



Academy of Authors
South Carolina

Marian Wright Edelman is an internationally known figure. As the founder and president of the Children's Defense Fund, she has been an advocate for disadvantaged Americans her entire professional life. A graduate of Spelman College and Yale Law School, she began her career in the mid-60s when, as the first black woman admitted to the Mississippi Bar, she directed the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund office in Jackson, Mississippi. In 1968, she moved to Washington, D.C., as counsel for the Poor People's Campaign that Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., began organizing before his death. She founded the Washington Research Project, a public interest law firm and the parent body of the Children's Defense Fund. For two years she served as the Director of the Center for Law and Education at Harvard University and in 1973 began CDF.

Edelman served on the Board of Trustees of Spelman College and was the first woman elected by alumni as a member of the Yale University Corporation. Among the awards she has received are the Albert Schweitzer Humanitarian Prize, the Heinz Award, and a MacArthur Foundation Prize Fellowship.

In 2000, she received the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian award, and the Robert F. Kennedy Lifetime Achievement Award for her writings which include: *Families in Peril: An Agenda for Social Change*; *The Measure of Our Success: A Letter to My Children and Yours*; *Guide My Feet: Meditations and Prayers on Loving and Working for Children*; *Stand for Children*; *Lanterns: A Memoir of Mentors*; *Hold My Hand: Prayers for Building a Movement to Leave No Child Behind*; *I'm Your Child, God: Prayers for Our Children*; and *I Can Make a Difference: A Treasury to Inspire Our Children*. Her latest book is *The Sea is So Wide and My Boat is So Small: Charting a Course for the Next Generation*.

She is a board member of the Robin Hood Foundation, the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities, and the Association to Benefit Children, and is a member of the Selection Committee of the Profiles in Courage Award of the John F. Kennedy Library, the Council on Foreign Relations, the American Philosophical Society, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and the Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences.

2012 Inductees to the South Carolina Academy of Authors



Marian Wright Edelman