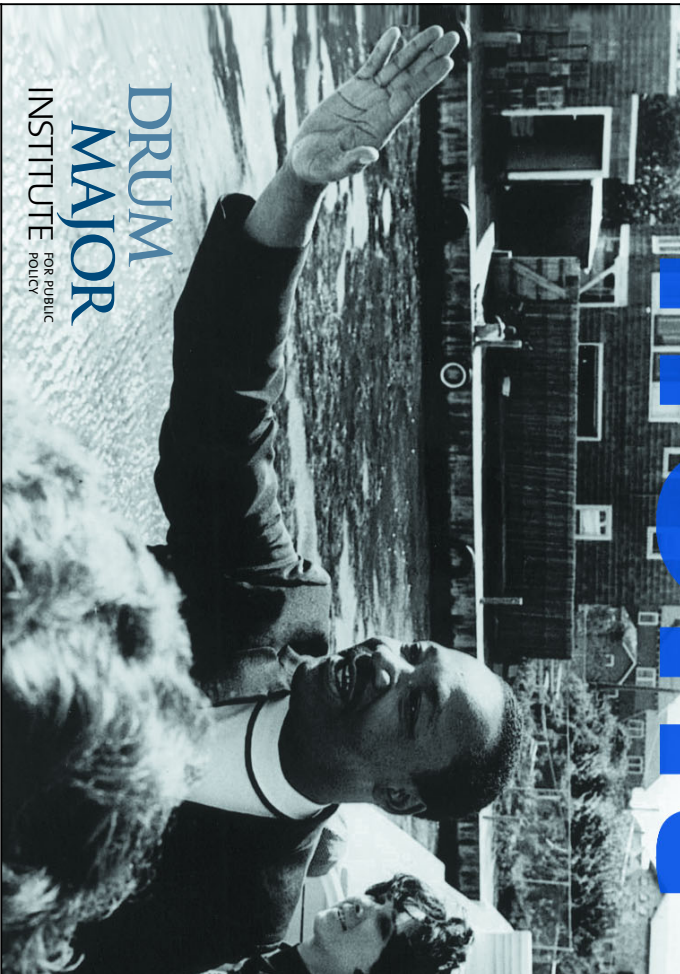


2002 ANNUAL REPORT

get front



DRUM
MAJOR
INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC
POLICY

Get Out in Front

Letter from the Chairman, Ambassador Andrew Young

Our Mission

The Drum Major Institute for Public Policy is a non-partisan, non-profit organization dedicated to challenging the orthodoxes that impede the achievement of social and economic justice. We operate in the spirit of the civil rights movement with the goal of fostering courageous leadership, informed citizens, and sound public policy. Energized by the nationally recognized leadership of Fernando Ferrer, the Institute's new president, we are committed to adding a rigorous progressive voice in the marketplace of ideas.

Originally called The Drum Major Foundation, DMI was founded by Harry Wachtel, lawyer and advisor to Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. during the turbulent years of the civil rights movement. The name comes from a recurring theme of Dr. King's, best illustrated in a sermon delivered at the Ebenezer Baptist Church shortly before his assassination.

Like Dr. King himself, the Drum Major Foundation sought to set the beat for the movement for civil rights. The goal of the foundation was to promote our nation's democratic values by eliminating the injustices rooted in ignorance or repression of those values. It provided vital assistance to the movement through fundraising, strategy development, and legal support. The Foundation played a role in the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

DMI was relaunched in 1999 by New York attorney Bill Wachtel, Harry's son, and Martin Luther King II. The Institute organized several highly successful forums with prominent Americans on the most important issues facing us today: poverty, educational equity, and the digital divide.

Today, the Drum Major Institute for Public Policy offers policymakers and the media an alternative to the conservative think tanks and policy institutes that currently dominate the landscape. We create much-needed opportunities for progressive thinkers to share their ideas for better policies. And we offer our assistance to legislators who wish to implement these ideas by providing insightful research and facilitating expert conversations. Our ultimate goal is to create meaningful social change through just public policy.

"DMI will offer a much needed resource to New York's policymakers coping with a profound fiscal crisis."

—CAROL O'CLEIRACAVAN
SENIOR FELLOW, THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

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Executive Director

COVER PHOTO: Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King visiting the Fire Island home of Harry Wachtel, Drum Major Foundation founder, in 1967.

Some wonder where the Drum Major Institute, a progressive think tank intended to offer competition in the marketplace of ideas and public policy formation, got its name.

When I worked in the trenches of the civil rights movement with Dr. Martin Luther King, he would ask people to stand up and be "drum majors." They didn't need to lead the movement; they needed to set the beat for it. In fact, in his final sermon at the Ebenezer Baptist Church on February 4, 1968, Martin said that "If you want to say that I was a drum major, say that I was a drum major for justice; say that I was a drum major for peace; say that I was a drum major for righteousness. And all of the other shallow things will not matter... I just want to leave a committed life behind."



In some ways, the challenges then were clearer: whole communities were disenfranchised and unprotected against discrimination by the letter of the law. Racism was prevalent in the language of pro-segregationists, and fears were exploited by politicians on a regular basis.

Those concerned with social change took to the streets, and to the courts, to fight for justice.

From 1990 to 2000, the top 20 conservative think tanks in our country spent \$1 billion to influence public opinion and thought.

Today, the challenges are stronger than ever. More than one in ten Americans live in poverty, itself defined by an embarrassingly outdated standard, and wealth is increasingly concentrated in the hands of the very few. Millions of Americans remain disenfranchised at the ballot box, our public schools are failing so many children who come from poor families with no other options, and city leaders pass the homeless and the working families who can't afford health insurance on their way to press conferences explaining why taxes on our wealthiest citizens simply cannot be raised.

Yet now the battles for economic and social justice take place in a different realm: on the editorial pages, in the reports that reach the desks of our legislators, in the realm of ideas. A report by the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy found that, from 1990 to 2000, the top 20 conservative think tanks in our country spent \$1 billion to influence public opinion and thought. As Paul Krugman writes in a recent *New York Times* magazine story called "For Richer": "The point is that it is no accident that strongly conservative views, views that militate against taxes on the rich, have spread even as the rich get richer compared with the rest of us: in addition to directly buying influence, money can be used to shape public perceptions."

While many progressives are doing the work to keep the dream alive for those who live on the margins—from providing direct services to advocating for

individual pieces of legislation to accomplish goals like raising the minimum wage—we are losing larger battles in the court of public opinion. Losing those battles means that we are unable to communicate our message, and therefore cannot inspire the public will that leads to change in the policymaking arena. I talk to progressives from all over the country who tell me that they are always playing catch up, responding to the exclusive vision promoted by the right. We can't afford to play catch up any longer. *We've got to get out in front.*

When I was a young man working with Dr. King, Harry Wachtel and a group of New York lawyers got out in front of the movement for civil rights by forming the Drum Major Foundation. Hearing Dr. King's call to be "Drum majors for justice," it provided vital assistance to the movement through fundraising, strategy development, and legal support for the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

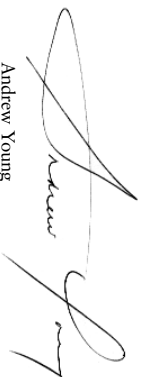
I talk to progressives from all over the country who tell me that they are always playing catch up, responding to the exclusive vision promoted by the right. We can't afford to play catch up any longer. We've got to get out in front.

After Martin's death, the Institute fell into disrepair like many of the organizations created during the movement. But in 1999, the sons of Harry Wachtel and Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King relaunched it to inspire conversation around the critical questions of equity and access. Fernando Ferrer, the new president of DMI, has gotten out in front by continuing the work that guided his nationally-recognized career in public office. Members of our Advisory Board, including Bill Bradley and Bob Kerrey, and my fellow board members, including Dennis Rivera and Bernard Nussbaum, all recognized that we need to get out in front. There is no more important time to have a conversation with alternative voices.

I'm proud of the work that the organization, refocused as the Drum Major Institute for Public Policy, has accomplished in less than a year in its new incarnation. From rebuilding the organizational identity, launching a dynamic web site with original content, organizing important conversations designed to provide a platform to progressive thinkers who too often go without one, making an impact on our editorial pages and on the debate over school governance, initiating several important collaborations with top researchers to produce analysis that will serve as tools for legislators to make progressive policy, DMI has shown that it is capable of getting out in front.

As Victor Hugo said, "There is one thing stronger than all the armies in the world, and this is an idea whose time has come." The time for the Institute, and its role as a progressive voice to counter the conservative voices that currently dominate the landscape, has come.

I hope you will join us as we continue to get out in front.



Andrew Young

DMI 2002 Accomplishments

A Unique Approach to Influencing Public Policy

- We partner with top researchers, locally and nationally, to conduct high-quality research.
- We leverage our strategic connections and rich history to engage policy and opinion makers in our work.
- We offer platforms to amplify the work of progressive practitioners and thinkers.



UFT President Randi Weingarten and Assemblyman Roger Green at DMI's June Forum: "School Governance: From the Relationship Up."

Impact: The Year in Review

MOVED THE ISSUE OF RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN COMMUNITIES AND SCHOOLS FROM PERIPHERY TO CENTER TO IMPROVE SCHOOLS

DMI is in the midst of an intensive policy study, "From Governance to Accountability," an effort to reframe the school governance debate from the merits of top-down control to how to restore the critical relationships between schools and their communities. We began a panel discussion in June and will continue through briefings with legislators, advocates, and the private sector before releasing the paper with the NYU Institute for Education and Social Policy in December.

"I've known Freddy Ferrer for years as a public servant, and I'm thrilled that he's continuing his commitment to social justice by leading the Drum Major Institute."

—RUTH MESSINGER, PRESIDENT,
AMERICAN JEWISH WORLD SERVICE



September 26 launch of DMI Speaker Series with Steven Binger and Manhattan Borough President C. Virginia Fields

PROVIDED A PLATFORM TO PROGRESSIVE THINKERS WHO HAVE PUT THEIR VALUES INTO PRACTICE

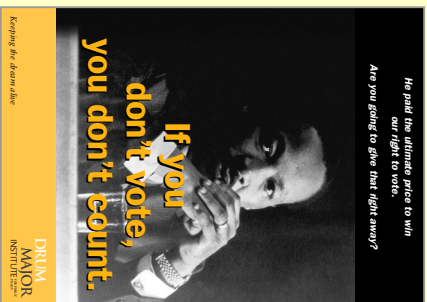
In September 2002, DMI launched an innovative breakfast discussion series designed to highlight thinkers with solutions to the challenge that face us. The first speaker was Steven Binger, nationally recognized for his innovations in community-based planning and design of school buildings. This discussion is especially relevant as New York City and other urban centers confront the need for massive new school construction and better ways of maximizing our existing resources.

ORGANIZED SUCCESSFUL BENEFIT WITH PRESIDENT CLINTON

President William Jefferson Clinton presented Ambassador Andrew Young with the Drum Major Institute's Living Legends Award for his lifelong commitment to social and economic justice. Accepting the award were Martin Luther King III, Co-Founder of the Institute, and Andrew Young III. In his address, Clinton said: "The work of the Drum Major Institute needs to become a more urgent priority for our nation."



President Clinton presenting Drum Major to Andrew Young, Jr., with Martin Luther King, III, DMI Co-Founder Bill Washel, and Fernando Ferrer.



TURNED OUR WEB SITE INTO ONLINE NETWORK OF IDEAS AND ARGUMENT, AND A NATIONAL RESOURCE FOR JOURNALISTS, ACTIVISTS AND LEGISLATORS

We completely overhauled our web site to include original content from progressive thinkers on issues from voting rights to building affordable housing as well as our own regularly updated Drum Major Institute Injustice Index. Our content is publicized with monthly email blasts to our national network.

drummajorinstitute.org

CONTRIBUTED TO THE DEBATE ABOUT SCHOOL GOVERNANCE ON OUR CITY'S EDITORIAL PAGES

To provide counterpoint to the emphasis on the structure of the school board, DMI redirected attention on the editorial pages to the questions missing from the dialogue: How will governance reform address the prevailing disconnect between schools and their communities? How can we engage the private sector and communities of faith in the effort to provide much needed resources for our public schools? After the legislation is passed, what happens next?

School Governance Reform Is Just the Beginning

Andrew Batista Schesinger Proposes Roles for Parents and the Private Sector

In a recent days' newspapers, there are two articles that are worth reading carefully. One school board began with a resolution of the system, a new board of trustees, and a new superintendent. The other article, things look pretty good. While we are certainly entitled to feel good about the progress, the fact is that we are still in the beginning of an all-encompassing struggle for the governance system.

Corporations understand the need for successful schools.

One school system has introduced a program that will allow corporations to sponsor the education of their employees. Many thought their work was done. Our schools continued to struggle. We learned the painful lesson.

Help Schools Connect With Their Communities

NY Forward First

NY Forward First is a coalition of parents, teachers, and community members who are committed to ensuring that every child in New York State has the opportunity to succeed in school and in life.

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"The Drum Major Institute combines a belief in the value of a long term progressive vision with the practical experience of its President, Fernando Ferrer. His unique perspective will make it an indispensable partner in crafting the kind of new policy agenda that the City and the nation so desperately needs."

—MILES RAMOYROT
 PRESIDENT, DEMOS

A world of pain

As the city plunges into debt, Rudy's tax cuts don't look so smart.

FERMANO



The state of New York is in a state of financial crisis. The state's debt is over \$100 billion, and the state is facing a budget deficit of over \$10 billion. Governor George Pataki's tax cuts have contributed to this crisis. The state's revenue is down, and the state is facing a budget deficit of over \$10 billion. Governor George Pataki's tax cuts have contributed to this crisis. The state's revenue is down, and the state is facing a budget deficit of over \$10 billion.

Looking Ahead

Getting Out in Front: 2003

If the year 2002 showed us anything, it was a vacuum of progressive ideas. DMI's goal for 2003 is to fill that void with a clear agenda informed by the work of top-tier thinkers and supported by a constituency of private sector leaders, labor unions, academics and practitioners.

Improve schools by restoring critical relationships between schools and communities.

- With the National Center for Schools and Communities, DMI is working to catalyze a national effort that re-engages communities of faith, particularly in urban, low-income communities, to provide leadership to transform isolated attempts at school reform into next phase of civil rights movement.
- We are working with policymakers, community organizations and the private sector in New York City to make schools and districts accountable for building the relationships with parents and communities that are critical to their success.

Lead conversation on those most deeply affected by economic hard times.

- With the New School, DMI will produce research and facilitate conversations that ask: To what extent is a fair balance, between carrying the burden of financing government and benefiting from its spending, critical to our long-term economic stability?
- We will organize a Speakers Series highlighting elected officials who have governed by progressive values in times of fiscal distress with success.
- We have commissioned a study on the role of New York City newspapers in shaping public perceptions of class conflict.

Facilitate the creation of a progressive agenda for New York City.

- DMI convened focus groups on public education, criminal justice, poverty, and civil and human rights that demonstrated the need to articulate a long-term vision for a progressive New York City. DMI will lead the effort to develop a progressive agenda by uniting progressives with message and strategy experts.
- We will continue to expand our web site with original content, produce and circulate our Injustice Index, organize Speakers Series events to highlight progressive thinkers and contribute to the editorial pages on issues of economic and social justice.

"The challenges to overcoming poverty in this nation are great. We need a voice in policymaking concerned with making budget policy that is just and equitable."

—SENATOR BILL BRADLEY

Contributors

"I am proud to be a founding sponsor and Board member of the Drum Major Institute. I know that Freddy Ferrer and the Institute can bring progressives together around an agenda for economic justice."

—DENNIS RIVERA, PRESIDENT
LOCAL 1199 SEIU New York

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Fernando Ferrer with Dennis Rivera at November gathering.

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DMI Board Member Dennis Rivera with Anthony Watson, CEO of HIP.

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Get Out in Front

Fernando Ferrer joins the Drum Major Institute



It is an honor to serve as President of the Drum Major Institute for Public Policy. My commitment to protecting and extending the gains of the civil rights movement is deeply personal; I was able to attend college because of a scholarship created in honor of Dr. King's memory, after his assassination.

In more than two decades of public service work, I have seen that the dreams of equality, fairness and justice that inspired the civil rights movement have not been wholly achieved. The problems of poverty, racism and disenfranchisement are still with us.

People are hungry for new approaches to public policy that are based on principles of fairness, justice and equality. Yet, inserting a progressive viewpoint into public debate is increasingly difficult. Policy institutes and think tanks on the other side of the political spectrum are well funded, highly organized, and media-friendly; You see them represented on the editorial pages and the Sunday morning talk shows. But most importantly, you see those opinions reflected in the making of policy.

Recently, the Drum Major Institute sponsored a series of focus groups inviting people in the forefront of social change to discuss broader issues of policy formation. Over and over, participants expressed a need to change the terms of the public policy debate and insert progressive values. Over and over they lamented that the demands of providing direct services and organizing grassroots actions leave them unable to do anything but react to the actions of the right.

Clearly, there is a need for leadership for a progressive agenda—expressed in a thoughtful and constructive manner. It is possible to create successful public policy based on values other than small government and the expansion of free markets. For fourteen years I had the privilege of serving as Borough President of the Bronx. During that period the Bronx was home to the largest urban rebuilding effort in the country, later recognized by the National Civic League with the prestigious All-America City Award.

The policy voices at the other end of the political spectrum have had the advantage in public discourse for a number of years. While it is unfortunate that progressives have been absent from the debate for so long, there is opportunity here as well.

The intransigence of social problems shows that the old policies have not been universally effective. We need to gather data, create long-term agendas and coherently and effectively communicate a different vision.

The Drum Major Institute for Public Policy asks for leadership and support to:

- sustain our projects, which will make much-needed contributions to debates about issues of social and economic justice while identifying a constituency for our work.
- turn our web site into a thriving online network of ideas and argument, and a national resource for journalists, activists, and legislators.
- increase and expand the Institute's series of public events, providing microphones to progressive thinkers from across the country.

I look forward to the opportunity to work with you, and to lead the Drum Major Institute as we turn your valuable contributions into impact.

Like Dr. King's metaphorical drum major for justice and peace, *won't you get out in front?*

Fernando Ferrer

"The work of the Drum Major Institute needs to become a more urgent priority for our nation."

—PRESIDENT WILLIAM JEFFERSON CLINTON

The work of the Drum Major Institute is to sponsor frank dialogue about the problems facing us—in areas of education and social and economic justice—and cultivate solutions. We will offer policymakers and the media an alternative to the conservative think tanks and policy institutes that currently dominate the landscape. We will create much-needed opportunities for progressive thinkers to share their ideas for better governance. We will offer our assistance to legislators who wish to implement these ideas, with the goal of creating meaningful social change and just public policy.

I want to support the work of the Drum Major Institute.

Here is my tax deductible contribution of \$ made payable to the Drum Major Institute.

please send me information on upcoming events.

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keeping the dream alive

“If you want to say that I was a drum major,
say that I was a drum major for *justice*;
say that I was a drum major for *peace*;
say that I was a drum major for
righteousness. And all of the
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I just want to leave a committed life behind.”

DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.
EBENEZER BAPTIST CHURCH
FEBRUARY 4, 1968

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