

Protest outside Marc's Big Boy on North Avenue in Milwaukee, 1963

“Future Political

The Milwaukee NAACP Youth Council's Early Fight for Identity

BY ERICA L. METCALFE



**COMPLETE
EQUALITY
NOT "TOKEN"
EQUALITY**



Actors”

During the 1960s, the Milwaukee NAACP Youth Council, along with its charismatic advisor, Father James Groppi, came to the forefront of Milwaukee’s civil rights movement. In 1966, the group protested the exclusively white

membership restriction at Milwaukee’s Fraternal Order of Eagles Club. That same year, the Youth Council established its Freedom House headquarters and its aggressive security unit known as the Commandos. In 1967, the group joined forces with Alderwoman Vel Phillips to rally for a strong open housing law in Milwaukee. The open housing campaign became the Youth Council’s most prominent campaign and would place the group in the national spotlight.

The Milwaukee NAACP Youth Council’s involvement and activities in Civil Rights from 1948–1963 are mostly forgotten and neglected by historians. The group’s work during this time was quite conservative compared to the confrontational activities that it became known for in the 1960s. In fact, during its initial years, NAACP elders discouraged their young members from using direct action. Additionally, adult members viewed Youth Council members as future political actors—agents of change for the future, not the present. In so doing, they were simultaneously denying the group the chance to form its own identity.

The *Milwaukee Sentinel* covered the protest against Marc’s Big Boy on March 26, 1963.

NAACP Youths Picket Three Restaurants

Three of Marc’s Big Boy restaurants here were picketed Monday afternoon by about a dozen members of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People for allegedly discriminating against Negroes in certain job classifications.

The members of the NAACP’s youth council here carried signs and posters protesting an incident earlier this month which the council alleges involved refusal to hire a Negro at one of the restaurants because he was a Negro.

Ben Marcus, the owner of the six Big Boy restaurants, said Monday the NAACP allegation was “absolutely and unequivocally not true.”

“We have 16 to 20 Negro employees at present,” Marcus said, “and we hire people by the job whenever they are qualified. We just don’t understand what prompted all this.”

The restaurants that were picketed are at 7114 W. Capitol dr., 2207 E. North av. and 441 W. Wisconsin av. Four or five youth council members paraded peacefully on the sidewalks in front of the restaurants from 4 p.m. until 8 p.m.

The youth council issued a statement declaring that one of its members applied for a job at the Big Boy at 2207 E. North av. last Mar. 5 and was told he would be called the next day and informed whether he was hired.

Council members claim the youth was not notified the next day and after inquiring on Mar. 7 he was told by the Big Boy manager that the job was filled.

“The manager stated Marc’s Big Boy policy prohibited hiring Negroes at the 2207 E. North av. store,” the council’s statement declared. “He further stated that a neat Negro bus boy who was a good worker had been working at the 2207 E. North av. store, but was fired because business fell off due to his employment.”

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The Smiths, children rangin in age, tenant near Onarga, s

Protest For

Two City club Monday endorsed Milwaukee’s positio tion of expres changes from “im ing.”

Carl H. Quast, a planning director, zoning laws were ne vent the building clogging” establishr interchanges.

He also said that giving Milwaukee a control billboards ne ways should be brou date.

Quast spoke at a meeting of the muni regional planning com the club in the Pfister I panels voted to suppor ssembly bills controli way zoning.

John Givens worked to improve race relations in Milwaukee in the 1960s through social action via the Youth Council.

ECHO (MILWAUKEE) WINTER EARLY FALL, 1971

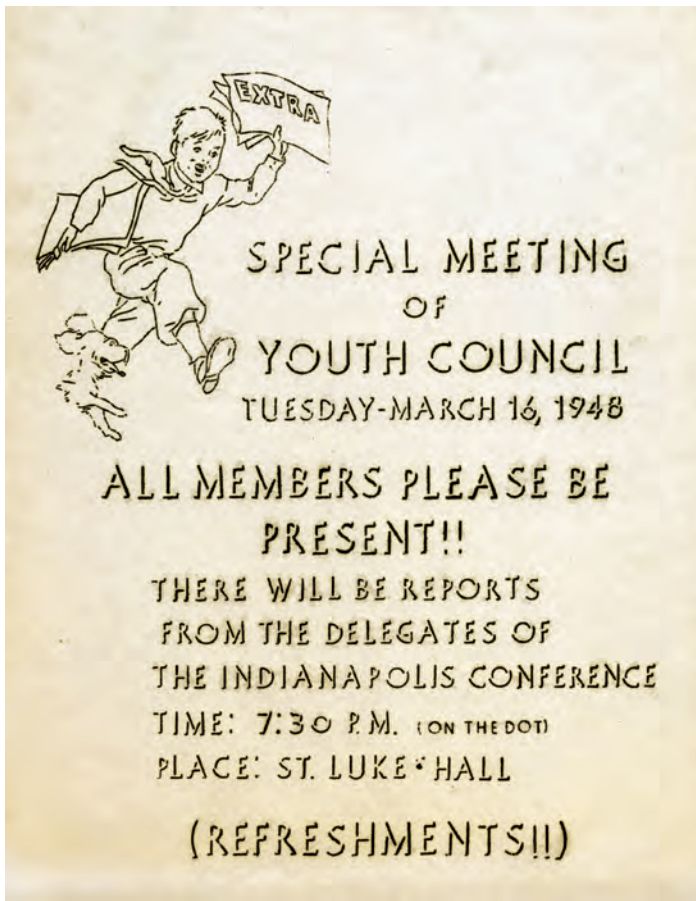


WISCONSIN BLACK HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Ardie Halyard was instrumental in reorganizing the Milwaukee NAACP and developing its Youth Council.

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The Early Years:

Adult Authority and Future Political Actors

Shortly after becoming president of the Milwaukee NAACP branch in the 1930s, attorney James Dorsey closed the local chapter because he believed that Milwaukee’s black population was far too destitute to support both an Urban League and an NAACP.¹ In 1947, several young professionals, who had encountered difficulties in finding job opportunities, united to discuss the possibility of reviving the local NAACP branch. The group met with Dorsey, who acted as temporary chairman, and elected new officers.² A membership drive followed, in which nearly 900 members were gained. After being inactive for several years, the Milwaukee chapter of the NAACP had finally re-emerged.³

Once the chapter was re-organized, member Ardie Halyard quickly went to work developing an ambitious youth council. Halyard, born in Covington, Georgia, was very invested in young people. She had earned a degree in teaching from Atlanta University and taught one year in the university’s



WISCONSIN MAGAZINE OF HISTORY



NAACP member pin from 1954

WHS MUSEUM 1979.106.39

Teacher's Training Department. She married Wilbur Halyard in 1920, and subsequently relocated to Beloit, Wisconsin, where Mr. Halyard had been offered a job developing company housing for Fairbank Morse employees. Soon after, the Halyards moved to Milwaukee where they assisted in reactivating the local NAACP chapter.⁴

According to Youth Council member and future advisor, Gwen Jackson, "They [Mrs. Halyard and Mrs. Gordon] called together a group of young people and talked to us about [the] NAACP and what it meant . . ."⁵ By spring 1948, a Youth Council had been formed and was participating in various local roundtable discussions on race.⁶ The following year, Susan Warren was elected as its first president and Lucinda Gordon became senior advisor to the Youth Council.⁷ Warren, who briefly served on the branch's rally committee in 1947, was one of the first to join the Youth Council.⁸ Gordon's field of specialty was social work, but she had graduated from West Chester State Teacher's College with a bachelor's degree in secondary education.⁹ Under Gordon's leadership, many local youths from the ages of sixteen to twenty-five were recruited. The Council expanded so rapidly that by October 1949, membership, which in October 1948 was at 82, had more than doubled to 186.¹⁰ During its first year of activity, the Youth Council held a formal dance, picnics, a back-to-school lawn party, a Miss Youth Council contest, and other exciting activities that attracted local youth.¹¹

When the NAACP national branch restructured its youth division in 1936, a Youth and College Division constitution was created. The constitution stated that youth councils were expected to work with the local senior branch and the national office of the association for progress in four specific areas: equal educational opportunities, equal economic opportunities, civil liberties, and physical security against lynching.¹² Youth councils were to be a subordinate unit supervised by the senior branch and guided by a senior advisor.¹³ This bureaucratic structure oftentimes created conflict and tension

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Ruby Hurley served as the NAACP's national youth secretary in the 1940s.

between youth councils and senior branches. Gloster B. Current, director of NAACP branches, discussed the conflict, stating, "Some senior branches take the attitude that they have the power to dominate the youth, to tell them what to do . . . This type of negative interpretation of 'subordinate' disrupts the program of the youth council and oftentimes prevents its growth- may even destroy it."¹⁴ During its earliest years, in fact, the Milwaukee NAACP Youth Council's programs and activities were monitored and controlled by an advisory committee.¹⁵ Members of the committee, which included Ardie Halyard and Lucinda Gordon, were appointed by the branch's Executive Board.¹⁶

In 1949, the Youth Council embarked on a mission to promote the importance of education among the city's black community, particularly its youth. In an annual report, Youth

Council president Susan Warren wrote that the group was "concerned about the appalling statistics showing that out of a Negro population of approximately 20,000, only fourteen Negroes were graduated from all of Milwaukee's high schools in June 1948." The ultimate objective of the project was to discover why so many black students were leaving high school before graduation, and to educate them on the social and economic benefits that accompany a high school diploma. The council engaged in a year-long project in which members collected data from schools, high school graduates, and social service agencies in an effort to "reach young people and aid them in their efforts to become adequately trained and correctly placed in employment." Subsequently, the Youth Council held a career conference in which successful black professionals discussed their careers and conducted workshops with youths.¹⁷

WHS MUSEUM 1985.38.25



"I have joined the NAACP" membership label, 1952





At a 1949 meeting, the Youth Council discussed Ada Sipuel's (above) legal challenge to the University of Oklahoma Law School's discriminatory admissions policy.

The project was not the Youth Council's brainchild. Rather, the second paragraph of an advisory committee report states that "Mrs. Halyard and Mr. Galazan explained the educational project which the Youth Council has "accepted."¹⁸ In addition to devising project objectives, advisory committee members also supervised each of the Youth Council's four project committees. Advisory committee member, Michael Galazan, designed the questionnaire that was used in contacting various schools and groups.¹⁹

A 1948–1949 annual report reveals that the most "inspiring and outstanding activity" of the year was the Interracial Human Relations Conference. NAACP National Youth Secretary Ruby Hurley attended the conference and also served as guest speaker. She opened the conference with a speech challenging young people to attack the problems of human relations "because adults too often are set in their ways." Following the address, there were workshops based on the theme: "How Can Young People Improve Human Relations in (1) Schools and Colleges, (2) Social and Recreational Activities, and (3) Community and Civic Action." Seventy-five young people attended the event, including student representatives from Lawrence College, of Appleton, Wisconsin, and six other Milwaukee area colleges. At the conference, the guests from Lawrence College expressed disturbance over "the absence of Negroes" on their campus, and the local community's apparent prejudice towards minorities. The students had previously discussed these grievances with Youth Council members, and according to a report, the conference was the outcome.²⁰ In the report, the Youth Council states its resolution for addressing discrimination at local colleges,

WHEREAS, the Youth Council is unalterably opposed to a school policy which bars such minority groups be it hereby **RESOLVED** that the youth council support in any manner possible efforts on the part of individuals to gain entrance to such schools and will publicize through any means at our disposal the fact that such a school is making an effort to take down its discriminatory bars.²¹

The students of Lawrence College lamented their school's racial intolerance expecting, or at least hoping, that the Youth Council or its adult branch would take some sort of action. Unfortunately, the Youth Council's resolution failed to discuss any possible plan or program

of action to end discrimination at Lawrence College or any other local colleges or universities. After printing the Youth Council's findings, a local newspaper contacted the president of Lawrence College to discuss the absence of African-Americans on the campus. The president disclosed that it had been several years since an African-American had applied to Lawrence and that the school did not have a discriminatory admission policy. A possible Youth Council plan of action could have included, first, taking the initiative to inquire about the school's admission policy as the newspaper had done, and secondly, to help increase the campus diversity by encouraging local black youths to apply for admission. Alternatively, the Council decided to simply bolster the efforts of others in their attempts to gain admission, and thereafter, announce the fact that the school is admitting people of color. The adult branch did not encourage the Youth Council to take action, and instead, convinced the group to organize an interracial human relations conference. Like many other NAACP branches of that era, the Milwaukee branch preferred that its youth study and discuss problems rather than to solve them with action.²² The St. Louis NAACP Youth Council experienced a similar situation. Once youth stopped discussing problems and began taking action, its adult branch grew discontented, insisting that the youth were moving far too rapidly.²³

While the Milwaukee NAACP Youth Council failed to attack the discrimination pervading Wisconsin colleges and universities, NAACP youths elsewhere had begun challenging the racist policies in America's institutions of higher learning. In 1946, Ada Sipuel, a twenty-one-year-old black woman, applied for admission to the all-white University of Oklahoma Law School, but was rejected because of her race. Subsequently, her NAACP attorney's challenged the state's segregation laws in the case *Sipuel v. Board of Regents of the University of Oklahoma*. After two years of litigation, the state supreme court ordered the state board of regents to either close the University of Oklahoma Law School or provide a separate but equal law school

for Sipuel. Immediately, the regents ordered that a law school be hastily created at Langston University, a local agricultural and mechanical college for blacks. Sipuel was told to enroll as soon as possible. In a new lawsuit, the NAACP legal team argued that Langston University Law School, which lacked sufficient funds, was in no way equal to the University of Oklahoma Law School. In 1949, the NAACP gained a victory when, due to a federal district ruling in a similar case, Sipuel was admitted to the University of Oklahoma Law School.²⁴ The Milwaukee NAACP Youth Council's 1949 program shows that the group discussed the Sipuel case during a March membership meeting. However, the discussion failed to spark the resolve to challenge the unfair racial policies of local institutions. The advisory committee was more comfortable with the Youth Council discussing civil rights issues rather than being proactive.²⁵

In 1949, the Youth Council won the NAACP's Ike Smalls Award for "making the greatest progress of any youth council or college chapter among the three hundred in the country." The doubling of its membership, the education project, and the Interracial Human Relations Conference apparently put it ahead of the rest. The award was given at the National Youth Conference in Dayton, Ohio, and was accepted by president Susan Warren and senior advisor Lucinda Gordon.²⁶

While youth councils were under the authority of the senior branch, the relationship between the two was usually not one of mutual understanding. Senior branches were often very domineering toward youth councils. Many adult members thought that it was their duty to decide and dictate what was best.²⁷ The senior branch believed that it should have total control and final approval over youth council programs. This is evidenced within a passage of the youth council constitution which states, "The Youth Council shall be a constituent and subordinate unit of the Association . . ." ²⁸ Young people were not viewed as an essential element in the fight for civil rights and adults viewed youth primarily as "future political actors," the present belonged to them while the future belonged to the young.²⁹ In 1925, an NAACP director stated in a newsletter, "Who will take up the work of the N.A.A.C.P. when this generation passes? The answer contains the reason for the Junior Division."³⁰

Delegates of the Milwaukee NAACP Youth Council attended the NAACP's Annual Youth Legislative Conference in April 1949.³¹ The annual conference had commenced in 1947.³² It mainly attracted NAACP youth council and college chapter members, as well as young people belonging to other organizations. According to the NAACP, the main objective of the conference was "to arouse the interest of young Americans in working for the elimination of racial discrimination and segregation in this country, with particular emphasis being placed on the legislative and political action techniques."³³ The conference educated youths on the political process, as well as the NAACP's legislative agenda. After training sessions, students were often taken to the offices of key members of Congress where politicians would



A sit-in at Woolworth's lunch counter in Jackson, Mississippi, May 28, 1963

speak candidly and provide them with information regarding government processes and congressional bills.³⁴

These conferences were also an attempt by the NAACP national office to mold and control the direction of youth councils. NAACP Youth Secretary Ruby Hurley felt that "it was crucial that the youth become familiarized with the Association's broad legislative agenda because they would ultimately play a crucial role in advancing the Association's political program."³⁵ Essentially, the legislative conferences served as opportunities to get NAACP youth familiarized with their work for the future, not the present. The NAACP did not make an effort to expose its youth to alternative ways of affecting change in their communities, other than through the courts. In fact, the national office would often

A Milwaukee Journal article about the shooting of Daniel Bell in February 1958





Laplois Asford became the NAACP's youth and college director in 1962.

receive letters from young members urging the development of a youth program that included "immediate, specific, practical methods of action which youth groups of the N.A.A.C.P. may take." Most youth council members were working-class kids who would never get the opportunity to practice law. The primary reason they joined the youth council was because they saw it as a platform from which they could affect change as young people.³⁶

The Need for Autonomy

The 1950s marked a low point for the NAACP, both locally and nationally. The senior branches' need for control severely stifled the growth of the Milwaukee NAACP Youth Council and resulted in an all-time low in membership and activity. In a 1951 letter to NAACP Youth Secretary Herbert Wright, Youth Council president Susan Warren wrote, "Our council has not been so active this year as in previous years. We have had meetings every month, but most of the time was spent trying to find out what was wrong with the council." Warren claims that, in addition to complaining about the Council, members had also expressed complaints about the youth council constitution, and various other issues that weren't mentioned in the letter.³⁷ This trend continued throughout the decade. A 1957 annual report reveals the Youth Council's few activities which, for the most part, consisted of board meetings, youth conferences, and NAACP conventions.³⁸ Its loss in membership was largely because more focus was placed on "social and recreational activities and not enough on civil rights action."³⁹

In early 1958, the Youth Council was presented with the opportunity to take social action against an injustice that affected a Milwaukee youth. On Sunday, February 2, Daniel Bell, a twenty-two year old African-American man, was murdered by a white policeman. Bell had been driving home when two uniformed policemen on motorcycle noticed that he had a broken taillight. The officers quickly followed in pursuit. When Bell noticed the officers behind him, he quickly parked the car near the curb, jumped out, and fled the scene. It is unclear why he ran from the police. However, many speculated that he did not have a license and feared receiving a driving citation. One of the officers, Thomas Grady, managed to catch up to Bell on foot, but instead of tackling the young man to the ground, the officer shot him in the back. Bell died instantly. To make the killing look justified, Grady planted a

knife in Bell's hand. Both officers told the public that the youth had lunged at Grady with the weapon in hand, prompting the shooting in self-defense.⁴⁰

Subsequently, Bell's family came forward to request a full investigation into the murder. Despite numerous discrepancies between Grady's account and the medical examiner's findings, the medical examiner's jury decided on February 14 that Grady "acted justifiably" in the killing. While many of Milwaukee's black citizens alleged police brutality and looked to the local NAACP to demand a full inquest into the case, the branch alternatively opted to avoid immediate involvement.⁴¹ Former Youth Council member Eddie Walker, who had become president of the Milwaukee branch by then, wrote a letter to national NAACP Branch Director, Gloster Current, lamenting that many black Milwaukeeans regarded the local chapter as a "social club" for self-absorbed professionals who were too fearful to stand up and fight for the civil rights of the whole black community. During his term as president, Walker attempted to bring in new leadership into the branch by changing the traditional nomination committee and adding a new team of candidates. His proposal, however, generated conflict and rigid resistance from longtime members.⁴² The branch's unwillingness to take action in the Bell case came with consequences, resulting in the loss of community credibility and membership.⁴³

Into the late 1950s, many NAACP youths were growing tired of obeying their conservative elders, and through the use of direct action, began challenging the racist laws that denied them service in public places. In 1958, the Wichita, Kansas Youth Council conducted a sit-in demonstration against a local drug store that refused to serve blacks at its soda fountain and lunch counters. After a four-day protest, drug stores throughout the state eliminated segregation policies. That same year, the Oklahoma City Youth Council led a city wide sit-in protest against segregation at lunch counters, soda fountains, and department stores, which resulted in thirty-nine stores opening their facilities on an integrated basis.⁴⁴ It wasn't until 1960 that the student sit-ins received any national coverage. The coverage was prompted by students at North Carolina A&T University who conducted a sit-in at a local Woolworth Department Store after being denied service.⁴⁵

Alderwoman Vel Phillips became an iconic figure in the fight for strong open housing laws in late 1960s Milwaukee.





Youth Council Commandos gathered around material about George Wallace, 1964

Despite the success of the student sit-in movement, the national branch remained unwilling to view its youth branches as counterparts. The association's inability to regard its young members as counterparts has much to do with the way youth were perceived in America during the early twentieth century. The NAACP's Youth and College Division emerged at a time when many adults still believed that youth were to be seen and not heard. In the 1930s, Americans were just beginning to consider teenagers and youth in their early twenties a significant social group. However, many archaic attitudes toward young people still prevailed. An immense amount of child-based research of the early twentieth century stressed that adults should maintain intransigent control over the development of young people. Many adults—black and white alike—still believed that young people should be molded through adult supervision.⁴⁶

As a result, the Youth and College Division's membership began to decline. Youth frustration reached its pinnacle at the 1961 NAACP national convention when youth councils and college chapters challenged the association. Young people ral-

lied together to demand more independence and more representation on convention committees and the national board.⁴⁷ Many youth had already left the association to join less bureaucratic groups like CORE (Congress of Racial Equality) and SNCC (Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee) because they granted young people much more autonomy.⁴⁸

By the early 1960s, Milwaukee NAACP Youth Council membership remained at a low point. In 1962, advisor Gwen Jackson placed an ad in the *Milwaukee Star* encouraging membership: "Wake up Milwaukeeans. Wake up your youth. [The] NAACP has a Milwaukee Youth Council Branch that needs members badly . . . Youth seem to be leading the way today, so let's give the youth of Milwaukee a chance to be heard." Jackson acknowledges the important leadership of other youth organizations and urges Milwaukee's youth to join and finally "be heard."⁴⁹

Revamping and Re-emerging

The NAACP's refusal to embrace direct action originates from the association's tradition of using the court system to attack injustice. The act of using direct action to attack discrimination was a fairly new phenomenon that was sweeping the nation. Youth preferred this type of action because it was the easiest way that they could affect change.⁵⁰ Once the NAACP realized that many of its young members were leaving the association, it finally began the task of revamping itself. In 1962, new National Youth Director Laplois Ashford began reorganizing the Youth and College Division in order to "create its own distinct entity."⁵¹ The national office gave youth more control over programs and also began encouraging direct action demonstrations. A 1963 report written by Ashford reads, "We need action, action and more direct action for civil rights. Very few of our units take upon themselves to pursue civil rights problems and initiate direct action when necessary."⁵² In addition, at the 1963 NAACP annual convention, the youth council constitution was revised. For years, the senior branch had interpreted the word "subordinate" to mean that it had complete control over youth programs. The word was finally removed and replaced with the word "coordinate." The changes within the association and the revisions to the constitution brought new vigor to the youth division.⁵³

Locally, the Milwaukee Youth Council was also making major changes. After spending two years overseas serving in the army, Milwaukee native John Givens returned home anxious to get involved in the fight for civil rights. While stationed in France, he noticed that race relations there differed greatly from those within the United States. Givens had such an amiable relationship with the small community of Pont-l'Évêque, that they petitioned President Kennedy to allow him to stay. Nevertheless, in 1961, he returned to Milwaukee, eager to help improve the city's race relations. In 1962, he became the Youth Council's advisor. According to Givens, before he joined, the



NAACP protest at the Eagles Club, led by Father Groppi, in 1966

Council's activities only included meeting and discussing civil rights issues: "The adult branch of the NAACP was content as long as all we did was meet with the youth and discuss current issues."⁵⁴ The following year marked a major turning point in the Council's program. In March 1963, it began its first direct action campaign against employment discrimination at a local restaurant. After seeing a "help wanted" sign in the window of Marc's Big Boy restaurant, a young man applied for a bus boy position on two separate occasions, but could not gain employment at the restaurant. He subsequently brought his employment grievance to the Youth Council. Givens and the Youth Council decided that they would first test the situation before they began a protest. They sent the young man a third time to apply for the job, and following him, a young white man was sent to apply for the same position. The white youth was hired on the spot. A manager informed the black youth that the job was filled and that company policy prohibited the hiring of blacks at that particular location. The Youth Council contacted the owner of the restaurant, Ben Marcus, by letter on March 13. In the letter, they expressed that employment at Big Boy was "not integrated" and informed Marcus that qualified young African-Americans were "ready to fulfill available managerial jobs as well as hostess and waitress positions." Marcus failed to respond to the letter in a timely manner, prompting the picketing of the restaurant.⁵⁵

On the third day of picketing, Marcus finally called for a meeting at the Pfister Hotel. Also present at the meeting were Big Boy management officials, Youth Council president Paul McDonald, the Youth Council's employment committee, and NAACP employment advisor Tom Jacobson. Marcus claimed that his restaurant did not have a discriminatory hiring policy towards people of color and vowed to re-emphasize that with all Big Boy employees. The young man who had previously been rejected from the bus boy position was finally hired.⁵⁶

According to John Givens, the Big Boy protest led to "real dissension" between the Youth Council and the adult branch: "When we began picketing the Big Boy restaurant we were immediately confronted by the adults of the NAACP saying that we should not be getting into this direct action." The elders of the branch had played a minor role in the protest. Branch president Edward Smyth was supportive, but according to Givens, his support was "tentative." After the Big Boy campaign, Givens became so discontented with the senior branch that he resigned from his position as advisor and began working to establish a Milwaukee chapter of CORE.⁵⁷ Before departing, he succeeded in setting the stage for Father Groppi to join the Youth Council in 1965, and guide the group into several more direct action campaigns.⁵⁸

As a fledgling group, the Youth Council relied on the adult branch to define its purpose and functions. While heeding the advice and direction of adult mentors, young members learned significant lessons on how to apply pressure to public officials, attack injustice through the legal system, and negotiate disputes, as displayed in the Big Boy protest. But the youth were not content with simply remaining in the shadow of their elders until their time to lead had arrived.

After a lengthy membership decline in the 1950s, the Milwaukee NAACP Youth Council re-emerged with a new philosophy grounded in social action. Most of the older members were displeased with the changes that were taking place. In an interview, founder Ardie Halyard discussed her feelings regarding the Youth Council, stating, "It had a constitution and program to follow. Some may disagree, but it is my feeling that Father Groppi took something out of the Council when he helped to turn it into a picketing organization. Its aim, originally, was to train the young people to take over the program of the NAACP as the older ones retired."⁵⁹ Halyard clearly expresses the senior branch's agenda—to make the Youth Council follow in the conservative footsteps of their elders.

Unfortunately, during the Milwaukee NAACP Youth Council's formative years, senior members of the association did not respectfully heed the desires of its young people or afford them the opportunity to make their own contributions. However, into the 1960s, the Youth Council finally began constructing an organizational identity which embraced legislative methods along with direct action tactics. With Father Groppi as advisor, the Youth Council initiated several more major civil

rights campaigns, and in 1966 founded the Commandos, a security unit designed to protect marchers during direct action protests. Between the years of 1965 and 1968, the Milwaukee NAACP Youth Council would attack the discriminatory membership policy of a local club, segregated housing, and employment discrimination, and in the process, would become the vanguard of Milwaukee's civil rights movement.⁶⁰ ❧

WHI IMAGE ID 4934



Father James Groppi led the Milwaukee NAACP Youth Council into a phase of activism in the late 1960s.

Notes

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25. NAACP Papers: Milwaukee Branch, Box 5, Folder 15.
26. NAACP Papers: Milwaukee Branch, Box 2, Folder 5; NAACP Papers: Milwaukee Branch, Box 5, Folder 15.
27. Bynum, "Our Fight is for Right," 103–104.
28. NAACP Papers: Milwaukee Branch, Box 1, Folder 1.
29. de Schweinitz, *If We Could Change the World*, 159–160.
30. NAACP Papers, Part 19, Series A, Reel 1.
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33. NAACP Papers: Milwaukee Branch, Box 5, Folder 15.
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35. *Ibid.*, 80.
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38. NAACP Papers: Milwaukee Branch, Box 2, Folder 10.
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