

**12<sup>th</sup> Grade – Grand Prize**  
**Josephine – Lincoln Park High School**

‘Hope’, as in the surety of a better, improved future. ‘Secure’, as in the state of being founded and moving in the ethically right direction. Livable, as in the state of surroundings that provides not only necessary but sufficient conditions for survival, growth, reproduction, improvement. These conditions are provided for through another set of conditions. ‘Disciplined non-conformists’ reference human beings who live with intention and control, testing and challenging convention. They do so to promote justice, peace and brotherhood. That is, they seek to promote values that establish the improved and harmonious conditions of humankind and guarantee its survival in the future.

Albert Raby, a man of few words, a large heart and an even bigger vision, a leader in the Chicago Freedom Movement in Chicago during the 1960’s. This movement began when the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) acknowledged Chicago’s non-violent demonstrations in favor of real estate, stores, and public education reform and formed a coalition, as it were(1). Chicago at this time was a battleground: a people in arms against racial inequality peacefully charging a people in arms to keep the institution of segregation and racism. Far from the model of peace and stability, Chicago meandered to chaos and dishabile.

Raby grappled with the matter politically and peacefully. A disciplined non-conformist, he welcomed the SCLC’s participation in Chicago and co-worked with leaders Dr. Martin Luther King and Jesse Jackson to fight the gross racial inequalities that for a large time most quietly and unquestioningly accepted. An advocate of justice, peace and brotherhood, he actively and uninhibitedly dedicated himself to reform measures. From his participation in the negotiations for the Summit Agreement, the city agreed to enforce the open housing law and desegregate housing. Included in the Summit Agreement were demands for a nondiscriminatory mortgage policy, the availability of listings on a nondiscriminatory policy, and programs to increase the supply of low-cost housing on a scattered basis for both low and middle-income families(2). His work in Operation Breadbasket, later know as PUSH, called for boycotts on stores as a means to pressure white businesses to hire blacks and purchase goods and services from black contractors(3). Leading marches on housing in slums and white neighborhoods, he impressed non-violent methods to his followers m even when met by angry white mobs. His peaceful efforts to reform indeed mark him, in Dr. King’s words, as a disciplined non-conformist dedicated to the causes of justice, peace, and brotherhood in hope of a securer and more livable future. He was a man who lived with intention and control, challenging the conventions of his day. He sought to guarantee the future of better humankind.

Ironically, you see him mostly in the shadows in many of his pictures with Dr. Martin Luther King and other leaders. In fact, one picture documents his body as a shield for Dr. King when King becomes the target of an angry white man. Dr. King is in focus, Raby’s gesture almost goes unnoticed in the flurry of activity. In his interviews, he is a man of few words and a grave face. To one just beginning to learn about reform movements in the sixties, Raby is unimpressive or unnoticed.

Albert Raby, in this respect, transcends Dr. King’s words. His quiet presence is a different timbre of the disciplined non-conformist type that King falls under. Understanding the ground-shaking nature of his work, his silence can be understood to be unintentional. Far be it that Raby had nothing to say or was doing inconsequential work, or even that he was naturally shy. It was Raby’s dedication to the cause of justice, peace, and brotherhood that blends his actions into the silent noise raised by peaceful demonstrating crowds. His dedication is hope for all human beings who strive to change the world. A disciplined non-conformist need not be the loudest or the bravest to be a leader. One needs to be committed and convicted to be a leader, to be the change that makes the world a more secure and livable place.

Footnotes: (1) Terry Don, “Fear and Loathing in Chicago,” *Chicago Tribune Magazine*, 15, January 2006, 10-18; (2) Operation Breadbasket News, “What is Operation Breadbasket?” *Operation Breadbasket News*, 3 Oct. 1969: 4-10; (3) Ibid.

Bibliography: "What is Operation Breadbasket?" Operation Breadbasket News 3 Oct. 1969: 4-10; Don Terry, "Fear and Loathing in Chicago," Chicago Tribune Magazine, January 15, 2006, 10-18