



**For Immediate Release**  
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**LDF Mourns the Loss of Agnes Gund,  
Devoted Philanthropist and Advocate for Social Good**

The [Legal Defense Fund \(LDF\)](#) is deeply saddened by the passing of Agnes Gund, a devoted philanthropist whose enduring commitment to racial and social justice left a lasting impact on both communities and institutions. A renowned art collector and expert, Ms. Gund dedicated her life to using art as a vehicle for driving equity, justice, and social change. Ms. Gund passed away at her home in Manhattan on Sept. 18, 2025. She was 87 years old.

“We deeply mourn the loss of Ms. Agnes Gund, an unrelenting advocate and cherished friend of LDF,” said Janai Nelson, LDF President and Director-Counsel. “Ms. Gund was an extraordinary supporter and thought partner whose generosity and passion were matched only by her visionary insight and unwavering resolve to use her position and resources for transformative change. Ms. Gund held a core conviction that art could inspire meaningful advocacy, which guided her work to advance justice, promote equity, and further the public good. In one of her most ground-breaking contributions, Ms. Gund established the Art for Justice Fund, an innovative initiative that aims to support criminal justice reform and advance racial justice through creative arts and advocacy. Our heartfelt condolences are with her family and loved ones during this difficult time. While her loss is tremendous, she leaves behind an indelible legacy that will continue to empower and inspire generations to come.”

At the time of her death, Ms. Gund was a President Emerita and Life Trustee of the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA). From 1991-2002, Ms. Gund served as MoMA’s president, where she oversaw the major expansion of the museum. In 1977, Ms. Gund founded Studio in a School, a nonprofit that brings professional artists into New York City public schools, providing arts education to thousands of students and fostering creativity in underserved communities.

For many years, Ms. Gund maintained a close relationship with LDF, providing invaluable support to many causes including voting rights advocacy and scholarship opportunities for college and law students. She was also closely connected to LDF through her establishment of the Art for Justice Fund, which helped to support LDF’s Justice in Public Safety Project which addresses systemic inequities in the criminal justice system and supports those affected by over-policing and mass incarceration.

In 2017, LDF honored Ms. Gund with a National Equal Justice Award (NEJAD) for her exceptional dedication to advancing racial and social justice.

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*Founded in 1940, the [Legal Defense Fund \(LDF\)](#) is the nation's first civil rights law organization. LDF's Thurgood Marshall Institute is a multi-disciplinary and collaborative hub within LDF that launches targeted campaigns and undertakes innovative research to shape the civil rights narrative. In media attributions, please refer to us as the Legal Defense Fund or LDF. Please note that LDF has been completely separate from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) since 1957—although LDF was originally founded by the NAACP and shares its commitment to equal rights.*