

# **ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE 1982-2007**

**LESSONS AND MILESTONE OVER  
THE PAST TWENTY-FIVE YEARS**

**March 29, 2007**

**Robert D. Bullard, Ph.D.**

**Environmental Justice Resource Center**

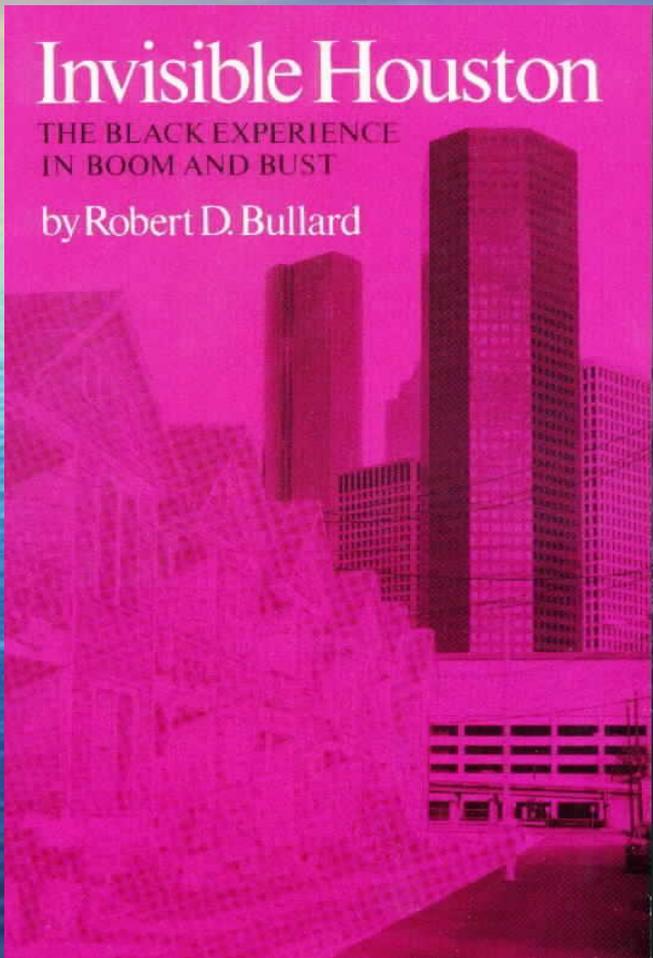
**Clark Atlanta University**

**Atlanta, Georgia**

# EJ at Twenty-Five – 1982-2007

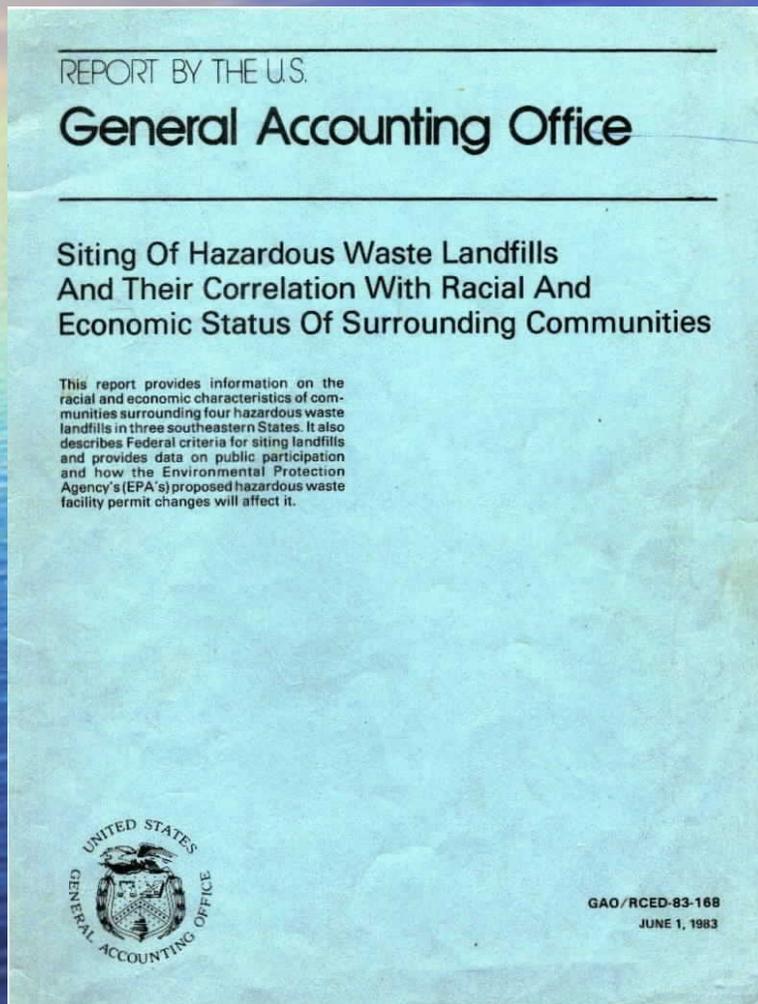


# Wastes Sites and Black Houston - 1983



- *Bean v. Southwestern Waste Management, Inc.* lawsuit (1979)
- "Solid Wastes Sites and the Houston Black Community" *Sociological Inquiry Journal* (1983)

# U.S. GAO Waste Study - 1983



- The 1983 U.S. General Accounting Office study found that three out of four hazardous waste landfill in EPA Region IV were located in predominately black communities
- However, blacks made up just 20 percent of the region's population

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REPORT BY THE U.S.

1983

# General Accounting Office

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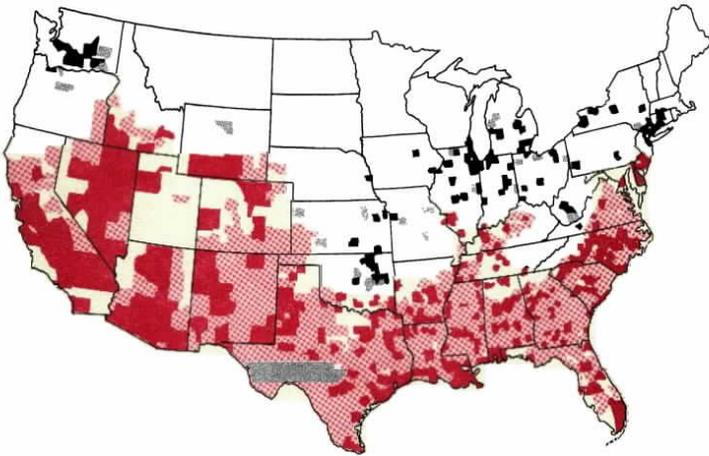
## Siting Of Hazardous Waste Landfills And Their Correlation With Racial And Economic Status Of Surrounding Communities

This report provides information on the racial and economic characteristics of communities surrounding four hazardous waste landfills in three southeastern States. It also describes Federal criteria for siting landfills and provides data on public participation and how the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) proposed hazardous waste facility permit changes will affect it.

# Toxic Wastes and Race in the United States - 1987

## TOXIC WASTES AND RACE In The United States

A National Report on the Racial and Socio-Economic  
Characteristics of Communities  
with Hazardous Waste Sites



COMMISSION FOR RACIAL JUSTICE  
United Church of Christ  
©1987

- The United Church of Christ Commission for Racial Justice produced the first national study linking race and the location of hazardous waste sites

# UCC Press Briefing 1987





**Race, Class, and  
Environmental Quality**

# Dumping in Dixie - 1990

## **DUMPING IN DIXIE**



**Race, Class, and  
Environmental Quality**

**Robert D. Bullard**

- The “Deep South” is stuck with a unique legacy of slavery, Jim Crow, and resistance to equal justice
- The South is the most environmentally befouled region of the United States

# The “Michigan Coalition” - 1990



- Bunyan Bryant and Paul Mohai, the *Race and the Incidence of Environmental Hazards Conference* brought together academics and activists
- The “Michigan Coalition” (an ad hoc group formed during the conference) wrote letters and met with William Reilly (EPA) and Michael Deland (CEO)
- William Reilly established the Environmental Equity Work Group
- EJ activists wrote letters to the “Big 10” environmental groups

# Response from EPA - 1990

- After a series of meetings with ad hoc "Michigan Coalition," EPA Administrator William Reilly established the Environmental Equity Workgroup



# People of Color Summit Washington, DC, Oct., 1991



# Speaking for Ourselves



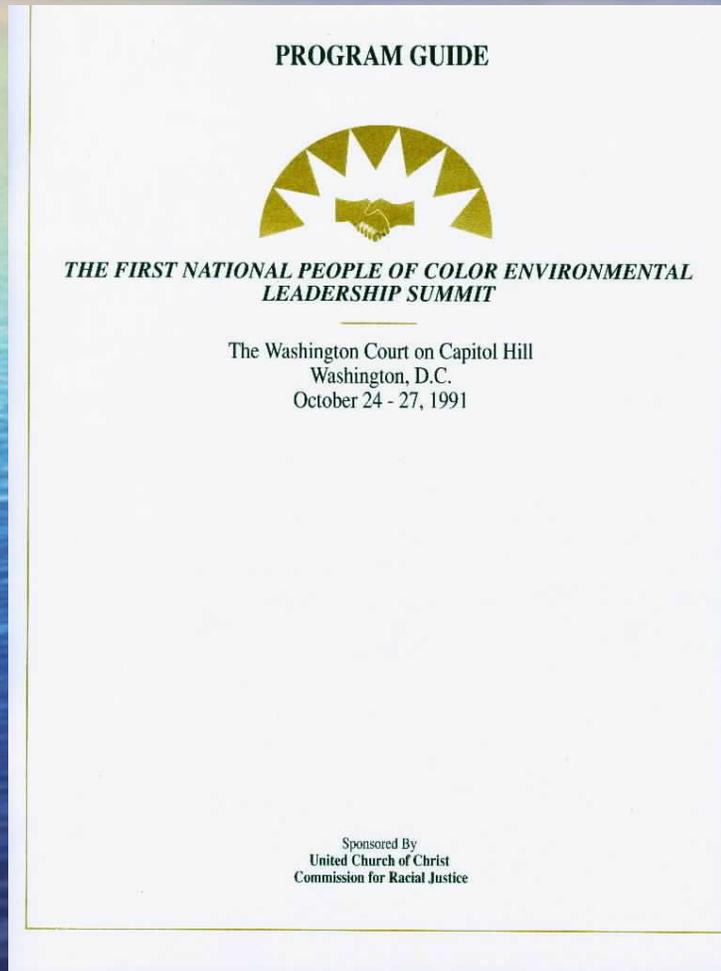
# Delegates Called the Shots



- The 1991 Summit was organized by and for People of Color
- Delegates set the agenda
- They developed 17 Principles
- Set a course for building multi-ethnic, multidisciplinary, global movement

# Environmental Justice Principles

## – October, 1991



- The First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit adopted 17 Principles of Environmental Justice
- People must speak for themselves

# National Minority Environmental Health Conference -- 1991

- The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry convenes the National Minority Environmental Health Conference in Atlanta, Georgia



# Clinton-Gore Presidential Transition Team - 1992



- Two EJ leaders (Rev. Benjamin Chavis and Robert D. Bullard) were selected to serve on Clinton-Gore Transition Team in Natural Resources Cluster
- Developed an National EJ Position Paper (two sociologists major contributor to paper)
- Major requests in policy paper: an EJ Executive Order; National EJ Advisory Council; appoint people of color to 2 of 4 Natural Resources Cluster departments (EPA, DOE, USDA, and Interior); elevate EPA to cabinet status; appoint people of color to half of EPA regional administrators; and fully fund and expand the EPA EJ Office

# EPA Equity Report - 1992



- EPA releases "*Environmental Equity: Reducing Risks for All Communities*" report, one of the first EPA reports to examine environmental justice

# EPA Creates NEJAC - 1993



- The U.S. EPA created the 25-member National Environmental Justice Advisory Council (NEJAC) under Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA)

# National Brownfields Pilots - 1993



BEST VIEW OF CLEVELAND  
[www.bestviewofcleveland.com](http://www.bestviewofcleveland.com)

- EPA awarded the first National Brownfields Pilot in Cleveland, Ohio in 1993
- EPA awarded two pilots at the end of 1994 in Bridgeport, Connecticut and Richmond, Virginia
- EPA awarded fifteen additional National pilots in July 1995

# EJ Health and Research Symposium - 1994



- NIEHS takes lead on EJ and health issues
- Interagency "Health and Research Needs to Ensure Environmental Justice Symposium" held on February 10-12, 1994
- The original meeting was supposed to be a workshop of 75-100 scholars, researchers, and scientists
- This plan was abandoned and expanded to include participation by grassroots and community leaders
- The symposium was attended by over 1,000 participants

# EJ Reaches the White House

## – February, 1994



- On February 11, 1994, President Clinton signed Executive Order 12898
- EO 12898 reinforced existing two existing laws, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969
- Present at the EO signing in the Oval Office were cabinet officials, 4 members of Congress, 4 grassroots EJ leaders, a lawyer, and two sociologists



# NIEHS Minority Worker Training Program Established - 1995



- NIEHS established the Minority Worker Training Program in September 1995 to provide a series of national pilots to test the range of strategies for the recruitment and training of young persons (18-25) who live near hazardous wastes sites or in the community at risk of exposure of contaminated properties

# Superfund Relocation - 1996



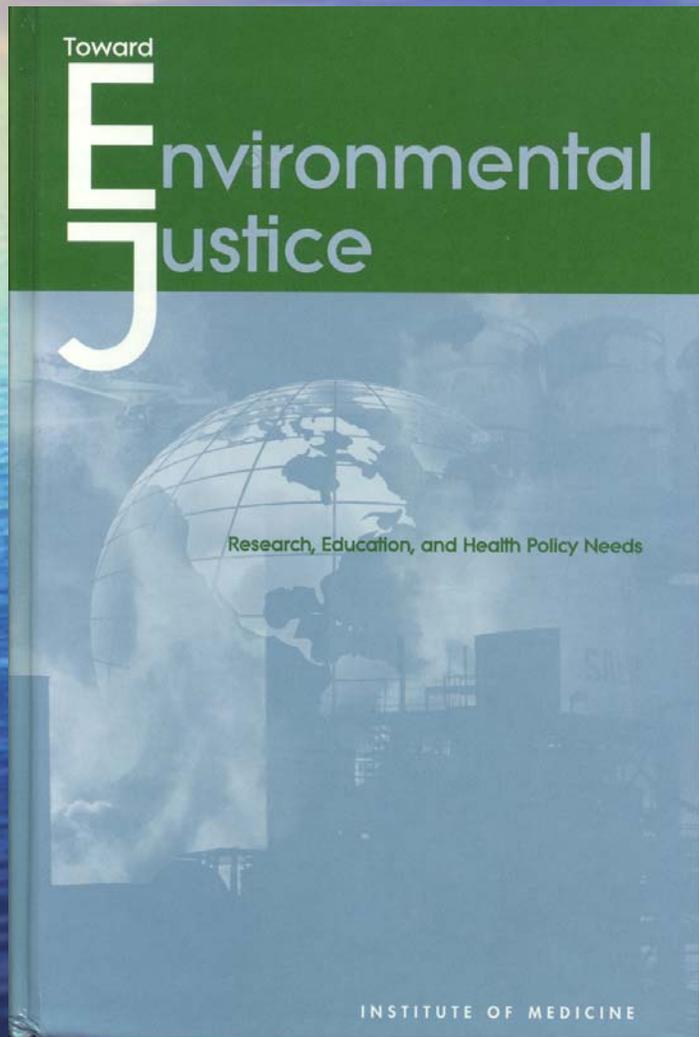
- The EPA holds Superfund Relocation Roundtable in Pensacola, Florida
- Because of this work coming out of this meeting, EPA decides to relocate the entire community of 358 African American and low-income households living next to the Escambia Wood Treatment Plant

# CBTU CARAT Team Formed - 1998



- The Conference of Black Trade Unionists, the nation's oldest and largest black labor organization, initiated its Community Action and Response Against Toxics (CARAT) Team Program

# Institute of Medicine Study Environmental Justice - 1999



- The 1999 IOM Study confirmed that people of color and low-income communities are exposed to higher levels of pollution than the rest of the nation
- These groups also experience certain diseases in greater number than more affluent white communities

# South Camden Legal Victory - 2001



- South Camden Citizens in Action win Title VI court victory against the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection
- This court victory was shortlived because that same year the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in the *Alexander v. Sandoval* -- nullifying the use of disparate impact to show discrimination



# U.S. Supreme Court Ruling

## *Alexander v. Sandoval* - 2001



- In April 2001, the U.S. Supreme Court in *Alexander v. Sandoval* took away an individual right to sue under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 using “disparate impact” and raised the hurdle requiring “intent” to be shown

# People of Color Summit II

## October 23-26, 2002



- The EJ Summit II was planned for 500 people, but over 1,400 showed up
- Delegates reaffirmed the Principles of EJ and drafted a dozen resolutions

# "Sheroes" Honored - 2002





THE SECOND NATIONAL PEOPLE OF COLOR ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERSHIP SUMMIT  
WASHINGTON, D.C.  
OCTOBER 27, 2002





Romulo  
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ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE  
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OLD EARTH'S TRACKS  
OCTOBER



THE SECOND NATIONAL PEOPLE OF COLORE ENVIRONMENTAL  
LEADERSHIP SUMMIT  
WASHINGTON, DC  
SEPTEMBER 16-27

# PROTECT OUR ARCTIC REFUGE



*"If we destroy the land... we destroy ourselves"*  
-NORMA KASSI

# Warren County PCB Landfill Clean-up - 2003



- Detoxification work began on the PCB landfill in June 2001 and ended the latter part of December 2003.
- The State of North Carolina and federal sources spent \$18 million to detoxify the contaminated soil stored at the PCB landfill.
- Predominately black Warren County still does not have a hospital



# Ladies in Red Win Top Awards - 2003 & 2004



- Peggy Shepard (West Harlem Environmental Action, Inc.) won the 2003 Heinz Award in Environment
- Margie Richard (Concerned Citizens of Norco) won the 2004 Goldman Prize

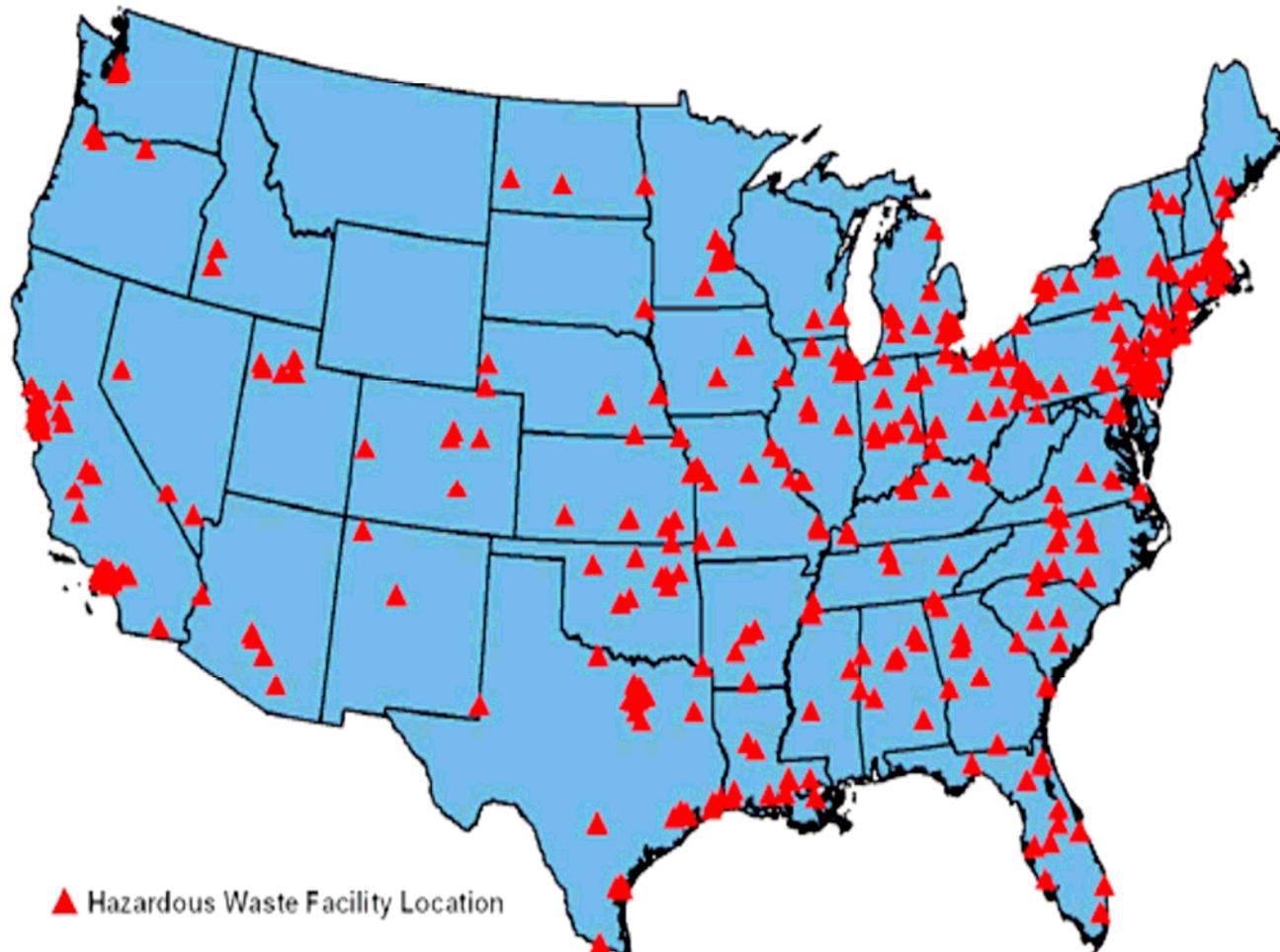
# Katrina EJ Work Recognized - 2006



- In September 2006, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation honored Dr. Beverly Wright, founding director of the Deep South Center for Environmental Justice at Dillard University, with a Special Gulf Coast Award for her leadership and EJ work in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina

# Toxic Wastes and Race at Twenty: 1987-2007

## *Grassroots Struggles to Dismantle Environmental Racism in the United States*



# Toxic Wastes and Race - 2007



- A team of environmental justice scholars completed the *Toxic Wastes and Race at Twenty – 1987-2007* report for the United Church of Christ to commemorate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the release of the landmark 1987 UCC report
- A Special Executive Summary of the report was released at a press briefing in February at the 2007 AAAS Conference in San Francisco, CA



# AAAAS

ADVANCING SCIENCE, SERVING SOCIETY



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