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Bob Woodson

Robert L. Woodson, Sr., is founder and president of the National Center for Neighborhood Enterprise (NCNE). Often referred to as the godfather of the movement to empower neighborhood-based organizations, Bob Woodson's social activism dates back to the 1960's, when as a young civil rights activist, he developed and coordinated national and local community development programs. During the 70's he directed the National Urban League's Administration of Justice division and then served as a Resident Fellow at the American Enterprise Institute.

For more than 30 years Woodson has been a source of guidance and support for grassroots organizations around the world. He was instrumental in paving the way for resident management and ownership of public housing, and brought together task forces of grassroots groups to advise the 104th Congress, the Pennsylvania Legislature, and the Wisconsin Assembly. He is consulted by cabinet officials, numerous governors, members of Congress, academicians, business leaders, and the news media.

He has worked with youth intervention and violence prevention programs since the 1960's and has written several books on the subject. A major initiative of the National Center for Neighborhood Enterprise is the Violence Free Zone project, the roots of which were in a program in Philadelphia, PA known as the House of Umoja, which stopped gang violence throughout Philadelphia in the early 1980's. Using strategies learned there, Woodson and NCNE helped craft a peace agreement among warring factions in Washington, D.C.'s Benning Terrace public housing development that had led to more than 50 youth deaths in recent years. A program of jobs, training, education and other support led to a complete revitalization of the neighborhood and turnaround in the lives of youths most people had written off as hopeless. The principles of this program have been adapted to NCNE's Violence Free Zone projects in the East Capitol section of Washington, DC, Dallas, Los Angeles, Hartford, and Indianapolis.

Among the many awards Woodson has received is the prestigious John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Fellowship, often referred to as the "genius" award. He is the author of hundreds of articles and several books, including *The Triumphs of Joseph: How Community Healers are Reviving Our Streets and Neighborhoods*, published by The Free Press in January, 1998.