

# American Legend



*"The arc of the moral universe is long but it bends toward justice."*

– Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

In the early 1960s, Birmingham, Alabama, was so dangerous to Black Americans who suffered so many bombings at the hands of White supremacists that it was often referred to as "Bombingham." There's an old joke from the Civil Rights movement: "A Black preacher in Chicago wakes up one morning and tells his wife that Jesus had come to him in a dream and told him to go to Birmingham to seek justice. His wife is horrified. 'Did Jesus say he'd go with you?' The husband replies, 'He said he'd go as far as Memphis.'" Birmingham was just that dangerous.

We view the heroism of history from a safe distance. Pretending that we would do the same, given the opportunity.

Stand up for justice, risk our careers, or even our lives. But few of us heed the call. It's just too hard. You know those moments when we "Go along to get along." Not to cause even "good trouble" as the late John Lewis would say. Even in protest, we often don the mantle of self-righteousness, which can make change more threatening, rather than advance "truth and reconciliation."

Imagine not having the safety and security of the rearview mirror, but instead to have lived history-making in real time? What courage and strength of character. At the Edmund Pettus Bridge; on the bus in Montgomery, Alabama, with Rosa Parks; at the door at Foster Auditorium when Governor George Wallace attempted to block the integration of the University of Alabama. To run into the burning building rather than away from it?

Enter **Andrew Young**, among the last of the early civil rights leaders, the former executive director of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) and a close confidant to Martin Luther King, Jr. Later in his career he served as a U.S Congressman from Georgia, Ambassador to the United Nations and the Mayor of Atlanta. At 88, he is still leading the way.

Ambassador Young was kind enough to offer to kick off a series called *American Legends* that we are doing with *CommPRO* and on our podcast, *In House Warrior*. Sponsors of this historic event – free to the public – include the Museum of Public Relations and *American Heritage* magazine. Bill Ide, the former General Counsel of Monsanto, a partner at Akerman in Atlanta and a friend of the Ambassador for over 50 years, will join me in moderating this timely conversation on Aug 21 at 2 pm ET over the CommPRO network.

Ambassador Young will provide perspectives on the upcoming presidential election, including the emerging new "birtherism," #BLM and the impact of COVID-19 on communities of color... ***please join the conversation.***

***Register for the Event***

***Download our new DEI eBook***

**Richard Levick**