

John Hope Bryant

Written by Maya Beecham
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Civil unrest erupted in Los Angeles, California, on April 29, 1992. Four police officers were acquitted the same day, by a white jury in the majority white suburb of Simi Valley, for the beating of Rodney King after a high speed chase on Highway 212. Members of the African-American community decried the LAPD for police brutality directed towards their community, and sought justice. Riots on the streets of Los Angeles led to the death of 53 people and \$1 billion in damages.

Amidst the upheaval John Hope Bryant emerged with a plan to restore a sense of purpose to under-served minority communities. Immediately following the 1992 LA riots Bryant brought his plan to fruition by founding HOPE, a non-profit, public benefit organization, providing economic tools and services, and bridging the gap between minority communities and mainstream, private sector resources, through strategic programming.

On Monday, April 4, 5:30 p.m. Bryant, author of the book *Love Leadership: The New Way to Lead in a Fear-Based World* and founder of the international anti-poverty organization, Operation HOPE, Inc. will speak on his book, his philosophies on leadership, leading with love as opposed to fear, at the auditorium of the O'Shaughnessy Educational Center at the University of St. Thomas—St. Paul Campus, 2115 Summit Avenue, St. Paul, Minnesota 55105.

The lecture, free and open to the public, is a CommUnity event sponsored by the Opus College of Business in collaboration with the university's School of Law and Center for Intercultural Learning and Community Engagement. Bryant will be available to sign copies of his book following the lecture.

Bill Woodson, assistant dean for UST MBA programs at St. Thomas' Opus College of Business, said "Bryant's accomplishments and aspirations provide inspiration to anyone who seeks to leave the world a better place than she or he found it, or believes that a hand-up is superior to a hand-out."

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HOPE, the country's first nonprofit social investment banking organization, serves over a million individuals in 70 U.S. communities, Haiti and South Africa.

HOPE serves as a facilitator, lender, advocate and educator for the underserved. Additionally, the organization advocates for the voice of the underserved within City and State Government, Congress, Senate, and other government, legislative and regulatory bodies. The mission of HOPE reads, "...through (1) partnership, (2) investment, (3) lending, (4) practical education, (5) technical assistance, (6) advocacy and outreach, is to 'bridge the gap'".

Bryant, 45, and a native of Los Angeles, faced his own struggle with poverty. He was homeless for six months by the age of 18. He is lauded for his life work and undying commitment to underserved communities. Bryant has been recognized for his work by the last five U.S. presidents; he was named a 'Community Hero' by People magazine and one of 'America's 50 Most Promising Leaders of the Future' by Time.

Dean Woodson said, "We are delighted to have the opportunity to expose our university community and the Twin Cities to this fresh approach to leadership and social entrepreneurship."