



# Lay Bare the Heart: An Autobiography of the Civil Rights Movement

*James Farmer*

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## **Lay Bare the Heart: An Autobiography of the Civil Rights Movement** James Farmer

Texas native James Farmer is one of the “Big Four” of the turbulent 1960s civil rights movement, along with Martin Luther King Jr., Roy Wilkins, and Whitney Young. Farmer might be called the forgotten man of the movement, overshadowed by Martin Luther King Jr., who was deeply influenced by Farmer’s interpretation of Gandhi’s concept of nonviolent protest.

Born in Marshall, Texas, in 1920, the son of a preacher, Farmer grew up with segregated movie theaters and “White Only” drinking fountains. This background impelled him to found the Congress of Racial Equality in 1942. That same year he mobilized the first sit-in in an all-white restaurant near the University of Chicago. Under Farmer’s direction, CORE set the pattern for the civil rights movement by peaceful protests which eventually led to the dramatic “Freedom Rides” of the 1960s.

In *Lay Bare the Heart* Farmer tells the story of the heroic civil rights struggle of the 1950s and 1960s. This moving and unsparing personal account captures both the inspiring strengths and human weaknesses of a movement beset by rivalries, conflicts and betrayals. Farmer recalls meetings with Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt, Jack and Bobby Kennedy, Adlai Stevenson (for whom he had great respect), and Lyndon Johnson (who, according to Farmer, used Adam Clayton Powell Jr., to thwart a major phase of the movement).

James Farmer has courageously worked for dignity for all people in the United States. In this book, he tells his story with forthright honesty.

First published in 1985 by Arbor House, this edition contains a new foreword by Don Carleton, director of the Dolph BriscoeCenter for American History at the University of Texas at Austin, and a new preface.

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