

CHILDREN'S ADVOCATE CALLS FOR WAR AGAINST GUNS AND VIOLENCE

MARIAN WRIGHT EDELMAN HONORED BY UAHC

SAN FRANCISCO — A noted fighter for children's rights has called for a major national effort to stem violence in America, especially "the quick violence of guns that takes a child's life every 53 minutes."

Marian Wright Edelman, president of the Washington-based Children's Defense Fund, made an impassioned plea to 4,000 delegates attending the 62nd general assembly of the Union of American Hebrew Congregation (UAHC). She urged them to make a personal commitment to help end growing from a "deadly combination of guns, gangs, drugs, poverty and frightened hopeless youths, a combination that is turning

many of our inner cities into corridors of fear."

Ms. Edelman spoke after receiving the UAHC's Eisendrath "Bearer of Light" award for her lifelong work as an advocate for disadvantaged Americans, particularly children. The award was presented by Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler, president of the UAHC, which is composed of 850 Reform congregations in the United States and Canada, and is named for the late Rabbi Maurice Eisendrath, long-time president of the Reform group. The UAHC is composed of 850 Reform Synagogues in the United States and Canada, with a membership of 1.3 million.

Ms. Edelman cited the rapid

growth in childhood poverty among all races and groups as a key factor in the growth of violence. "There are more poor children in America today than at any time since 1965, with infants and toddlers the biggest victims," she said. "And it's not just poor black children but also poor white children."

On the issue of guns, Ms. Edelman declared: "The deadly quick violence of guns takes a child's life every three hours. A new handgun is produced in America every 20 seconds.

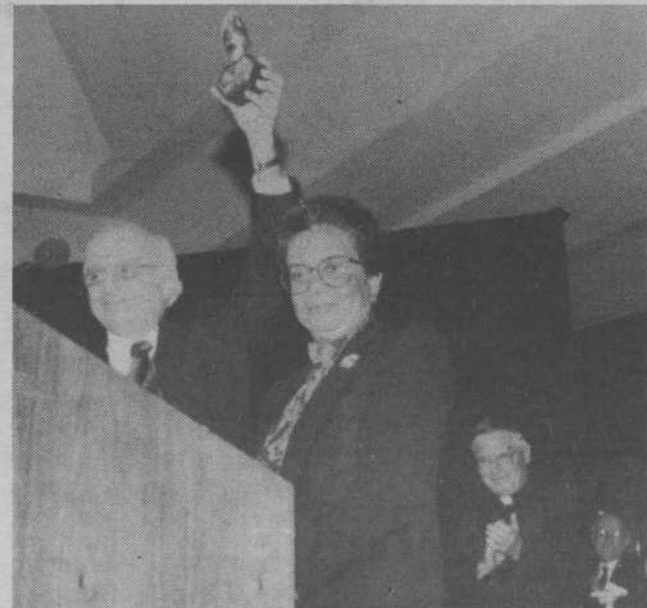
"Are we too weak to stand up to the NRA?" she asked.

Poverty, Guns and the Media
Poverty, widespread availability of guns and "the glorifica-

tion of violence in the media, Ms. Edelman said, "have transformed the U.S. into 'the world's biggest jailer.'" She added: "Many inner city youngsters look forward to prison as a refuge from the risk of death by gunfire in their own neighborhoods."

In her call to the UAHC delegates, the Children's Defense Fund president said: "The future of democracy rests on American society's success in coping with the current crisis of deprivation coupled with violence."

Stressing the role of individual initiative in such an effort, she stated: "The challenge for all of us should be not 'How can I find myself?' but 'How can I lose myself by helping others?'"



SAN FRANCISCO — Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler, president of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, holds aloft the organization's prestigious Eisendrath "Bearer of Light" award during presentation to Marian Wright Edelman, president of the Washington-based Children's Defense Fund. Award was made at the UAHC's 62nd general assembly, attended by more than 4,000 delegates from the United States and Canada.

BOOZE IN THE HOOD

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The store has been the target of several drive-by's, one of which resulted in the death of a clerk in 1992. "When a teenager walks in the store with a 9mm and you can see it," says Thakor, "You have to sell or face a bullet." Police have been supportive of Thakor but they don't provide 24-hr patrols. He admits a correlation between alcohol and violence, but says it's a business decision. "We're trying not to sell it, but everybody's selling it," says Thakor, "I'm not the only person selling it."

He says he feels a certain responsibility to the community, and attempts to employ directly from the community. He said he would invite a coalition of store owners to unite and attempt to control the distribution of alcohol.

Next week: Owners respond to their social commitment and the 40-ounce beer issue.

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