

MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF JULIUS ROSENWALD

Among his many accomplishments, Julius Rosenwald:

- *Acted on his deep commitment to the welfare of African-Americans by building over 5,300 schools, shops and teachers' homes in the rural South between 1912 and 1932. Generations of African-American children got their only chance at an education thanks to these Rosenwald schools. In addition, he established 27 YMCAs for African-Americans (existing YMCAs served only whites) around the U.S., which functioned as "safe centers" for those traveling to new cities seeking work and provided training in management for black youth.*
- *At age 33, became president of Sears, Roebuck, which during his tenure became the leading mail order firm in the world. Far from the top-down, power-wielding CEO typical of the day, JR was heralded for his collaborative management style — which was way ahead of its time — that enabled him to overhaul the management of the company and rescue it from near bankruptcy.*

In addition to modernizing the company's operations, he was a strong believer in truth in advertising, creating the first retail laboratory to test the products his company sold. And, as a proponent of the Welfare Capitalism Movement, which advocated amenities for workers, JR instituted the Sears profit sharing plan, one of the most liberal and most successful in American business history.
- *Galvanized the nation by giving a \$1 million challenge grant to the American Jewish Committee (of which he was a founder) to aid Jewish victims of World War I, then the largest gift ever given by an individual to a public charity.*
- *During World War I, served on President Wilson's national council of business and labor leaders, which advised the government on defense transportation and supply management.*
- *Provided money and recognition through the fellowship program of the Rosenwald Fund to almost every significant black artist and thinker of the 1930s and 1940s, including Marian Anderson, Ralph Ellison (who wrote "The Invisible Man" on a Rosenwald fellowship), Augusta Savage, Catherine Dunham, John Hope Franklin, Jacob Lawrence, Langston Hughes, Zora Neale Hurston, and Ralph Bunche. JR was one of a very few prominent white leaders of his day who genuinely believed that blacks and whites should be equal, indignantly noting in 1911, "To think that in this land of the free a condition should exist that on account of a difference in color of skin, children should be denied sufficient school privileges and be shut out from parks and playgrounds; that the youth should be barred from public libraries!"*
- *Rescued Sears, Roebuck from bankruptcy in 1922 with \$5 million of his own wealth, as well as buying the land on which the Sears plant stood for \$15 million and allowing the company to stay on the property at no charge. He later used his personal funds to save 300 Sears employees from financial ruin following the 1929 stock market crash.*
- *Created the first major American foundation to go out of existence voluntarily, in accordance with his belief that each generation spends its own money most wisely.*
- *Donated \$5 million to the building and maintenance of Chicago's Museum of Science and Industry.*

Contact: Jill Danzig/Danzig Communications; 212-579-5215; jill.danzig@earthlink.net