

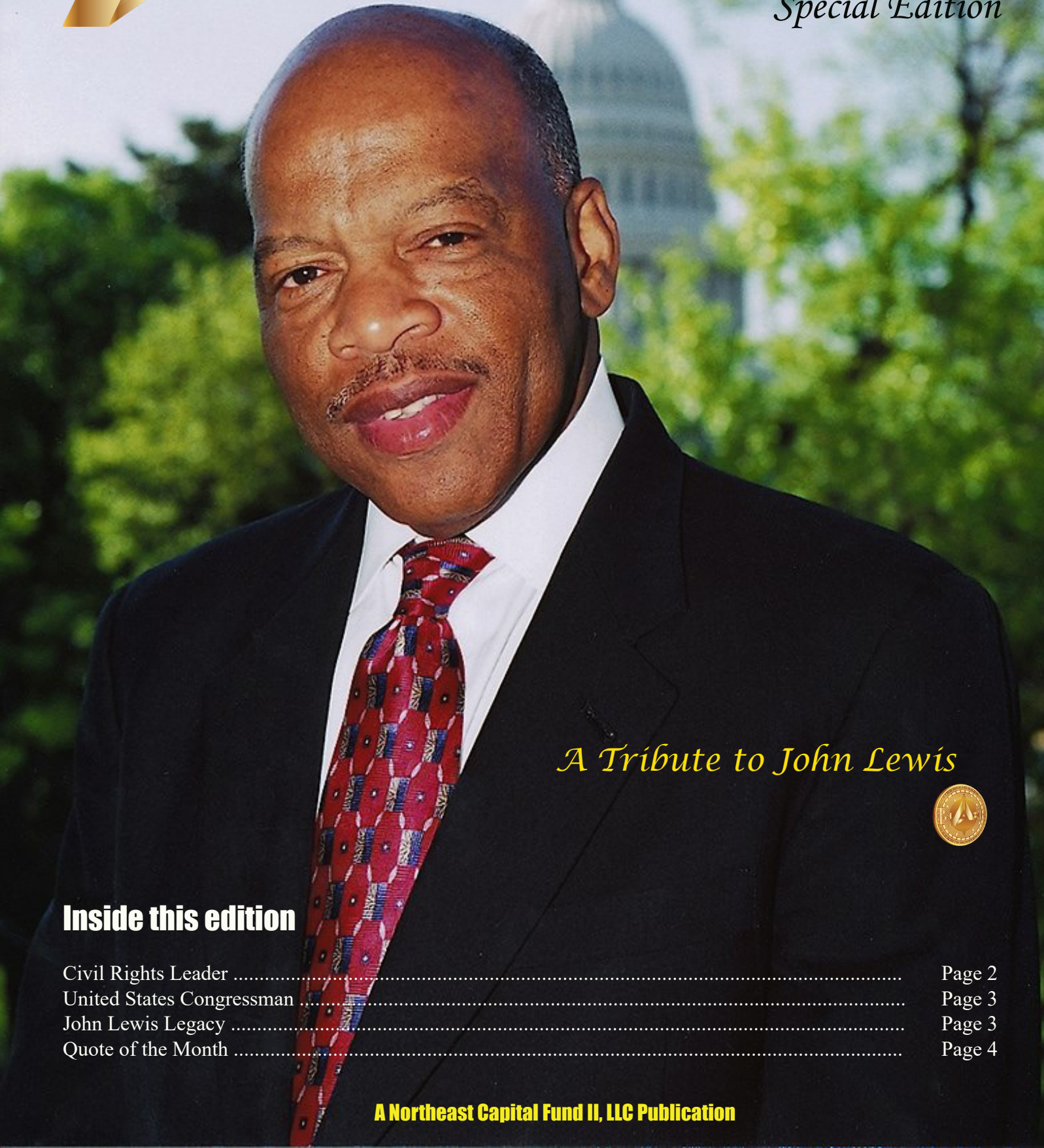


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Newsletter

JULY 2020

Special Edition



A Tribute to John Lewis



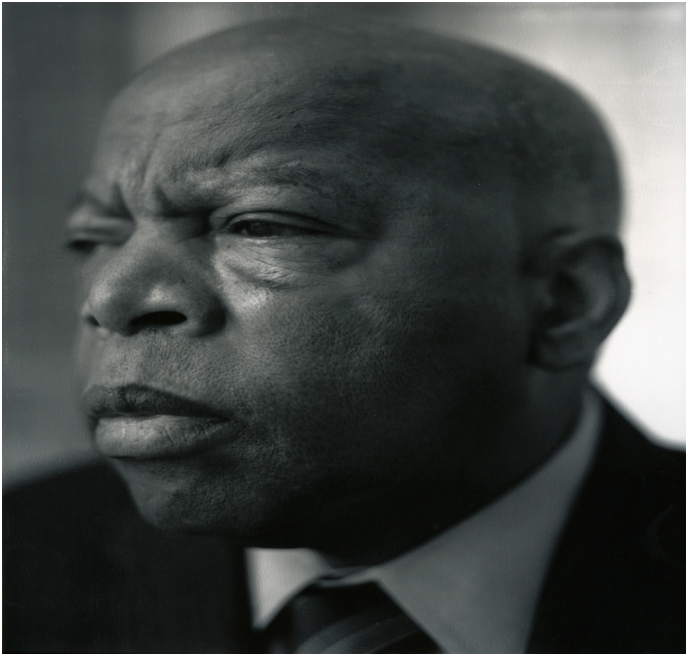
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In Loving Memory of John Robert Lewis

We take the month of July to pay our special tribute to the Honorable John Robert Lewis who transitioned on July 17, 2020 at the age of 80. Known for his famous quote *“Get in good trouble, necessary trouble, and help redeem the soul of America.”*, Congressman Lewis was one of the “Bix Six” leaders of the civil rights movement in the 1960s and continued to fight for people’s rights all of his life.

Civil Rights Leader



Born outside of Troy, Alabama, on February 21, 1940, John Robert Lewis grew up in an era of racial segregation. Inspired by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., he joined the burgeoning civil rights movement.

In 1957, Lewis left Alabama to attend the American Baptist Theological Seminary in Nashville, Tennessee. There, he learned about nonviolent protest and helped to organize sit-ins at segregated lunch counters. He was arrested during these demonstrations, which upset his mother, but Lewis was committed to the civil rights movement and went on to participate in the Freedom Rides of 1961.

Freedom Riders challenged the segregated facilities they encountered at interstate bus terminals in the South, which had been deemed illegal by the Supreme Court. It was dangerous work that resulted in arrests and beatings for many involved, including Lewis.

The violent attacks were recorded and disseminated throughout the country, and the images proved too powerful to ignore. “Bloody Sunday” as the day was labeled, sped up the passage of the 1965 Voting Rights Act.

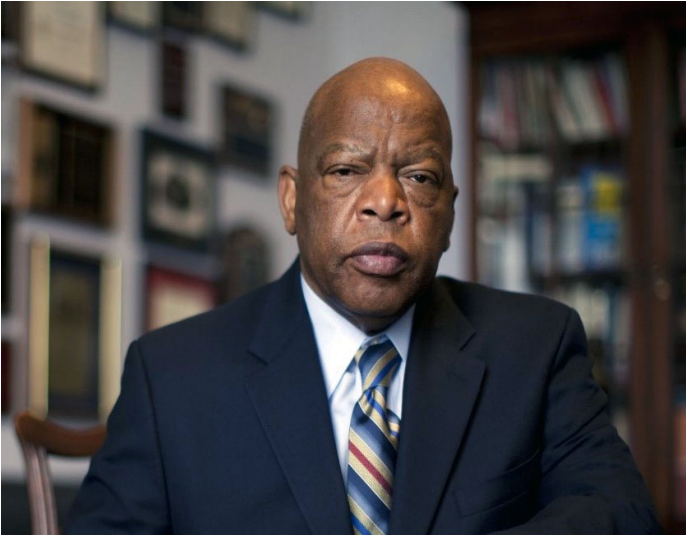
In 1963, Lewis became chairman of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee; that same year, as one of the “Big Six” leaders of the civil rights movement, helped plan the March on Washington.

Lewis, the youngest speaker at the event had to alter his speech in order to please other organizers, but still delivered a powerful oration that declared, “We all recognize the fact that if any radical social, political and economic changes are to take place in our society, the people, the masses, must bring them about.”



After the March on Washington, in 1964, the Civil Rights Act became law; however, this did not make it easier for African Americans to vote in the South. To bring attention to this struggle, Lewis and Hosea Williams led a march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama, on March 7, 1965. After crossing the Edmund Pettus Bridge, the marchers were attacked by state troopers. Lewis was severely beaten once more, this time suffering a fractured skull.

United States Congressman



In 1986, he was elected to the House of Representatives and represented Georgia's 5th District, he was one of the most respected members of Congress. Since entering office, he called for healthcare reform, measures to fight poverty and improvements in education. Most importantly, he oversaw multiple renewals of the Voting Rights Act. When the Supreme Court struck down part of the law in 2013's *Shelby County v. Holder*, Lewis decried the decision as a "dagger into the heart" of voting rights.

In the wake of the mass shooting that took place on June 12, 2016, in Orlando, Florida, Lewis led a sit-in comprised of approximately 40 House Democrats on the floor of the House of Representatives on June 22nd in an attempt to bring attention and force Congress to address gun violence by taking definitive legislative action. "We have been too quiet for too long," Lewis said. "There comes a time when you have to say something. You have to make a little noise. You have to move your feet. This is the time."

The protest came just days after several measures including a bill regarding background checks and adding restrictions on the purchase of guns by people on the federal no-fly list, failed in the Senate. Senator Chris Murphy applauded the protest. Murphy had previously led a filibuster in the Senate which led to the subsequent vote.

Legacy

Though the Supreme Court's decision about the Voting Rights Act was a blow to Lewis, he has been encouraged by the progress that has occurred in his lifetime. After Barack Obama won the presidency in 2008, Lewis stated that "When we were organizing voter-registration drives, going on the Freedom Rides, sitting in, coming here to Washington for the first time, getting arrested, going to jail, being beaten, I never thought — I never dreamed — of the possibility that an African American would one day be elected president of the United States."

In addition to continuing his work in Congress, Lewis has reached out to a younger generation by helping to create a series of graphic novels about his work in the civil rights movement.

In 2010, Lewis was awarded the First LBJ Liberty and Justice for All Award, given to him by the Lyndon Baines Johnson Foundation, and the next year, Lewis was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President Barack Obama. In 2016, he won the National Book Award for the third installment in the series *March: Book Three*, which marks the first time a graphic novel has received the honor.



The civil rights icon has also been honored with numerous awards, including the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the NAACP's Spingarn Medal and the sole John F. Kennedy "Profile in Courage Award" for Lifetime Achievement.

Together, You Can Redeem the Soul of Our Nation

*Though I am gone, I urge you to
answer the highest calling of your heart and
stand up for what you truly believe.*

JOHN LEWIS

February 21, 1940 - July 17, 2020



Quote of the Month

*“Nothing can stop the power of a committed and determined people to make a difference in our society.
Why? Because human beings are the most dynamic link to the divine on this planet.”*

- John Lewis

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CREATING EQUALITY
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PROTEST = INVEST

JUNE 6, 2020

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*We encourage you to get involved
in our asset building movement; tell
family, friends and associates to join
& follow us on social media*

