

# *Ralph Bunche*

## *Diplomat*

(1904-1971)



**Ralph Bunche** was the first African American to win the Nobel Peace Prize.

He was born on August 7, 1904 in Detroit, Michigan.

Bunche attended the University of California at Los Angeles and majored in international relations. He also played basketball at UCLA and participated in campus debates. After graduating in 1927, he attended Harvard University and completed his graduate studies in 1928. The next few years he taught at historically black Howard University while simultaneously working on a doctorate degree at Harvard.

Bunche was an advisor to presidents and was appointed by President Truman to serve as Assistant Secretary of State. He declined the position because of segregated housing in Washington DC. However, he did later work as an advisor to the Department of State and the military.

In 1948 he became chief aide to Count Folke Bernadotte, the United Nations appointed mediator for the conflict in Palestine between Arab states and the Israelis.

When Count Bernadotte was assassinated, Bunch was named acting United Nations mediator on Palestine. In 1949, and after several months of negotiating, he was able to bring the Arab states and the Israelis together to sign a peace agreement.



Count Folke Bernadotte

His efforts were recognized by the Nobel committee and in 1950 Bunche was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.



Nobel Medal