

CARL THOMAS ROWAN

Breaking Barriers is the title of Carl Rowan's autobiography. It is an apt summation of his distinguished career as a journalist, diplomat, author, and administrator. The son of a lumber stacker in Tennessee, he was reared under the restrictions of a racially segregated society but went on to graduate valedictorian of his high school class. Passing a nationally competitive exam in 1943, he became one of the first fifteen African-Americans to win a commissioned rank in the United States Navy.

Preparing for a career in journalism, he took his A.B. degree at Oberlin College and his M.A. at the University of Minnesota. As a writer for the Minneapolis Tribune, he covered school desegregation cases, civil rights marches and boycotts, as well as national and international news events with a prize-winning force and authority. During the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, he was called to serve as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs in the Department of State, Ambassador to Finland, and Director of the United States Information Agency. As the first African-American to serve as Director of the U.S.I.A., he became the first of his race to sit with the United States National Security Council and the Cabinet.

In 1965 he became a columnist for the Field Newspaper Syndicate and went on to serve as national affairs commentator on his radio program called "The Rowan Report," a regular panelist on the television show called "Agronsky and Company," and a frequent panelist on "Meet the Press." He is author of South of Freedom (1952), The Pitiful and the Proud (1956), Go South in Sorrow (1957), Wait Til Next Year: The Life Story of Jackie Robinson (1960), Just Between Us Blacks (1974), Race War in Rhodesia (1978), Breaking Barriers (1991), and, just published this year, Dream Makers, Dream Breakers: The World of Thurgood Marshall.

In 1988 Carl Rowan founded Project Excellence, a college scholarship program for African-American high school seniors. More than 300 students have already benefited from the more than \$2 million in scholarships raised under his leadership.

In his autobiography he writes: "I'd have been, in my early days in Tennessee, Richard Wright's Black Boy; and in my late teens a Booker T. Washington coming Up from Slavery; and in my thirties and forties a black Horatio Alger in the minds of some whites. But I have never been Ralph Ellison's Invisible Man." He has worked with Presidents, legislators, civil rights leaders, and ordinary citizens to widen the boundaries of the American dream. Not only has he broken barriers, but Carl Rowan, in his own varied career, has carved out new standards of excellence that transcend race. The University proudly salutes him today by conferring upon him this honorary Doctor of Letters.