

Celebrating the life and legacy of civil rights leader James M. Lawson Jr.

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James Lawson talks about Black Lives Matter and the civil rights movement during a break from teaching at the Children's Defense Fund's Proctor Institute in 2016. (File photo by Mike DuBose, United Methodist News)

When civil rights activist James M Lawson Jr. was expelled from Vanderbilt Divinity School in 1960 for participating in sit-ins in downtown Nashville restaurants, the *Christian Century* provided extensive [coverage of the aftermath](#). The *Century* also covered Vanderbilt Divinity School's creation of the [James Lawson Institute for Research and Nonviolent Movements](#) in 2022 in recognition of Lawson's

contributions. In 2023, the city of Nashville honored Lawson's legacy by naming a [brand new high school](#) in his honor. We join in the celebration of Lawson's ministry and leadership in championing nonviolence and civil rights.