



THE UNIVERSITY OF WINNIPEG

N E W S R E L E A S E

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For Immediate Release

Urban Change Conference Attracts Outspoken NY State Mayor

WINNIPEG-Outspoken and forward-thinking African-American Mayor William A. Johnson, Jr. of Rochester, N.Y. is known for spearheading innovative community initiatives, including housing development, education programs and family services, and is a strong advocate for collaborative partnerships and smart growth policies. This September, Johnson—a leader in urban change—will be one of the key speakers at *CUexpo2005*, a conference hosted by the Winnipeg Inner-City Research Alliance of The University of Winnipeg's Institute for Urban Studies.

The Urban Leaders Panel, a UWinnipeg OmniTRAX/Broe QUEST-sponsored event, will kick off the *CUexpo2005: Community-University Research Partnerships, Leaders in Urban Change* conference. Mayor Johnson, along with three other innovative leaders in urban change, will tackle the topic of *New Times, New Challenges, New Visions*, discussing key challenges facing urban areas, and the changes necessary to address these issues, including:

- The role of partnerships in strengthening urban communities' capacity and resilience
- The role of community in addressing important challenges in impoverished urban neighbourhoods
- The role of urban governments in supporting and/or initiating community development
- Citizen engagement with city hall
- The factors necessary to stimulate leadership in urban development

This international conference runs from September 15 to 18, 2005 at the Delta Winnipeg and will examine issues such as poverty, homelessness, affordable housing, neighbourhood revitalization, support for children and youth, and community economic development. All sessions will have a strong urban focus and will touch on themes that include: *Influencing Policy Change*; *Building Community Capacity*; and, *Balancing Power and Participation*.

Other keynote speakers include:

- **Lloyd Axworthy**, President of The University of Winnipeg, UN special envoy to Ethiopia-Eritrea, former Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Nobel Peace Prize nominee, author, community innovator, urban planner, and former director of IUS
- **Cathy Crowe**, street nurse, co-founder Toronto Disaster Relief Committee (homelessness), International Nursing Ethics Award recipient, and Atkinson Charitable Foundation's Economic Justice Award recipient
- **David Roy Newhouse**, Principal of Peter Gzowski College at Trent University, Associate Professor in the Department of Native Studies and the Business Administration Program, Co-chair of Trent Aboriginal Education Council, and instructor in Graduate CED Program at Concordia University in Montreal

For details on the CUexpo 2005 conference, please visit:

<http://cuexpo.uwinnipeg.ca>

Located in the heart of downtown, The University of Winnipeg is a compact, diverse, multicultural academic community committed to access and excellence. Ranked by our graduates in Maclean's magazine University Graduate Survey (November 15, 2004) in the Top Ten of all Canadian universities when asked about their "Entire Educational Experience," UWinnipeg is home to more than 8,700 full- and part-time students.

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William A. Johnson, Jr. Biography

William A. Johnson, Jr., who served for 21 years as President and CEO of the Urban League of Rochester, spearheaded innovative and nationally recognized community programs in education and youth development, family services, employment training, and housing developments. For example, the Salute to Black Scholars, founded in 1980 to recognize the academic achievements of black high school students, has awarded tens of millions of dollars in community scholarships to more than 3,800 students.

Since being elected Mayor of New York State's third largest city in 1993, Mayor Johnson has continued introducing forward-thinking programs including the Neighbours Building Neighbourhoods Program (NBN) which promotes citizen participation and empowerment in every neighbourhood and engages citizens with decision-makers at City Hall. He also launched the Community Oriented Policing program to improve police-community relations, Community Economic Development schemes that partner community and faith-based development corporations with the city to create new residential and commercial projects, and Bi-racial Partnerships that matches people of different races and economic status to break down racial misunderstandings.

Under Mayor Johnson's leadership, Rochester has embarked on an ambitious program to reduce housing blight and increase the number of new and renovated houses in the city. More than 1,500 new homes have replaced more than 1,000 dilapidated structures. In 1998, the city implemented-with input from over 3,000 citizens- the Rochester 2010 Plan, a bold blueprint for the revitalization of the entire city by 2010.

Mayor Johnson, who holds a BA and MA in political science from Howard University in Washington, D.C. is a Trustee of the US Conference of Mayors, where he serves as Chairman of the Smart Growth and Regionalism Task Force; a member of the Executive Committee of the New York Conference of Mayors; an active member of the National Conference of Black Mayors; and, the Vice Chair of Task Force on Community and Regional Development of the National League of Cities.