

To my esteemed board of directors, friends and colleagues of the Urban League of Hudson County (ULOHC) and the community of Jersey City and beyond, it is a great honor and privilege to celebrate 50 plus years serving Hudson County. To achieve and maintain fiscal viability that spans fifty one years is an accomplishment that we should all truly be proud of. As an organization, we faced serious hardships during that time and persevered, while other similar not-for-profit organizations floundered. Today, we are still surrounded by an economic atmosphere of uncertainties and challenges, primarily from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. As we are learning to maneuver the new economic realities, it makes for a compelling story that we are still here, still going strong.

Our story began fifty one years ago, when venerated leaders; Reverend Thomas William, Mr. Joseph Calderera, Mr. John M. Stanton, Mr. Lawrence Stubaas and Mr. Henry Rieu created the Urban League of Hudson County. Shortly, thereafter, Mr. Charles Nelson took on the leadership as CEO, he was followed in that position by Mr. Ted Freeman. Mr. Freeman was a man who strived to make our community better by cultivating social programs, especially the DCPD program formerly known as DYFS, to help families in our neighborhoods. He was succeeded by the late Mrs. Elnora Watson, a true giant of a woman in every sense of the word. Under her leadership ULOHC went from being a small affiliate organization to become a strong fabric and steady mainstay of the Jersey City community.

She created educational after school programs, cultural and adaptive seniors programs, embarked on innovative and much-needed early childhood and childcare services support program and affordable housing program. Her vision was to enable residents of Hudson County to benefit from the cross cultural and education programs initiated by UHLOC. Shortly before she passed away in 2019, she was single handedly responsible for making ULOHC into a not-for-profit organization with the largest employees in Hudson County.

Her generous contributions to this organization will forever be recognized. A true visionary, she was about making a difference in the lives of people. The story of ULOHC for the next fifty years will be written by us, the current staff. Upon reflection, an organization cannot last for fifty years without its people. So, I salute all our staff members and remain grateful for your continued dedication. The commitments and sacrifices you have made to this organization have positively impacted thousands of households and families. Every day you show to work, every day you provide childcare services, every day you mentor and provide job training, every day you are writing the next great chapter of the ULOHC's history.

This extraordinary work that you do on a daily basis may not grace the newspapers or make TV headlines, but this effort is what it takes to build and grow this organization. I am transfixed with emotions as I thank all of you from the depth of my heart. My wish is that the next fifty years at ULOHC be filled with prosperity and more visionary leadership.

Sincerely,

Muhammad I Umar
President & CEO