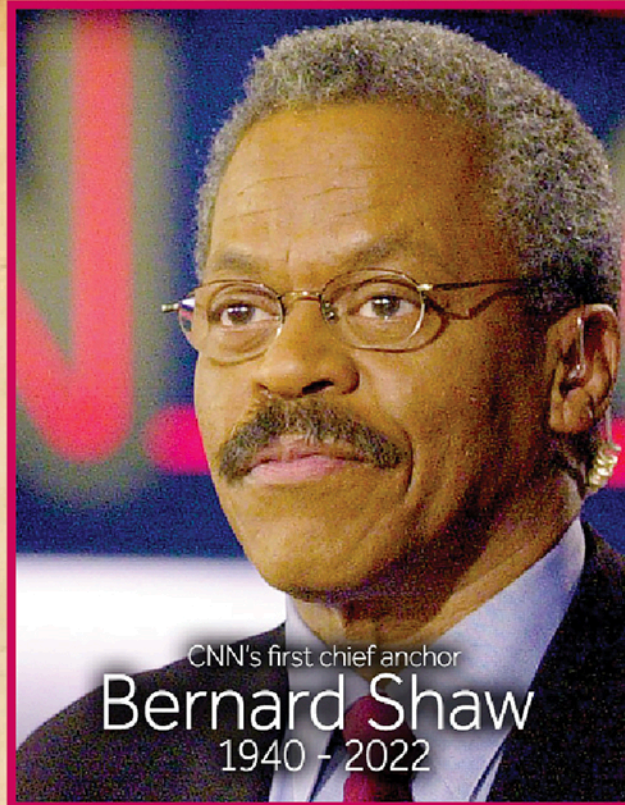


During my years in college, I became a news junkie. After the assassinations of the 1960s—Medgar Evers, John F. Kennedy, Malcolm X, Martin Luther King Jr., Robert F. Kennedy, and countless others during the Civil Rights Movement—and the protests against the Vietnam War, I feared the next catastrophic event. I did not want to be caught unawares. So, I listened primarily to WINS radio, which promised “all the news, all the time.” Plus, when I bought a portable black-and-white television set, I caught the news at 6:00 and 11:00 p.m.

Upon graduation from college, I soon relocated from New England to Atlanta, Georgia. I no longer had access to 24/7 radio news, which made me quite uncomfortable. However, just before I returned to Connecticut, Cable News Network (CNN) was launched in Atlanta. What a nice development for my equilibrium!

One of the featured anchors on the channel was a Black man: Bernard Shaw. Shaw was born in Chicago, Illinois, on May 22, 1940. After graduating from high school, he joined the U.S. Marine Corps and was stationed in Hawaii and North Carolina. He reached the rank of Corporal. While in the military, Shaw developed an interest in print news and sought advice from Walter Cronkite when he contemplated a career in journalism. Subsequently, he matriculated at the University of Illinois, Chicago, graduating in 1968. He had the opportunity earlier to interview Dr. King, who encouraged him in his vocation and charged him to do good.

Shaw began his career in Chicago as a radio reporter. Subsequently, he



commenced his television news occupation with CBS during the Watergate scandal. Next, he became ABC's correspondent and bureau chief in Latin America, where his team covered the tragedy in Guyana and the Jim Jones affair. And in 1980, he joined the world's first 24-hour television news network as its first chief anchor.

Many colleagues initially believed that Ted Turner's idea of a cable news network was outlandish and would never succeed. However, Shaw was more prescient about the

concept and had a storied career in the burgeoning industry that became the genre's standard bearer.

My, and many others', most prominent exposure to Shaw and his equanimity as a reporter occurred with his singular coverage at the start of the Persian Gulf War in 1991. He, along with two other CNN reporters, were holed up in a Baghdad hotel broadcasting during the initial attacks. Bombs were flying overhead and hitting their marks as they enlightened the world to what was happening.

## IN THE LINE OF FIRE: BERNARD SHAW

*“... in 1980, he joined  
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as its first chief anchor.”*

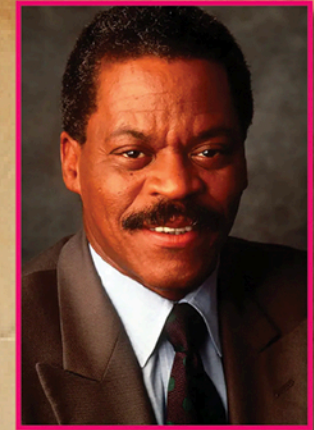


Rev. Michael D.  
Blackwell Ph.D.  
• Social Ethicist •

Born in Philadelphia and raised in CT during the classic Civil Rights era of the 1960s. He was profoundly affected by the life, thought, and legacy of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. He is published in African American religious thought, peacemaking, the nonviolent direct action of Dr. King, community building, and social change. He worked for twenty years as Director for Multicultural Education at the University of Northern Iowa (UNI) in Cedar Falls as the Director for the Center for Multicultural Education and served as an Adjunct Associate Professor of Philosophy and World Religions. Currently, he is retired and is the founding President and Executive Director of the nonprofit, Project for the Beloved Community, Inc. [mdbwell@gmail.com](mailto:mdbwell@gmail.com)  
BLOG: [mdbwell.com](http://mdbwell.com)

His coolness under fire while risking his life was remarkable. One could discern the fear and trembling he, his colleagues, and the citizens of Baghdad were experiencing in the intermittent quavering of his voice. But his general dispassionate calmness and determination to report the goings-on accurately and without alarm illuminated his reportage for the entirety of his career.

Two years earlier, he had covered the pro-democracy student revolt in Tiananmen Square in Beijing as the Chinese government violently repulsed the demonstrations that resulted in a significant number of casualties, with thousands injured and hundreds killed. Shortly after operating the anchor desk, Shaw was on hand to report on the shooting of President Ronald Reagan as he came out of the Hilton Hotel in Washington, D.C., on March 30,



1981. While other news outlets were reporting that White House Press Secretary James Brady had been killed, Shaw refrained from making that call, which proved right since Brady, though seriously injured, survived!

After twenty years at CNN, Shaw announced that he would be departing the network to spend more time with his wife, Linda, and their two children, as well as to do some writing and enjoy some hobbies such as gardening. Shaw had broken the race barrier in anchoring the news, paving the way for other racial and ethnic minorities in the profession. He received the Edward R. Murrow Award for Lifetime Achievement in Broadcasting for his stellar career. In addition to many other awards, he was also inducted into the Broadcasting & Cable Hall of Fame.

Shaw died from pneumonia on September 7, 2022, at a hospital in Washington, D.C.

I am Dr. Michael Blackwell, the Social Ethicist for The SoulTown Magazine. I want to thank Bernard Shaw for having SOUL! ☺