UU Warriors for Human Rights

Leader	Years	Primary place(s)	Most important contributions
John Murray	1741–1815	England; NJ; Boston, MA	Early American Universalist preacher; helped establish congregations and proclaim universal salvation.
Benjamin Rush	1745–1813	Philadelphia, PA	Universalist physician/reformer; opposed slavery, promoted women's education, prison reform, mental-health care.
Elhanan Winchester	1751–1797	CT; Philadelphia, PA; England	Influential preacher of universal restoration who gave early Universalism a transatlantic platform.
Judith Sargent Murray	1751–1820	Gloucester, MA; Boston, MA	Universalist writer and early feminist who advocated women's education and intellectual equality.
Hosea Ballou	1771–1852	VT; Boston, MA	Leading Universalist theologian; taught that God's love is restorative rather than eternally punitive.
William Ellery Channing	1780–1842	Newport, RI; Boston, MA	Leading New England Unitarian; championed reason, conscience, human dignity, peace, education, and abolition.
Hosea Ballou 2d	1796–1861	VT; Boston, MA; Medford, MA	Universalist minister, educator, and first Tufts president; strengthened Universalist scholarship and ministry.
Samuel Gridley Howe	1801–1876	Boston, MA	Abolitionist and disability-rights pioneer; led education and advocacy for blind people.
Ralph Waldo Emerson	1803–1882	Boston, MA; Concord, MA	Former Unitarian minister and Transcendentalist who elevated conscience, nature, and direct spiritual experience.
Adin Ballou	1803–1890	Hopedale, MA	Universalist and Unitarian pacifist; founded an antislavery, cooperative, nonviolent community.
Margaret Fuller	1810–1850	Cambridge, MA; Boston, MA; New York, NY	Transcendentalist writer and feminist who argued for women's full education, vocation, and public equality.
Theodore Parker	1810–1860	MA; Boston, MA	Unitarian abolitionist and religious reformer; defended freedom seekers and a justice-centered faith.
William Henry Channing	1810–1884	Boston, MA; Cincinnati, Rochester, England	Unitarian minister who advanced abolition, labor reform, democracy, and cooperative community.
Henry David Thoreau	1817–1862	Concord, MA	Transcendentalist abolitionist whose "Civil Disobedience" defended conscience against unjust law.
Julia Ward Howe	1819–1910	Boston, MA	Unitarian abolitionist, suffragist, poet, and peace activist; initiated the Mother's Day for Peace appeal.
Lydia Ann Moulton Jenkins	1824–1874	U.S.	Universalist minister, women's-rights advocate, and physician who crossed barriers in pulpit and profession.
Olympia Brown	1835–1926	MI; New England; WI	Universalist minister and lifelong suffrage leader; among the first women fully recognized in denominational ministry.
Florence Ellen Kollock Crooker	1848–1925	IL; MA	Universalist minister, temperance organizer, and woman-suffrage advocate.
Fannie Barrier Williams	1855–1944	Chicago, IL	Black educator and reformer who challenged racism and exclusion in women's and civic organizations.
Caroline Bartlett Crane	1858–1935	Kalamazoo, MI	Unitarian minister and suffragist who linked faith with public health, housing, and municipal reform.

Do you have nominees to add to this list? email Rev. Deborah Bond-Upson at minister@unitariansofhi.org

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Leader	Years	Primary place(s)	Most important contributions
Mary White Ovington	1865–1951	Brooklyn, NY; New York, NY	Unitarian social worker and NAACP cofounder who organized against segregation and racial violence.
Sophia Lyon Fahs	1876–1978	NY; Chicago, IL; nationwide	Reformer of UU religious education through child-centered, experiential learning.
John Haynes Holmes	1879–1964	New York, NY	Unitarian minister, pacifist, civil-liberties advocate, and cofounder of the ACLU and NAACP.
James Luther Adams	1901–1994	Chicago, IL; Cambridge, MA	Theologian of prophetic liberal religion, democratic association, and social transformation.
A. Powell Davies	1902–1957	Washington, DC	Unitarian preacher for racial integration, civil liberties, peace, and democracy.
Dana McLean Greeley	1908–1986	MA; national UUA	Final AUA president and first UUA president; strengthened post-merger peace and civil-rights witness.
John E. Wood	1910–1980	ME; MA; national UU	UU minister, Selma participant, racial-equity advocate, and early ecological organizer.
Robert Nelson West	1911–1999	Boston, MA; national UUA	UUA president who expanded public witness, LGBTQ+ inclusion, and sexuality education.
Homer A. Jack	1916–1993	Chicago, IL; worldwide	UU organizer for peace, disarmament, racial equality, human rights, and interfaith cooperation.
Viola Liuzzo	1925–1965	Detroit, MI; Selma, AL	UU laywoman murdered while aiding Selma voting-rights workers; a civil-rights martyr.
James Reeb	1927–1965	Washington, DC; Selma, AL	UU minister murdered during the Selma voting-rights campaign; his death galvanized national support.
William G. Sinkford	1946–	U.S.; national UUA	First Black UUA president; called UUism toward deeper anti-racism and multicultural faith.
Forrest Church	1948–2009	New York, NY	UU minister and author who articulated a welcoming, love-centered, non-creedal UU identity.
William F. Schulz	1949–	U.S.; Washington, DC	UUA president and human-rights leader who championed LGBTQ+ equality, peace, and civil liberties.
Meg Riley	1954–	U.S.; international UU networks	UUA leader who expanded global UU partnerships and international solidarity.
Karen Van Fossan	1960 ? -	U.S.; Standing Rock solidarity	UU minister promoting accountable solidarity with Indigenous communities and colonial reckoning.
Rev. Dr. Jacqui Lewis	1960 ? -	New York, NY	UU minister and public theologian for antiracism, LGBTQ+ dignity, and multiracial democracy.
Sofía Betancourt	1975–	U.S.; national UUA	UUA president since 2023; advances liberation, pluralism, covenant, and institutional transformation.
Susan Frederick-Gray	1975–	U.S.; national UUA	UUA president, 2017–2023; advanced anti-oppression, climate justice, and immigrant solidarity.

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