

National Urban League President challenges audience at 92nd awards dinner

By [Steve Birmingham](#)

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Two people and two organizations were honored Monday by the Metropolitan Saint Louis Urban League for their service to the Urban League and the St. Louis area.



National Urban League President and CEO Marc Morial was in St. Louis Monday. Morial was the keynote speaker for the 92nd Annual Greater St. Louis Urban League Awards Dinner at the Millennium Hotel.

The Urban League held its 92nd Annual Awards Dinner at the Millennium Hotel downtown and honored Pastor Michael Jones, senior pastor of Friendly Temple Missionary Baptist Church, Cheryl Heard, president of Racial Harmony, Citi and Habitat for Humanity.

"We are pleased to honor this year's awardees with our Awards of Merit for their exemplary service in helping the greater St. Louis community," James H. Buford, president and CEO of the Urban League of Metropolitan St. Louis, said.

Jones was honored for years of commitment to serving the greater St Louis metropolitan area. Jones created and serves as Board Chairman of the Robert Fulton Community Development Corporation and the Friendly Community Housing Corporation.

Heard was honored for outstanding youth development initiatives and awareness. President of Racial Harmony in Swansea Illinois, Heard promoted education, understanding, and communication among all races and ethnic groups. She also helped coordinate the annual Racial Harmony Gathering; rallied financial support for the Challenge 12 program, an education and youth development program. She has also developed an annual food drive and a call-to-action volunteer program.

Citi was honored for its community involvement and corporate citizenship. Citi has supported the foreclosure crisis by providing loss mitigation teams at foreclosure fairs. Citi has also provided staff volunteers to serve at financial literacy workshops and annually adopts 100 Neediest Families throughout St. Louis.

Habitat for Humanity was honored for its service and conviction to provide safe and affordable housing for everyone. The non-profit Christian ministry shelters families suffering from natural disasters, slum housing and no housing. It also lends no-profit, no-interest mortgage loans to its beneficiary families and promotes teamwork to homeowners and volunteers who build under supervision.

2010 also marks the 100th anniversary of the National Urban League movement, keynote speaker Marc Morial, National Urban League President and CEO and former mayor of New Orleans, Louisiana, said.

Morial recounted the events of the last decade, including 9/11, Hurricane Katrina, two overseas wars in two countries, the sub-prime mortgage failures, the worst recession since the Great Depression, said those in attendance and the country faced a “decade of incredible challenges.”

Instead of just having a traditional celebration of parties and gatherings and then going home, Morial challenged those in the audience to help fulfill the four goals set out by the National Urban League -- that every American child by the year 2025 is ready for college, work and life, that every American has access to jobs with a living wage and good benefits, that every American lives in safe, decent, affordable and energy efficient housing and that every American have access to good and affordable healthcare solutions.