



KAMARAJ IAS ACADEMY
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Tributes After Civil Rights Icon Jesse Jackson Dies at 84

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Reverend Jesse Jackson, a prominent civil rights leader, Baptist minister, and two-time U.S. presidential candidate, passed away at the age of 84.

Jackson was one of the leading figures of the American Civil Rights Movement after Martin Luther King Jr., advocating for racial justice, economic equality, and expanded democratic participation for more than five decades.

Early Life and Civil Rights Contributions

Born on 8 October 1941 in Greenville, South Carolina, Jackson became involved in civil rights activism as a student and participated in sit-ins and non-violent protests against racial segregation.

He marched with King during major civil rights campaigns in the 1960s and was present in Memphis shortly before King's assassination in 1968.

Jackson served as a leader in the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) and later founded Operation PUSH (People United to Serve Humanity) in 1971, focused on economic empowerment.

Rainbow/PUSH Coalition and Impact

Jackson later merged his organizations into the Rainbow PUSH Coalition, a multiracial advocacy group promoting voting rights, economic empowerment, and social justice.

Throughout his leadership, the Coalition supported scholarship programs, job initiatives, and community development efforts.

Kamaraj IAS Academy

Plot A P.127, AF block, 6 th street, 11th Main Rd, Shanthy Colony, Anna Nagar, Chennai, Tamil Nadu 600040
Phone: **044 4353 9988 / 98403 94477 / Whatsapp : 09710729833**

Political Career and Presidential Campaigns

Jackson ran for the Democratic presidential nomination twice — in 1984 and 1988 — becoming one of the first African Americans to mount serious nationwide campaigns. His efforts registered millions of new voters and expanded minority engagement in national politics.

Though he did not secure the nomination, his campaigns helped pave the way for future diverse leadership in American politics.

International and Human Rights Work

Beyond U.S. civil rights, Jackson was involved in international diplomacy, including negotiating for the release of hostages and advocating for human rights globally.

Honors and Later Years

In 2000, Jackson was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom — the United States' highest civilian honor — for his lifelong commitment to justice, equality, and human rights.

In later years, he battled neurological disorders including Parkinson's disease and progressive supranuclear palsy (PSP), yet remained a respected public voice.