 15 years ago, he would invariably and prophetically answer: "If you think we're radical, look out for the folks behind us."

#### Abreast of New Ideas

Although his own work since 1961 was most often far distant from protest demonstrations, sit-ins and picket lines, Mr. Young made a point of staying abreast of the ideas and concepts that moved young black America. He was a confidant of the late Malcolm X and was a featured speaker at last summer's Congress of African People's in Atlanta.

When asked how one of the nation's best known black racial integrationists could explain his presence at an all black conference, he said:

"I make no apologies at all for attending a conference where only blacks are. We are a family and it is appropriate and essential that family members get together before they plan to go elsewhere."

Mr. Young had said earlier: "We can agree on objectives and disagree on techniques. Like in any other war, we need a variety of resources and techniques. The difference between myself and some others is that they have given up on the American systems. As poor as the system is, until they provide me with an alternative I'm convinced we can follow no other without committing suicide."

Mr. Young married Margaret Buckner, a teacher, in 1944, and they have two daughters. The oldest, Marcia, is married to Robert Boles, the novelist, and the youngest, Lauren, lives at home in New Rochelle.

Speaking, planning and organizing trips kept Mr. Young moving just about every day in the week. He relaxed by reading on the subjects of race, psychology, sociology or labor.

Mrs. Young was once asked if her husband spent more time at home when he was a college professor and she said: "Not really, he would leave the office then and go work for the N.A.A.C.P."

Hardworking, shrewd, a persuasive and dedicated man, Mr. Young was described yesterday by close associates as a man who stood for ideals that a less strong man would have long abandoned or disguised under pressures from the black movement. He was seen too as a complicated figure out of a complex time "who will probably emerge as the most misunderstood civil rights figure of his time."

## Tributes Are Paid to Young

The following tributes were issued yesterday on the death of Whitney M. Young Jr., executive director of the National Urban League:

**PRESIDENT NIXON** — With Whitney Young's death today in Nigeria, I have lost a friend, black America has lost a gifted and commanding champion of its just cause, and this nation has lost one of the most compassionate and principled leaders it has had in all the long centuries since whites from Europe and blacks from Africa began building together toward the American dream.

**GOVERNOR ROCKEFELLER** — The sudden death of Whitney M. Young is a tragic loss for all Americans. A lifelong foe of injustice, poverty and repression, he entered today's human rights movement in its early days and became a strong voice for moderation and orderly progress.

**MAYOR LINDSAY** — Under his inspired leadership he peacefully pushed and prodded our country toward social justice. All of us owe him a debt no

words can repay. . . . His work was still unfinished. The most meaningful tribute is a renewed dedication to realize his vision.

**ROY WILKINS**, executive director, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People — The tragic and untimely death of Whitney M. Young Jr. removes from the front ranks of the nation's freedom fighters one of the most dynamic and effective leaders in this struggle for human dignity.

**ROY INNIS**, executive director, Congress of Racial Equality — The heart of a black leader stopped today in the liberated black nation of Nigeria.

. . . His death comes as a profound shock to the black world. Although we had philosophical and programmatic differences, our points of agreement were numerous. He was a friend and a great leader.

**LIVINGSTON L. WINGATE**, executive director of the New York Urban League — In less than a decade, the cause of freedom has suffered a series of incalculable losses within its ranks of leadership. It would be Whitney's wish that those who espoused his goals tarry not in mourning but sound the cry for renewed commitment in the quest for human justice.