

Marian Wright Edelman, Founder and President of the Children's Defense Fund, has been an advocate for disadvantaged Americans for her entire professional life. A graduate of Spelman College and Yale Law School, Edelman was the first black woman admitted to the Mississippi Bar and directed the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund office in Jackson, Mississippi. She has received over a hundred honorary degrees and many awards including the Albert Schweitzer Humanitarian Prize, the Heinz Award, a MacArthur Foundation Prize Fellowship, 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*, *Lanterns: A Memoir of Mentors*, *I'm Your Child*, *God: Prayers for Our Children*; *I Can Make a Difference: A Treasury to Inspire Our Children*; and *The Sea Is So Wide and My Boat Is So Small: Charting a Course for the Next Generation*. She is married to Peter Edelman, a Professor at Georgetown University Law Center. They have three sons and four grandchildren.