

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**PRESIDENT OF THE NAACP  
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE  
TO VISIT MAINE**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

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The newly installed president of the nation's oldest civil rights organization will spend a day in Maine next month visiting his father's high school alma mater, Portland High School; meeting with the NAACP Prison Branch and prison officials at the Maine State Prison; and delivering the keynote address for an annual Human Rights Day program.

Benjamin T. Jealous, who began serving as the national president of the NAACP in September, will speak at Hannaford Hall on the USM Portland campus on Monday, December 8 at 7:00 p.m. The NAACP Portland Branch has organized his visit to Maine in collaboration with the local branches of Amnesty International and the United Nations Association in order to commemorate the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Governor John Baldacci and USM President Selma Bottman will offer welcome remarks and Portland's mayor will present Jealous with a key to the city.

At age 35, Jealous is the youngest national president in the history of the 99-year-old NAACP. In that job, he becomes part of the legendary leadership group that extends from W. E. B. Du Bois and James Weldon Johnson in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century to Roy Wilkins and Julian Bond more recently.

Jealous was director of Amnesty International's U.S. Human Rights Program from 2002 to 2005, where he led efforts to pass federal legislation against prison rape, rebuild public consensus against racial profiling in the wake of the September 2001 terrorist attacks, and expose the widespread sentencing of children to life without the possibility of parole.

He was managing editor of the Jackson Advocate, the oldest black-owned weekly newspaper in Mississippi, which was torched repeatedly for its stands on civil rights, and served as executive director of a federation of more than 200 black-owned papers. He has also worked as a community organizer on civil rights lawsuits in the 1990s, and was program director of the National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty.

His career of advocacy began early at 14 when he organized his first voter registration drive. While a student at Columbia University, he organized boycotts and pickets for homeless rights, environmental justice, and full-need financial assistance.

Jealous' first stop in Maine will be at Portland High School where he will tour the school with principal Michael Johnson then speak at an assembly of approximately 1200 students and staff including civil rights team members from Deering High School and King Middle School. Immediately following the assembly, students will return to their classrooms to discuss the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Following up on his previous interest and work on prison issues, the NAACP leader will then travel to Warren with officers of the NAACP Portland Branch. They will meet with the organization's Prison Branch and Maine Department of Corrections Commissioner Martin Magnusson. Attorney General Steve Rowe has been invited.

The final event of Jealous' busy day will be to deliver the keynote address for Human Rights Day at the University of Southern Maine. Each year, early December is celebrated as the time in 1948 when the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Eleanor Roosevelt, one of its principal architects, described it as a modern Magna Carta. The UDHR states "recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice, and peace in the world."