

Nixon Leads Mourners at Young Funeral

By THOMAS A. JOHNSON

LEXINGTON, Ky., March 17 — President Nixon said today that "A great nation will pay its respects to Whitney Young by continuing the work to which he dedicated his entire life."

Standing in a small Negro cemetery beside the flower-decked coffin of Mr. Young, who was the executive director of the National Urban League, the President eulogized the civil rights leader "as a very complex man" who will be remembered as a doer, not a talker.

Wearing a gray suit without a topcoat, despite the chilly overcast day, Mr. Nixon stood erect and spoke without the benefit of notes. In solemn, measured tones, he said that Mr. Young's genius was that "he knew how to accomplish what other people were merely for."

Mr. Nixon also confirmed during the ceremonies that he had offered Mr. Young a Cabinet post during a meeting that followed the 1968 election but preceded the inauguration. There was much speculation at the time that such an offer had been made but it could not be verified.

'He Was Honored'

"We discussed the possibility of his becoming a member of the Cabinet," Mr. Nixon said. "He was honored by the suggestion and after consideration he told me that he could do more of the things he believed in outside of Government than he could inside of Government."

About 4,000 persons—blacks and whites, common people and celebrities—crowded the small Greenwood Cemetery for the ceremony. Many arrived early in the morning.

A few minutes after noon, the Young family, led by the composed widow and her two daughters, Marcia and Lauren walked through a roped-off area from their limousine to the grave site. They wore black cloth coats for the 30-degree weather, and each sat still during the brief ceremony.

Mr. Nixon arrived some 10 minutes later, just ahead of a black military aide. Lieut. Col. Vernon Coffey of the Army, who carried a wreath of red and white carnations laced with



Associated Press

Mrs. Young embracing the President after the service

a red, white and blue ribbon. Mr. Nixon set the wreath down at the graveside, and, standing at stiff attention, he closed his eyes for several minutes. Then he sat next to Mrs. Young and they passed a few words of greeting.

The President told the gathering there was a message in Mr. Young's life for all Americans. He said:

"At a time when it is so often the custom whenever we have a problem to throw up our hands and say, 'What is the Government going to do?' this man said, 'What can I do?'"

Mr. Nixon said: "Whitney Young's message is this: What can I do to make this a better country? What can I do, through helping others, through recognizing their equality, their dignity, their individuality, to realize the American dream?"

The President and Mrs. Nixon, who led a Washington delegation of 24 other officials and dignitaries for the hour-long jet plane ride, said Mr. Young had chosen to make America better

by "helping others through recognizing their equality, their dignity, to realize the American dream."

Stating that the many thousands of black people Mr. Young had helped to give educational and occupational skills were "living monuments" to the Urban League director, Mr. Nixon said also that there were "thousands more, not of his race, who have an understanding in their hearts which they would not have had except for what he taught."

Mr. Nixon ended the eulogy, standing in bright sunlight as the clouds moved from in front of the sun, by saying:

"His dream, if I may paraphrase, was one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice and opportunity for all. To fulfill his dream is the responsibility of each of us. It is the commitment each of us makes in his heart on this day."

Frank L. Stanley Sr., publisher of The Louisville Journal, an important black weekly, said

that officials of the adjacent, racially mixed Lexington Cemetery had offered a more expansive burial plot but that the family had chosen to have Mr. Young buried in the black cemetery in lots that had been owned for many years by his parents. It was said that Mr. Young's deceased mother had requested that he be buried near her grave.

The area in which Mr. Young was buried had fallen into disrepair in recent years, and Gov. Louis Nunn ordered it cleaned up last week. It was overgrown with weeds and abandoned cars, and refuse had been spread over the plots.

State crews also cut back the sagging limbs of several cemetery oak trees that today showed the fresh, white scars against the rough, black bark of the tree trunks.

The Mourners

The mourners included Mr. Young's father; Governor Nunn; Justice Thurgood Marshall of the United States Supreme Court; Ramsey Clark, former Attorney General of the United States; Roy Wilkins, executive director of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and Kentucky's two United States Senators, John Sherman Cooper and Marlow W. Cook.

A funeral service was held in New York City yesterday for Mr. Young, who died last Thursday in Lagos, Nigeria. The service drew more than 6,000 mourners to the Riverside Church and attracted thousands more to Harlem's 125th Street, through which the procession moved.

The body was flown yesterday afternoon to Louisville, where it lay in state at the A. T. Porter Funeral Home until this morning. A motorcade of more than 50 cars, following a detachment of motorcycle policemen, sheriffs and state troopers, brought the body 75 miles to its burial place.

The graveside services were brief—a little less than 20 minutes. They were begun by Dr. Peter Samson, pastor of the Unitarian Community Church of White Plains, N.Y., who, in bidding "farewell to this friend of man," expressed "gratitude that we have been able to walk a little way with him."



President Nixon eulogizing Whitney M. Young Jr. at the graveside service. In front row are, from left: Mrs. Nixon, Mr. Young's daughter, Lauren, and Mrs. Young. The President praised Mr. Young as "a doer, not a talker."