

Dallas pastor Haynes resigns from Rainbow PUSH Coalition

April 18, 2024

CHICAGO (RNS)—Frederick D. Haynes III, who succeeded Jesse Jackson as president of the Rainbow PUSH Coalition, has resigned suddenly from leading the Chicago-based civil rights organization.

“After continual prayer and deliberation, I have decided to step down from the position of Chief Executive Officer and President of Rainbow Push Coalition (RPC), effective immediately,” Haynes said in a statement issued April 16 on Rainbow PUSH letterhead.

Haynes, the pastor of Friendship-West Baptist Church in Dallas for four decades, could not be reached immediately for additional comment.

In a video statement, he called his work succeeding Jackson a “signal honor” but said it was time for him to continue his work in a different way.

“I felt it necessary, in light of the huge challenges faced by our community, in light of the challenges faced by this nation and world during this consequential year, to move in a different direction,” he said in the video statement posted on Instagram.

“I will continue the fight for justice. I will continue to be a prophetic witness. I will just do it in another lane while continuing to honor the work of Rainbow PUSH and Rev. Jackson.”

The Associated Press reported Jackson said Rainbow PUSH had accepted the resignation of Haynes and said they would continue as “partners in the fight for peace, civil rights and economic justice.”

He said his son, Yusef Jackson, would continue in his role as the chief

operating officer of Rainbow PUSH.

In July, when the transfer of leadership was announced, the elder Jackson said he would continue to be part of its work.

“I am looking forward to this next chapter where I will continue to focus on economic justice, mentorship, and teaching ministers how to fight for social justice,” he said in a statement at the time. “I will still be very involved in the organization and am proud that we have chosen Rev. Dr. Haynes as my successor.”

Haynes, who is triply aligned with the National Baptist Convention U.S.A. Inc., Progressive National Baptist Convention Inc. and American Baptist Churches USA, told Religion News Service in a July interview he was comfortable adding the additional role.

“I don’t know that it will be that much of a new juggle, because I’ve been blessed to pastor Friendship-West for 40 years, and we have built a solid infrastructure,” he said at the time. “I have a great staff, a wonderful church, quite supportive. And the work I’ll be doing at Rainbow Push is, in reality, a larger platform of work I’ve always been doing.”

‘Helped stabilize Rainbow PUSH’

Al Sharpton, president of the National Action Network, lauded Haynes’ work in a statement posted on social media and said he appreciated his colleague’s contributions to Rainbow PUSH.

“As someone who has been a student and mentee of Rev. Jesse Jackson since I was 12 years old, words cannot express my gratitude to Rev. Haynes for sharing his time away from his mammoth ministry and youth church responsibilities,” Sharpton said.

“He has helped stabilize Rainbow PUSH as Rev. Jackson’s health became

more challenging. As Rev. Haynes returns to his full-time work in his unparalleled ... social justice ministry, which is needed more than ever in a crucial election year, I look forward to working shoulder-to-shoulder with him to preserve the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Rev. Jesse Louis Jackson.”

The coalition’s history dates to 1966, when Martin Luther King Jr. appointed Jackson to direct the Southern Christian Leadership Conference’s Operation Breadbasket in Chicago, boycotting white businesses that did not employ Black Americans.

In 1971, Jackson founded PUSH (which first stood for People United to Save Humanity and later, People United to Serve Humanity), according to the coalition’s website.

In 1996, the Rainbow PUSH Coalition formed from the merger of PUSH with the National Rainbow Coalition, creating a civil rights organization with an aim for economic and educational equality.