NAACP Chairman Julian Bond and NAACP President and CEO Benjamin Todd Jealous noting the death of historian and activist John Hope Franklin, said, “America has lost a real treasure with the death of John Hope Franklin. He was a pioneer in democratizing American history, giving Black Americans a proper place in the development of the United States. His magnificent work, From Slavery to Freedom, insures people of color will not be forgotten when the American story is told. He was more than America's most prominent historian - his civic activism set a high standard for academics, marching in Selma, serving on numerous commissions and advising presidents.
Speaker of the US House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi called Franklin one of our nation’s most distinguished scholars. She said: “His academic and civic contributions helped integrate the African American narrative into American history – reflecting one of our nation’s most cherished goals of creating a stronger and more united America.

“Professor Franklin chaired the history departments at Brooklyn College and the University of Chicago, before becoming James B. Duke Professor of History at Duke University,” she said. “The John Hope Franklin Center for Interdisciplinary and International Studies and the Franklin Humanities Institute at Duke remain as permanent monuments to his contributions in academia and public policy.

“John Hope Franklin successfully bridged the gap between theory and practice. That was never more evident than his scholarly work on President Bill Clinton’s Task Force on Race – for which he received the Presidential Medal of Freedom, his invaluable work on the history of African Americans, and his seminal research used in the landmark case, Brown v. Board of Education,” she said.

John Hope Franklin was the 1995 recipient of the NAACP Spingarn Medal, the Association’s highest honor, given for distinguished merit and achievement among Americans of African descent.