



ROBERT L. WOODSON, SR.

Robert L. Woodson, Sr. is founder and president of the National Center for Neighborhood Enterprise (NCNE). NCNE is a nonprofit, nonpartisan research and demonstration organization that supports neighborhood-based initiatives to reduce crime and violence, restore families, create economic enterprise and employment, and revitalize low-income communities. Since its inception in 1981, NCNE has been on the forefront of a steadily growing movement to empower low-income Americans. Woodson is often referred to as the godfather of the neighborhood empowerment movement. As scholar Marvin Olasky notes in his recent book, *Robert Woodson was a trailblazer in the implementation of *Compassionate Conservatism*.*

For more than a decade, Woodson has had a special concern for the problems of youth. In response to an epidemic of youth violence that has afflicted urban, rural and suburban neighborhoods alike, Woodson has focused much of NCNE's activities on an initiative to establish Violence-Free Zones in trouble spots throughout the nation. This Violence-Free Zone program has achieved significant results in reducing youth violence in Washington, DC; Dallas, TX; Milwaukee, WI; Baltimore, MD; and Atlanta, GA.

A strong proponent of strategies of self-help and empowerment, Woodson is frequently featured as a social commentator in the print and on-air media, including *The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer*, *Nightline*, *Meet The Press* and other national and local broadcasts. He received a B.S. from Cheyney University and a M.S.W. from the University of Pennsylvania.

Among the many awards he has received are the Washington Times Foundation American Century Award; the Kahlil Gibran "Spirit of Humanity" Award; the Headway Magazine Booker T. Washington Award; the Martin Luther King, Jr. Family Life Institute "Real Dream" Award; the Outstanding Public Service Award from the Georgia Coalition of Black Women, Inc.; the George Washington Honor Medal presented by the Freedom Foundation at Valley Forge, and the prestigious John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Fellowship, often referred to as the "genius" award. His publications include *Youth Crime and Urban Policy*, *A View From the Inner City* (1981), *On the Road to Economic Freedom: An Agenda for Black Progress*, (1987), *A Summons to Life, Mediating Structures and the Prevention of Youth Crime*, (1988), and, most recently, *The Triumphs of Joseph: How Today's Community Healers are Reviving Our Streets and Neighborhoods* (1998).