



Sargent Shriver

Sargent Shriver, Peacebuilder

In a career of public service and civic leadership spanning the second half of the 20th Century, Sargent Shriver confronted a range of seemingly intractable conflicts that pitted Americans against each other, and the United States against the Soviet Union. He helped build peace by developing and implementing programs and policies structured to promote long-term, cumulative, peaceable change.

The key to Shriver's legacy of success as a peacebuilder lies in his ability to create feasible, effective programs that promote human dignity and welfare. All the programs he created are informed by a method in peacebuilding he once described as "a formula for practical idealism."

As the head of the Chicago School Board and the Catholic Inter-racial Council in the late 1950s, Shriver addressed America's racial conflict by leading successful efforts to integrate Chicago's public and parochial school systems. As a senior official in the Kennedy Administration, Shriver created the Peace Corps in response to the global conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union in the Cold War - a program that builds peace and friendship by sending Americans to work for human dignity and human welfare in the third world. As Director of the Office of Economic Opportunity in the Johnson Administration in the mid 1960s, Shriver developed a multi-faceted War on Poverty designed to transform the economic and social roots of the conflict over civil rights in America. Like the Peace Corps, the programs of the War on Poverty - including Head Start, Job Corps, VISTA, Community Action Program, Legal Services to the Poor, and Foster Grandparents - continue to serve Americans today. In the 1970s and 1980s, Shriver addressed the inter-religious tensions at the heart of the conflict in the Middle East by convening, for over five years, the first official Trialog of the Abrahamic faiths since the Moors ruled medieval Spain. He also addressed domestic and global tensions over America's escalating nuclear arms race with the Soviet Union by securing affirmation of a No First Strike policy by senior U.S. foreign policy officials and the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. In the 1980s and 1990s, as Chairman of the Board of Special Olympics International, Sargent Shriver joined with his wife and son, Eunice Kennedy Shriver and Timothy Perry Shriver, to transform the roots of violence and discrimination against people with intellectual disabilities by promoting Special Olympics

Games throughout the world.

About Sargent Shriver

Robert Sargent Shriver, Jr. was born November 9, 1915 in Westminster, Maryland. Shriver attended Yale University in 1934. During college, Shriver was the senior editor of the Yale Daily News. Shriver enrolled in Yale Law School in 1938, receiving his L.L.B. in 1941. Shriver went on to serve five years in active duty in the U.S. Navy during World War II.

In 1953, Shriver married Eunice Kennedy, sister of John F. Kennedy. Shriver's commitment to public service made him one of the most effective leaders of John F. Kennedy's New Frontier and Lyndon Johnson's Great Society in the 1960s. He inspired, directed, or founded numerous social programs and organizations, including Head Start, VISTA, Job Corps, Community Action, Upward Bound, Foster Grandparents, Special Olympics, the National Center on Poverty Law, Legal Services, and the Peace Corps, serving as the program's first director under President Kennedy. Shriver also ran the War on Poverty during Johnson's tenure as president. Shriver also served as U.S. ambassador to France from 1968 to 1970.

In 1972, Shriver was nominated by the Democratic Party as a candidate for Vice President with presidential candidate Senator George McGovern in the campaign against President Richard Nixon and Vice President Spiro Agnew. In 1978, Shriver began the Kennedy Institute of Ethics "Triologue" between leaders of Christian, Jewish and Muslim religions, the first such forum for discussion since medieval Spain.

Shriver went on to become President of Special Olympics in 1984. He was appointed Chairman of the Board of Special Olympics in 1990. Under Shriver's leadership, the Special Olympics greatly expanded its international sports programs for young people around the world.

On August 8, 1994, Sargent Shriver received the Presidential Medal of Freedom from President Bill Clinton, the United States' highest civilian honor, as recognition for his lifetime of public service. Shriver currently lives in Potomac, Maryland with his wife Eunice. They have five children: Robert Sargent Shriver III, Maria Shriver, Timothy Shriver, Mark Shriver, and Anthony Shriver.

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