

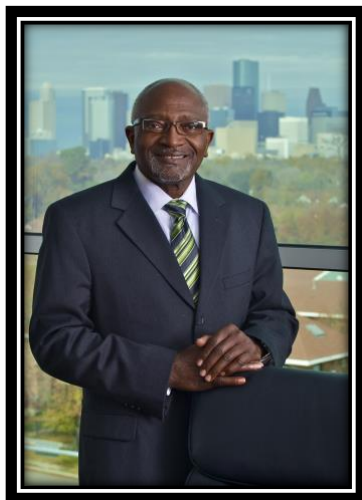
PROFILE OF RESISTANCE

RICHARD BULLARD

sociologist, environmental justice activist, and scholar

"Every social movement that has been successful in this country has had a strong youth and student component."

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COURTESY OF DR. RICHARD BULLARD

Background Information

Born December 21, 1946

Dr. Richard Bullard was born in Elba, Alabama. His connection to the environment was shaped early by fishing and hunting with his father.ⁱ Bullard's activism began in his youth after seeing powerful images of activists during the Civil Rights Movement.ⁱⁱ In 1968, Bullard received a bachelor's in History and Government with a minor in Sociology from Alabama Agricultural and Mechanical University. He then went on to earn an M.S. degree in Sociology in 1972 at Atlanta University, and a Ph.D. in Urban Planning in 1976 at Iowa State University.ⁱⁱⁱ

Bullard's Resistance

In 1978, Bullard's wife, Linda McKeever, filed a lawsuit against a company that planned to place a landfill in a predominantly Black neighborhood in Houston.^{iv} Since Dr. Bullard worked as a sociologist, his wife asked him to collect information for this case.^v His subsequent findings identified patterns of environmental inequality.^{vi} The appalling results drove Bullard to examine further the link between racism and environmental disparities, which led him to pursue environmental justice advocacy work.^{vii} Bullard's contributions include publishing his findings in books like *Dumping in Dixie* in 1990.^{viii} This groundbreaking book was the first to discuss the concept of environmental justice^{ix} and its connection to civil rights and environmental quality.^x Bullard served as a planner for the First National People of Color Environment Leadership Summit in 1991.^{xi} Bullard continues his environmental justice work and is currently Co-Chair of the Executive Committee of the National Black Environmental Justice Network.^{xii} He also currently serves as a distinguished professor of Urban Planning and Environmental Policy at Texas Southern University.^{xiii}

Achievements

Dr. Bullard received the Champions of the Earth Lifetime Achievement Award.^{xiv} He is also the HBCU Climate Change Consortium co-founder.^{xv} Through Bullard's pioneering and strategic work, the ideas of environmental justice and racism were widely shared. Bullard declared that the quality of the environment in which we play, eat, drink, and pray must be equitable for everyone, not just a select few.^{xvi}

Essential Questions

1. Richard Bullard could not find any work done on the relationship between environmental quality and civil rights. Through the influence of past activism in the 60s, like the Civil Rights Movement, Bullard investigated and connected the two concepts forming the field of environmental justice.
 - a. What social movement(s) or activist(s) have inspired you, and why?
 - b. When you realize problems in your community, how do you solve them?

2. Bullard's activism partially stemmed from his relationship with the environment and the influence of powerful activism in movements like the Civil Rights Movement.
 - a. What social issues are you passionate about, and what ways can you contribute to addressing the issue?

3. ***"Every social movement that has been successful in this country has had a strong youth and student component."***
 - a. Have you ever participated in any movements, and if not, what movements (past or current) would you like to join or even organize?

ⁱ Pilot, Otto. 2020. "Dr. Robert Bullard: The Father of Environmental Justice." Text. Climate One. January 2, 2020. <https://www.climateone.org/audio/dr-robert-bullard-father-environmental-justice>.

ⁱⁱ Pilot 2020

iii Agbor, Phylisha W. 2017. "Robert Doyle Bullard (1946-) •." December 24, 2017. <https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/bullard-dr-robert-doyle-1946/>.

iv Agbor 2017

v Agbor 2017

vi Milman, Oliver. 2018. "Robert Bullard: 'Environmental Justice Isn't Just Slang, It's Real.'" *The Guardian*, December 20, 2018, sec. Opinion. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/dec/20/robert-bullard-interview-environmental-justice-civil-rights-movement>.

vii Milman 2018

viii Agbor 2017

ix Agbor 2017

x Agbor 2017

xi Agbor 2017

xii Environment, U. N. 2020. "Robert Bullard." *Champions of the Earth*. December 9, 2020. <http://www.unep.org/championsofearth/laureates/2020/robert-bullard>.

xiii "BIOGRAPHY." n.d. *Dr Robert Bullard* (blog). Accessed September 13, 2021. <https://drrobertbullard.com/biography/>.

xiv "Robert Bullard's Biography" 2021

xv Environment 2020

xvi Environment 2020