



Leon H. Sullivan
*Leon H. Sullivan's
 Spingarn Medal, Sash,
 and Spingarn Medal
 Citation*

Minneapolis, Minnesota: National Association for the Advancement of Colored People 1971 **\$3000**

The Reverend Leon H. Sullivan's Spingarn Medal, Sash, and Spingarn Medal Proclamation, affixed on a velvet covered board, and probably previously framed. Slight stains on the sash, and aside from being tipped on the board all elements are otherwise near fine or better. See itemized description below.

Leon Howard Sullivan (1922 – 2001) was a Baptist minister, a civil rights leader and social activist focusing on the creation of job training opportunities for African-Americans. As an assistant to the Rev. Adam Clayton Powell he recruited 100 black men for the NYPD in Harlem in cooperation with Mayor La Guardia in the 1940s. He eventually migrated to Philadelphia to become pastor of the Zion Baptist Church. He was involved in the Civil Rights Movement, helping to organize a march of Washington in the 1940s. He pushed companies to hire blacks and organized boycotts of those that refused. The effectiveness of these boycotts came to the attention of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the SCLC, who persuaded Sullivan to share information with them which led to SCLC's economic arm, Operation Breadbasket. He was also a leader in the anti-apartheid divestment movement, and was extremely active in Philadelphia affairs.

The Spingarn Medal is awarded annually most years by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) for outstanding achievement by an African American. The award, a gold medal, was created in 1914 by Joel Elias Spingarn, Chairman of the NAACP, and was first awarded to biologist Ernest E. Just in 1915. Well-known recipients of the award include: W. E. B. Du Bois, George Washington Carver, Marian Anderson, Paul Robeson, Thurgood Marshall, Jackie Robinson, Martin Luther King, Jr., Langston Hughes, Sammy Davis, Jr., Alex Haley, Rosa Parks, Lena Horne, Jesse Jackson, Colin Powell, Alvin Ailey and Maya Angelou.

The description of each item:

1. Purple and yellow satin sash with gold trim crossed as it would be worn.
2. Printed Citation on thin beige card stock. Approximately 6½" x 8¾". Framed and glazed in a gold frame and with the frame affixed on the card.
3. The Spingarn Medal engraved to Leon H. Sullivan and awarded to him in Minneapolis in 1971. The Medal is affixed at the intersection where the sash would have crossed at mid-chest level. While the medal is described as gold, and is gold colored, we'd venture to guess that it is actually made of bronze.

Images follow. [\[BTC#420487\]](#)



SPINGARN MEDAL

AWARDED TO
LEON H. SULLIVAN
JULY 6 1971
MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA
BY THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION
FOR THE ADVANCEMENT
OF COLORED PEOPLE

CITATION
for
LEON HOWARD SULLIVAN
1970 Spingarn Medalist

In recognition of the inspiration and resourcefulness with which he has transmuted the social gospel into economic progress for his people;

In appreciation of his role in preparing his constituents to take advantage of the opportunities won by mobilizing their economic power for group advancement;

In tribute to his splendid achievement in adapting his church to the social, cultural and economic — as well as the spiritual — needs of its community; and

In admiration of the singular steadfastness with which he has melded religious leadership and social vision for the advancement of black folk.

The National Association for the Advancement of
Colored People
proudly awards the
Fifty-sixth Spingarn Medal
to

LEON HOWARD SULLIVAN

Clergyman, Activist and Prophet