



UNDER FORUM



“ A SURVEY OF THE UNDER 40 HONOREES FOUND CONCERN ABOUT RACIAL INEQUALITIES AND THEREBY THE FOCUS OF THIS YEAR’S FORUM WAS WORKING TOWARD RACIAL EQUITY.

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INTRODUCTION

In the collaborative spirit of Governor Rockefeller, the Winthrop Rockefeller Institute, in partnership with the University of Arkansas Clinton School of Public Service, hosted the fourth annual **Under 40 Forum**. The Forum brought together young leaders identified by Arkansas Business and the Northwest Arkansas Business Journal to discuss a pressing issue in the state. A survey of the 2018 Under 40 honorees found concern among the leaders about racial inequalities and thereby the focus of this year's forum was *working toward racial equity*.

In the field of civil rights, Governor Winthrop Rockefeller "made one of his greatest contributions to the state's history." He used his platform as Governor to appoint more blacks to state boards and hire more black state employees. He was the only southern governor to hold a public memorial after the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. In 1987, Robert McCord wrote that Arkansans have "made much of the fact that Arkansas never experienced the violence that occurred in so many other American cities during the civil rights struggle... The credit for this goes to Winthrop Rockefeller, who brought blacks into the mainstream of our society for the first time."² President Clinton has also long been a champion of racial equity, starting a **Blue Ribbon Advisory Board** in 1997 to address the specific need of dialogue around race. Clinton stated, "We have talked at each other and about each other for a long time. It is high time we began talking with each other. Racial dialogue will not be easy at first. We will have to get past defensiveness and fear and political correctness. We have torn down barriers in our laws. Now we must tear down barriers in our lives, our minds and our hearts"³.

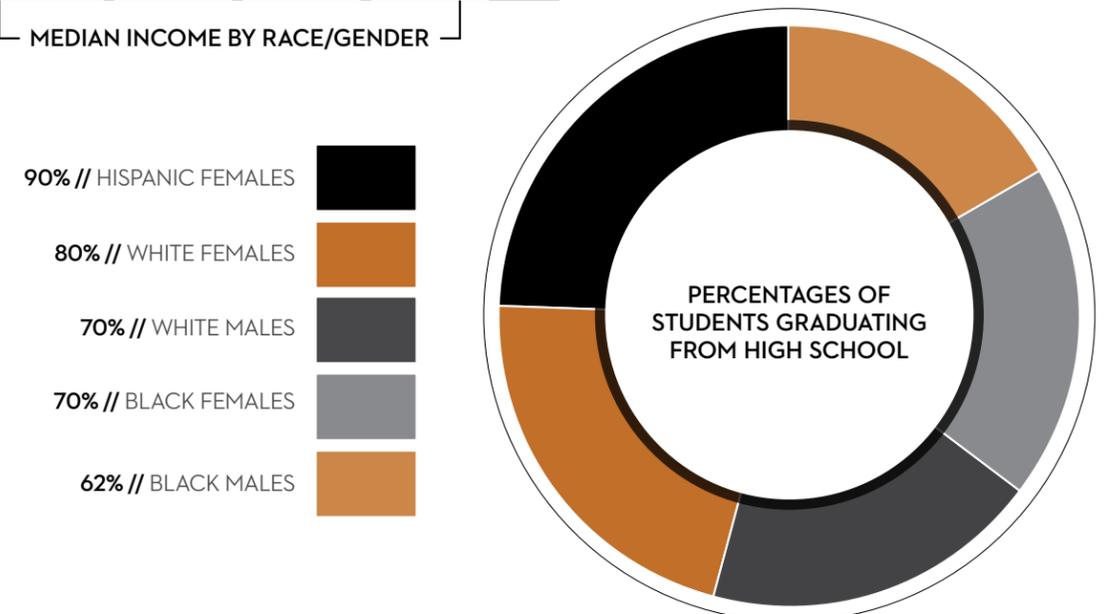
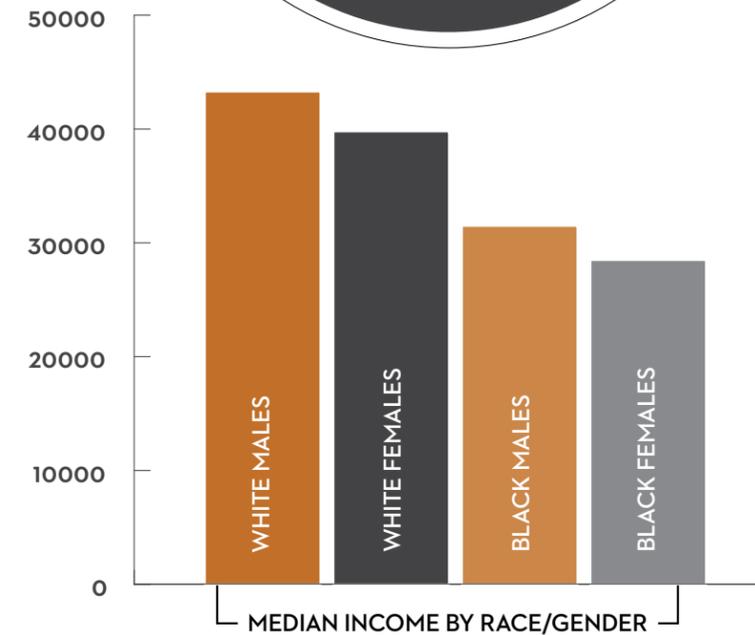
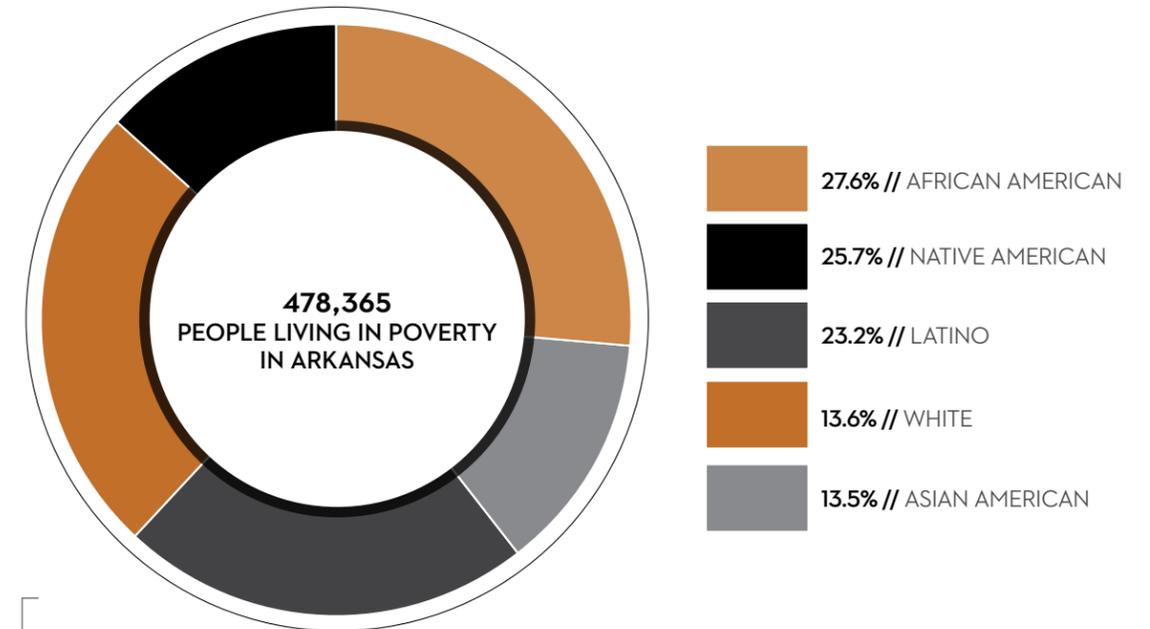
While some progress has been made advancing racial equity in Arkansas, racial inequities continue to impact the state. In 2018, of the 2,916,321 residents living in Arkansas, 478,365 lived in poverty. The poverty level is classified as an annual income of less than \$24,860 for a family of four. Arkansas ranks in 44th place nationally, with 16.4% of the population living at or below the poverty level. Of these almost half million people living in poverty, 27.6% are African American, 13.5% are Asian American, 23.2% are Latino, 25.7% are Native American, and

13.6% are White (**Talk Poverty, 2018 report**). 31.9% of the total black or African American population in Arkansas live at or below poverty levels.

Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families explored the impact that these poverty rates have specifically on black men and boys. In their "**State of Black Men and Boys in Arkansas**" report, they found that "black men in Arkansas have a median income of about \$31,500 (for full-time, year-round workers). That is more than \$11,800 a year less than white men and about \$3,500 less than white women. Black women have the lowest median earnings, making about \$3,000 a year less than black men." This discrepancy does not start at employment, but can be seen in the early education years, "only 62 percent of black boys are graduating from high school on time, compared to more than 70 percent of black girls and white boys, almost 80 percent of white girls, and more than 90 percent of Hispanic girls" (**State of Black Men and Boys in Arkansas Part III**). Once in college, the gap widens with 23.2% of black students graduating within six years as compared to 44.6% of white students (**Chronicle of Higher Education**).

The Kellogg Foundation explored the economic impact of narrowing the income and achievement gap between people of color and white people. They report "in consumer spending alone, closing the racial equity gap in the U.S. would generate an additional \$191 billion spent on food, \$500 billion on housing, \$52 billion on apparel, \$259 billion on transportation, and \$77 billion on entertainment each year. Federal tax revenues would increase by \$450 billion and state and local tax revenues would increase by \$100 billion annually."

These statistics are demonstrative of the existing racial inequalities in employment, income, and education, and how advancing racial equity could have positive impacts for all Arkansans. Carrying out Governor Rockefeller's legacy of bringing people together to have difficult conversations and find solutions for all Arkansans, these honorees convened at Governor Rockefeller's former homestead and cattle ranch atop Petit Jean Mountain to share experiences, learn from each other and build a strong network of young leaders from around the state.



¹ The Arkansas Historical Quarterly. Vol. LIV, No. 1, Spring 1995.

² *Arkansas Gazette*, September 27, 1967.

³ *One America in the 21st Century*. President Bill Clinton. Abridged from an address June 14, 1997, to the graduating class of the University of California at San Diego.

OVERVIEW OF THE RACE MATTERS INSTITUTE

The 24 hour program kicked off with a Race Matters training by Taralyn Keese and Anthony Armstrong of the Race Matters Institute. The mission of the Race Matters Institute (RMI) is to

“**HELP ORGANIZATIONS BETTER ACHIEVE THEIR MISSIONS THROUGH BECOMING INTENTIONAL ABOUT ADVANCING RACIAL EQUITY IN THEIR WORK.**”

RMI programming centers on “Five Key Building Blocks to Advance Racial Equity.” Topics covered at the Under 40 Forum included a discussion on shared language, a structural and systems analysis, and a tool was introduced that produces a racial equity impact analysis.

Ms. Keese and Mr. Armstrong opened their presentation by discussing the need for racial equity, and how **advancing equity has positive consequences for all**. They clarified the difference between equity and equality, explaining that equity emphasizes outcomes while equality typically addresses inputs. One of the goals for racial equity is to help support more equitable outcomes across differences. They also discussed the terms “diversity” and “inclusion” as they pertain to equity. The conversation shifted to examples of racism, including white privilege, and the impact these have on peoples’ lives and development.

The second building block in the RMI curriculum is **structural and systems analysis**. This discussion focused on historical policies and practices that continue to impact numerous generations of people of color. RMI provided examples such as the GI Bill and some USDA practices to demonstrate how such policies have long term consequences that are difficult to overcome. While money theoretically was made available for veterans of all races, bank and mortgage company practices restricted lending to people of color through redlining, thus making the home ownership benefits of the **GI Bill limited mostly to white families**. They highlighted **discrimination in USDA support** to farmers, with white farmers disproportionately receiving access to credit and extension services. RMI provided an overview of racism throughout Arkansas’s history including the roles of segregation and lynching.



Participants workshopped workplace practices that can lead to racial inequities and completed an exercise on implicit bias in the hiring process. RMI introduced the concept of microaggressions- the everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to targeted persons based solely upon their race. The importance of an inclusive culture in the workplace was discussed and RMI identified the four levels that drive inclusion: inclusive leadership, authenticity, networking and visibility, and clear career paths. Participants received a **racial equity impact analysis tool** that they can use to assess their own organizations.

MICROAGGRESSIONS
THE EVERYDAY VERBAL, NONVERBAL, AND ENVIRONMENTAL SLIGHTS, SNUBS, OR INSULTS, WHETHER INTENTIONAL OR UNINTENTIONAL, THAT COMMUNICATE HOSTILE, DEROGATORY, OR NEGATIVE MESSAGES TO TARGETED PERSONS BASED SOLELY UPON THEIR RACE

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE PANEL DISCUSSION

The second day of the Under 40 Forum included a panel discussion on current efforts to support racial equity in Arkansas. Moderated by the Winthrop Rockefeller Institute’s chief marketing and program officer Janet Harris, panel participants included Frank Scott Jr., mayor of Little Rock; Russell Carey, social, ethnic, and racial equity officer at the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation; Martie North, senior vice president, director of community development/CRA regulatory and consumer affairs at Simmons Bank; and Dr. Joseph Daniels III, community builder.

The panelists discussed what racial equity means to them and how it impacts their work. Ms. North commented that holding a discussion on racial equity implies that there is a recognized problem of a lack of racial equity. She spoke of progress that has been made advancing civil rights, particularly as it pertains to access of public spaces, but that large disparities continue to exist in areas like income and property ownership. Mr. Carey shared about his experience growing up in a low income community and the access he was afforded, as a white male, that allowed him to break through economic barriers to achieve positive outcomes. He explained that if two people are offered access to the same types of opportunities, but achieve different outcomes, then there is a problem with the system. Dr. Daniels told the group about his passion for building equitable communities and the impact he is making in northwest Arkansas by creating a sense of community ownership for people of color. Mayor Scott Jr. introduced himself as being from southwest Little Rock and how the community’s attempt at de-segregating that area contributed to his inspiration to run for a government leadership position. He also shared the unique position Little Rock has as both a rural and urban community, which helps it act as a microcosm of the United States. Mayor Scott Jr. emphasized the need to serve one’s community and the intentionality that is required to promote racial equity. He asked the honorees to consider who they and their family spend time with and if it reflects a diverse group of people.

Ms. Harris asked the panel to share some strategies for the honorees to use as they hold tough conversations with others about race. Ms. North talked about her experience growing up as the only black female in her community and the importance of using the right language to help understand someone else’s perspective. Dr. Daniels explained

the need to be supportive of each other, especially of friends and colleagues of color. He also shared stories of the role a white ally plays in the life of someone of color and identified strategies to advance racial equity. Mr. Carey addressed systemic and historical problems that plague the nation and said in order to make racial equity progress, the emphasis should be on policy structures in addition to interpersonal relationships. Ms. North encouraged the honorees to continue to educate themselves on the truth of the history of racial injustice and the need to create safe spaces to allow for tough conversations. Mayor Scott Jr. urged the group to build relationships with people who are different from each other to gain different perspectives. Mr. Carey added that the choice to not talk about race is an option for white people, but not people of color.



L to R: Dr. Joseph Daniels III, Frank Scott Jr., Martie North, Russell Carey

The panelists shared more of their personal backgrounds and experiences, including some of the daily challenges they face that others may not be aware of. Mayor Scott Jr. suggested using the dinner table as a litmus test to one’s inclusion of people of color in their lives. In closing statements, Ms. North encouraged the group to ask “why” when considering how policies are made. Mr. Carey shared the economic impact of improving racial equity in Arkansas. Mayor Scott Jr. shared initiatives in the city of Little Rock that address racial equity. Ms. North suggested that human resource professionals be more intentional in addressing racial equity. The honorees had an opportunity to ask the panelists questions at the end of the panel.

OVERVIEW OF QUESTIONS & COMMON THEMES

On day two, honorees divided into tables of six and reflected upon the information that had been presented throughout the program. They engaged in two facilitated dialogue sessions led by Winthrop Rockefeller Institute staff. The first set of questions touched on the role current policies played in the participants' success and how racial equity impacts Arkansas's prosperity. The questions asked the participants to consider the implications their race has played to help or hinder their personal progress. The questions then advanced to how the topic of race and racial equity is addressed in their business or professional setting. During the second dialogue session participants answered the following questions. Themes that emerged from the discussion questions follow.



“ HOW WOULD YOUR SECTOR BE DIFFERENT IF INDUSTRY LEADERS APPLIED AN INTENTIONAL RACIAL EQUITY LENS? ”

Organizational Culture

Many people identified the benefits a more racially equitable work environment would have in the overall organizational culture. It was recognized that having a more racially diverse workforce would help attract a racially diverse applicant pool. A more diverse workforce starts with intentional recruiting practices and diversity in recruiters themselves. A shift to a more racially equitable organization requires intentionality and a strategic focus on increasing racial representation of people of color.

Organizational Growth

The aforementioned shift in organizational culture will have a positive impact on organizational growth. By creating a more equitable work environment, the organization would attract staff of all backgrounds and would become a desirable place to work. This could in turn attract more business opportunities and increase the amount of funding, number of clients, or other metrics that measure organizational success. Having a more racially equitable lens in industry sectors will also help plug the organization more finely into the community to be able to better serve the area in which they are located. The organization would grow with help from the different perspectives and experiences that a racially diverse workforce would bring and help to form strong relationships and partnerships with other diverse organizations.

Community Impact

Applying an intentional racial equity lens to their organizations would have a positive impact on factors that contribute to a thriving community. A diverse organization would better understand how to meet the needs of a community in areas like education, design, and health care. It would reduce bias and assumptions and contribute to an environment where all residents would benefit. It would increase the skilled workforce and decrease the wage gap by providing training for historically marginalized populations and halting the cycle of generational poverty. Advancing racial equity would increase employee financial security, which would benefit their families and also increase trust in certain sectors.

Personal Enlightenment

Such changes to the workforce and benefits to communities would also spark interpersonal changes and improve relationships. It would expose people to cultures they have not had the opportunity to learn from and help create space for conversations on racial equity. These conversations would cover other aspects of racial equity, like superiority complexes, white privilege, racism, personal responsibility, and intersectionality. Further, other topics that would be shared are the connection between wealth and power, racist policies, dangers of political correctness, and the miseducation of the true impact of slavery on today's economy.

“ ARE THERE ANY CURRENT OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN YOUR ORGANIZATION TO WORK TOWARD RACIAL EQUITY? ”

Participants shared how racial equity is currently addressed in their workplaces, and any opportunities they see to work toward racial equity in their organizations. Two primary themes of internal opportunities and external impact emerged from this conversation.

Internal Opportunities

Suggestions on how to increase racial equity internally within an organization include improving the recruitment process to intentionally locate qualified diverse candidates, identifying ways to measure diversity within an organization without adding to a culture of tokenism or quota filling, and opening doors for dialogue with people of color to better understand their professional journey. Also discussed was the need to increase people of color in C-level executive positions and internal educational programs to help foster a more collaborative environment.

External Impact

Another way to increase racial equity in an organization is to better engage with the community. Some ways to do this that were discussed include creating an organizational advisory board that works with the community to be informed of their needs and wants, participating in inclusive community events to strengthen relationships, be intentional in cultural sharing, talking to children about race and diversity, and purposefully creating programming that reaches a broader audience.



PARTICIPANT TAKEAWAYS & RESOURCES TO WORK TOWARD RACIAL EQUITY

After participating in the Race Matters Institute half day workshop, listening to a panel discussion on current efforts to advance racial equity in Arkansas, and engaging in two facilitated dialogue sessions on their personal and organizational experiences with racial equity, honorees each shared two key pieces of information they learned that they want

to share with others upon departing the Institute. The responses varied between furthering their own education on racism, direct actions they can take, and holding conversations with their friends and colleagues about lessons learned from the program. Some common answers are listed in the table.

EDUCATING SELF

- ▶ Awareness of white privilege
- ▶ Policy is powerful
- ▶ Purposeful, intentional networking
- ▶ More reading/research
- ▶ Making the point to be intentionally inclusive
- ▶ Research policies that perpetuate racial inequity
- ▶ History of GI bill
- ▶ Evaluating the range of opportunity that people had/didn't have because of policies
- ▶ Acknowledging my privilege
- ▶ Be intentional about racial equity
- ▶ Educate on racial equity
- ▶ Donate to the political campaign of someone who advocates for equity
- ▶ Nominate a person of color to 40 Under 40 (or similar)
- ▶ White responsibility
- ▶ Lean into discomfort
- ▶ Be intentional about racial equity
- ▶ Educate
- ▶ Privilege awareness
- ▶ I will read more to learn about racism so I can help combat it in all forms
- ▶ I will be intentional and interact socially with non-white people
- ▶ Be intentional in my networking to include people of color

DIALOGUE WITH OTHERS

- ▶ Acting like a true white ally in my community
- ▶ Historical examples of structured racism
- ▶ Create safe spaces to discuss racism and its effects
- ▶ Educating people on the difference between equity and equality
- ▶ Take names of resources
- ▶ Introducing a version of this training to my area team
- ▶ Intentional conversations with people not like me
- ▶ Share job opportunities more broadly to include everyone and add language to include everyone
- ▶ Have the conversation
- ▶ Discuss localized issues
- ▶ Hold my white friends accountable for their language
- ▶ Start the conversation at home, especially with my kids
- ▶ Talk with my family and kids about equity and what I have learned





**“ BUILD AUTHENTIC
RELATIONSHIPS WITH
PEOPLE WHO DON'T
LOOK LIKE YOU.. WHO
DON'T COME WHERE
YOU COME FROM.
BE AVAILABLE TO
CHALLENGE IDEAS, TO
CHALLENGE THE 'SAME
OLD, SAME OLD.' THAT'S
HOW WE PUSH FORWARD
WITH TRUE CHANGE.”**

- Mayor Frank Scott Jr.,
Previous Under 40 Forum Attendee & 2019 Forum Panelist

RESOURCE LIST

These resources can help advance racial equity and are suggestions from Under 40 Forum presenters and participants.

- + "Allegories on Race & Racism|Camara Jones|TEDxEmory." *YouTube*, uploaded by TEDx Talks, 10 June 2014
- + Baldwin, James. *The Fire Next Time*. Vintage Books, 1993.
- + Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo. *Racism Without Racists: Color-blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in the United States*. Lanham, Md. : Rowman & Littlefield, 2018.
- + Coates, Ta-Nehisi. "The Case for Reparations." *The Atlantic*. June 2014.
- + Coates, Ta-Nehisi. *Between the World and Me*. Spiegel & Grau, 2015.
- + Cone, James H. *Martin and Malcom: A Dream or a Nightmare*. Orbis Books, 1991.
- + DiAngelo, Robin. *White Fragility: Why it's So Hard for White People to Talk about Racism*. Beacon Press, 2018.
- + Dyson, Michael Eric. *Tears We Cannot Stop: A Sermon to White America*. St. Martin's Press. 2017
- + Dixon, T. L. (2017). Good Guys Are Still Always in White? Positive Change and Continued Misrepresentation of Race and Crime on Local Television News. *Communication Research*, 44(6), 775-792.
- + King Jr., Martin Luther. *Letter from a Birmingham Jail*. April 1963.
- + Tatum, Beverly Daniel. *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria? And Other Conversations About Race*. Basic Books; Revised, Anniversary, Updated edition 2017.
- + Thomas, Angie. *The Hate U Give*. Balzer + Bray. 2017
- + Turner, Ani. *The Business Case for Racial Equity, A strategy for growth*. W.K. Kellogg Foundation. July 24, 2018.
- + Woodson, Carter G. *A Century of Negro Migration*. IndieBooks, 2018.

Organizations Focused on Racial Equity

- + Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation
- + Race Matters Institute
- + Race Forward

Interactive Resources/ Toolkits

- + The White Ally Toolkit
- + Me and White Supremacy
- + Implicit Bias Test
- + Racial Equity Resource Guide. W.K. Kellogg Foundation
- + Racial Equity Tools

THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS

The **Winthrop Rockefeller Institute** (the Institute) is a non-profit organization established in 2005 with a grant from the Winthrop Rockefeller Charitable Trust. The Institute is located atop Petit Jean Mountain in central Arkansas on the grounds of former Gov. Winthrop Rockefeller's cattle ranch. The Institute's mission is to perpetuate the legacy of Gov. Rockefeller as a catalyst for positive change by bringing together people of diverse ideas and interests to practice collaborative problem-solving and respectful dialogue, called the "Rockefeller Ethic."

The first school in the nation to offer a Master of Public Service (MPS) degree, the University of Arkansas Clinton School of Public Service gives students the knowledge and experience to further their careers in the areas of nonprofit, governmental, volunteer or private sector service. A two-year graduate program with a real-world curriculum, the Clinton School is located on the grounds of the William J. Clinton Presidential Center and Park in Little Rock, Ark. The school embodies former President Clinton's vision of building leadership in civic engagement and enhancing people's capacity to work across disciplinary, racial, ethnic and geographical boundaries. For more information, visit clintonschool.uasys.edu.



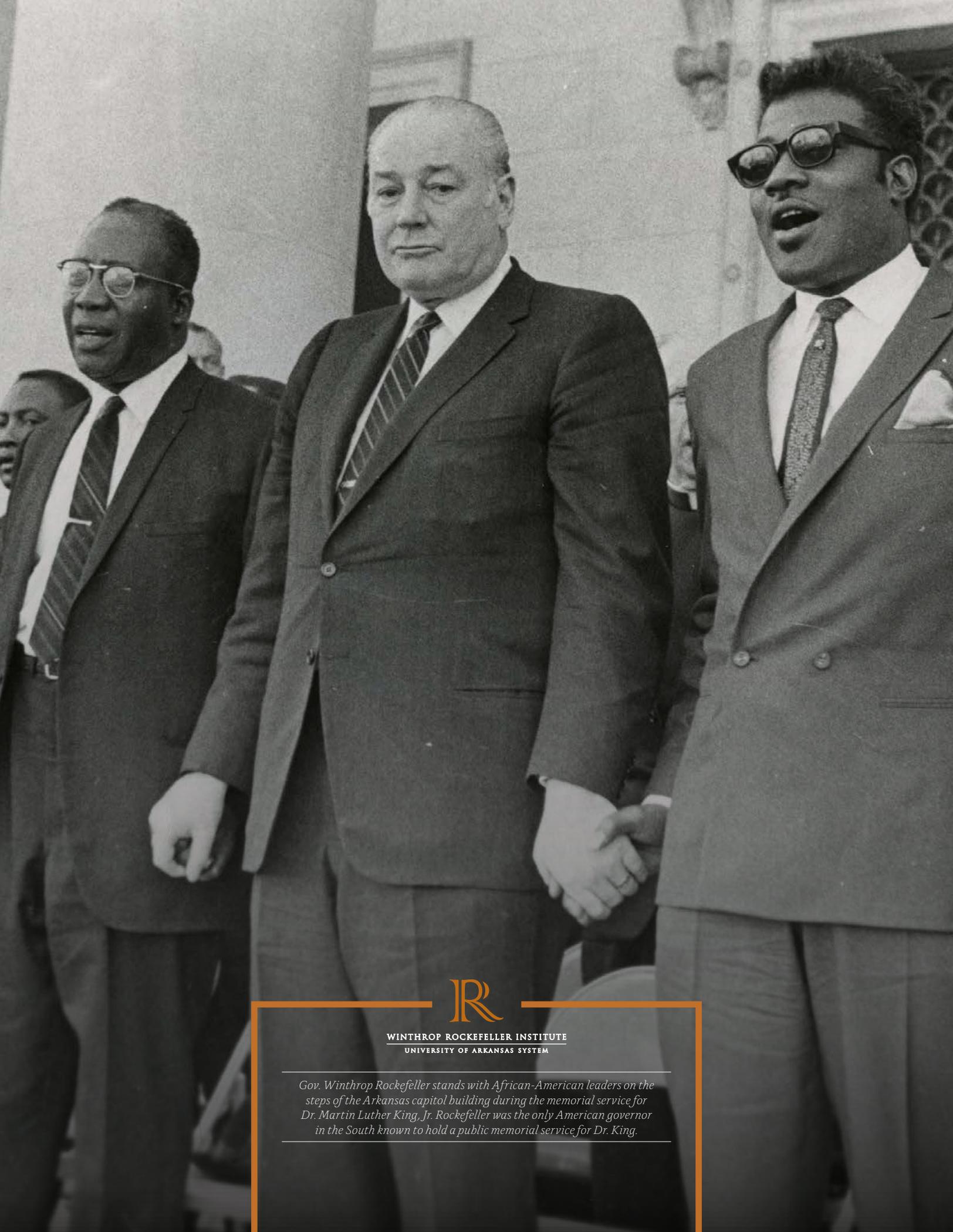
REACH OUT

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BE SOCIAL

- rockefeller.institute
- rockefellerinstitute
- rockefeller



WINTHROP ROCKEFELLER INSTITUTE
UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS SYSTEM

Gov. Winthrop Rockefeller stands with African-American leaders on the steps of the Arkansas capitol building during the memorial service for Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Rockefeller was the only American governor in the South known to hold a public memorial service for Dr. King.