



## Michael D. O'Neal

*President and Chief Executive*

*Officer of Fathers, Inc.*

*Class of 1978*

Michael O'Neal distinguished himself as an outstanding athlete in soccer, outdoor track, and basketball while at Needham High School. He was a member of the 1978 outdoor track team that won the Bay State League Championship. Individually, he won the long jump championships at the Class A Eastern Massachusetts, State of Massachusetts, and New England competitions. He set a Needham High School record (6 feet, 3 inches) for the high jump and tied the record (10 seconds) for the 100-yard dash. Mr. O'Neal was also a member of the soccer team that won the Bay State League and Eastern Massachusetts Championships.

Following graduation from Needham High, Mr. O'Neal attended the University of Massachusetts (Amherst). While there he was a member of the football, soccer, and indoor and outdoor track teams. Mr. O'Neal was able to utilize his track experience, as he served as Head Coach for Needham High School's Varsity Track Team in the spring of 1986. After receiving his B.A. degree in Human Services he became a counselor and then Residential Director for the Amherst Upward Bound Program, having previously served as a caseworker in this program that aids low-income young people in their quest for higher education by first recruiting them and then counseling and tutoring them. Mr. O'Neal is currently working on an M.Ed. in Counseling and Guidance at Howard University.

In 1987 the Urban League of Eastern Massachusetts hired Mr. O'Neal as a program assistant. Several months later he became the director of the League's Young Fathers' Program. The program served young minority males from Roxbury, Dorchester, Mattapan, the South End, and Jamaica Plain. Mr. O'Neal counseled the thirty-five men in the popular program, both singly and as a group, seeking to develop their senses of responsibility and self-esteem. Both Mr. O'Neal and the program were well-

received and he soon found himself being interviewed by television, radio, and newspaper, and magazine reporters. He and the Young Fathers' Program were profiled on WCVB-TV Channel 5 ("City Line" and "Home Line"); WLVI-TV Channel 56 ("Visions"); WNEV-TV Channel 7 ("Our Times"); WBZ-TV Channel 4 ("Jean Blake"); and CBS-TV ("60 Minutes"). He also received a "Seven People Salute" from WNEV-TV Channel 7 for outstanding work in the community. Radio stations WROR, KISS, WBUR, and WPOM (West Palm Beach, Florida) interviewed him. Newspaper articles appeared in The Bay State Banner, The South End News, The Boston Globe, The Needham Times, and The Needham Chronicle. He was also a speaker at the National Urban League's National Conference and at the President's Second National Conference on State and Local Drug Policy.

In the late spring of 1990, Mr. O'Neal left the Urban League and founded his own program, Fathers, Inc. Since its beginning the program has been a phenomenal success - there are over 100 people currently in the program and the numbers are increasing every day. Mr. O'Neal and his new program have been featured in Emerge Magazine, The Boston Sunday Herald, and U.S.A. Today. He was recognized as one of the "50 Leaders of the Future" by Ebony Magazine and was chosen as a "New England Hero" by WBZ-TV Channel 4's "Evening Magazine." He was recently interviewed by David Brudnoy.

Mr. O'Neal serves on the Board of Trustees of the Boston Technical Center; the Board of Directors of Family Day Care; the Minority Advisory Committee of WLVI-TV Channel 56; the Advisory Boards of the March of Dimes, the Children's Museum, the City-Wide Teen Forum, the Organization for New Equality (ONE), Roxbury Against Drugs, and the Big Brother Association of Greater Boston; and the Roxbury, Dorchester, Mattapan, (RDM) Advisory Committee. He is also a member of the Urban League of Eastern Massachusetts; A Thousand Black Men, Boston; and the African-American Youth coalition.

Mr. O'Neal's interests include jazz piano, sports, martial arts, reading, acting, and meeting people.