
US Civil Rights Icon Jesse Jackson Dies Aged 84



Published on February 17, 2026

Document Date: Thu, Feb 19 2026 07:13:44 pm

Category: ,English,International - ,Snippets

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Jesse Jackson, the prominent US civil rights leader, minister and two-time Democratic presidential candidate, has died at the age of 84 after more than five decades at the forefront of social justice activism.

In a family statement, relatives described Jackson as a “servant leader” devoted to the oppressed and marginalized worldwide, whose commitment to equality and justice uplifted millions. No immediate cause of death was announced. Jackson had lived for years with progressive supranuclear palsy after initially being diagnosed with Parkinson’s disease and had also been hospitalized twice with COVID-19.

Born in 1941 in Greenville, South Carolina, Jackson rose from student activism in the segregated US South to become a close associate of Martin Luther King Jr.. He joined the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in the 1960s and later founded Operation Breadbasket, promoting economic opportunities for Black Americans through corporate pressure campaigns and community programs.

Jackson established People United to Save Humanity (PUSH) in 1971 and later the Rainbow/PUSH Coalition, advancing education, voting rights and economic inclusion. He twice sought the Democratic presidential nomination, in 1984 and 1988, becoming one of the first Black politicians to mount a nationwide US presidential campaign and helping pave the way for future leaders. Former US president Barack Obama credited Jackson’s trailblazing campaigns with making his own historic election possible. Jackson remained active into recent years, campaigning against racial disparities in healthcare and social outcomes.

His death marks the passing of one of the most influential figures of the modern American civil rights movement.