

## **Dr. James R. Dumpson Scholarship Program for Studies in Child & Family Services**

As one of the nation's most prominent social workers and social welfare policy advocates, Dr. James Russell Dumpson symbolizes the values of the Administration for Children's Services through his tireless commitment to children and families whose life options were diminished by poverty and societal inequalities that increased their risk for involvement with the child welfare system. Dr. Dumpson was deeply committed to the core values of the social work profession, the humanistic goals of the field of health and human services, and steadfast in advocating for the rights of the poor by maintaining a commitment to creating "a caring society for all Americans."



His career began as a case worker and supervisor for the Philadelphia department of public welfare before moving to New York City in the early 1940s to join the staff of a special program sponsored by the Children's Aid Society designed to find adoptive homes for black children. As his career grew, Mayor Robert Wagner appointed Dr. Dumpson Commissioner of the NYC Department of Public Welfare in 1959, a position he held until 1965. At the time of his appointment he was one of the first African Americans to hold the post of commissioner of public welfare in the United States, and also the first social worker to hold the position in New York City. He was appointed to a second term as commissioner by Mayor Abraham Beame. Under his two appointments as commissioner, he oversaw efforts to desegregate the city's child welfare system.

Dr. Dumpson also served on several presidential task force groups and advisory boards, such as President John F. Kennedy's Advisory Commission on youth gangs, narcotics and drug involvement. His international work included consulting to the United Nations delegation to Pakistan to put in place social welfare and social work education programs following the partition of India; and establishing the first international field instruction site for social work interns in a refugee camp in Thailand. Closer to home, he led a delegation of 2,000 Human Resources Administration (HRA) employees who participated in the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom on August 28, 1963 where Martin Luther King, Jr. delivered his iconic, "I Have a Dream Speech."

In addition to his government service with the department of public welfare and the Human Resources Administration, Dr. Dumpson was president of the Council on Social Work Education, the accrediting body for social work education programs. He held academic appointments in New York City at Hunter College School of Social Work as associate dean, and in 1967 he was appointed dean of the Graduate School of Social Service at Fordham University, becoming the first African American appointed to the deanship of a predominately white school of social work. He continued to serve on national and local boards, publish, and accept speaking engagements until his full retirement from public life in 2002. In partial retirement, he returned to his post at the New York Community Trust where he founded the New York Center for Policy on Aging and advocated for enhanced services to New Yorkers impacted by HIV/AIDS and for disengaged male youth of color. He was a member of the founding board of the *Child Welfare Watch* project at its inception in 1996.

Dr. Dumpson once said, "...my message has been to stimulate people to consider meeting the challenge involved in creating a caring society for all Americans—a society distinguished by its equal treatment of all people, and its compassionate response to those least able to care for themselves." It is in this spirit that ACS funds, supports, and promotes the new *Dr. James R. Dumpson Scholarship Program for Studies in Child & Family Services* to provide tuition support to ACS staff who wish to pursue a career in social work, public administration, public policy or urban policy analysis and management, and who are committed to bringing the highest quality of services and supports to the children and families of New York City.