2023 KING HOLIDAY OBSERVANCE

KING



IT STARTS WITH

ME:

CULTIVATING A BELOVED COMMUNITY MINDSET TO TRANSFORM UNJUST SYSTEMS

THE KING CENTER
FOUNDED 1968

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THE KING CENTER

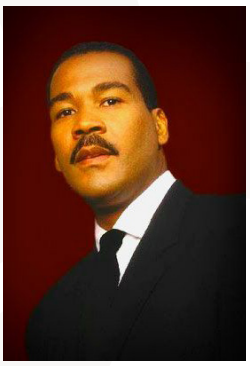
KING

HOLIDAY OBSERVANCE

2023



Coretta Scott King attends the signing of
Martin Luther King Jr. Day
by President Ronald Reagan
on November 2, 1983



Founder
Coretta Scott King

Message From Dexter Scott King
Chairman, Board of Trustees
The King Center

As Chairman of The King Center's Board of Trustees, I welcome you to The King Center's 2023 observance and celebration of my father's birthday. As we move on from 2022, we are thankful for the challenges of yesterday, the opportunities before us today, and the hope of tomorrow. One lesson we have learned is that your continued prayers and support have been unwavering. You have been the wind beneath our wings, and we are eternally grateful to you. May God continue to bless you and keep you and your families.

As we continue to navigate this third decade, in the second millennium, our first priority is to be a positive force for change. Despite any social, political, or religious differences, one commonality we all share is wanting our tomorrows to be better than our yesterdays. My father said, "we must accept finite disappointment, but never lose infinite hope". It is that hope that always gives tomorrow great promise. Each day presents us with a fresh opportunity to make a difference. Whether it's mentoring our youth, caring for our seniors or lending a helping hand to a friend in need, my father challenged us all to understand "the time is always ripe, to do right". He shared that "our goal is to create a beloved community, and this will require a qualitative change in our souls…". It doesn't always take a monumental act to move the needle. Each of us can do one small thing, which taken in its totality, can create a positive wave. We can all pay it forward by being kind to someone. The health pandemic of the last few years has created great challenges for many and seems to have ushered in a wave of pessimism and negativity. But it can be easy to brighten someone's day simply through a smile or hello. We are living in polarized times where a minor difference of opinion or view can lead to utter conflict. I'd like to think the warmth of the human spirit still persists and will connect us. For it is written in Matthew 19:19 'that you should love your neighbor as you love yourself'.

It is imperative that we remember our interconnectedness and interdependence. We must fight any spirit of self-centeredness and focus on our role as a part of a larger whole. The wholeness and oneness of the human race is the tie that binds us all. During high tide, all boats rise together; there is no delineation. We will continue to pray for you, as you continue to pray for us. It is through our collective prayers that we will please the almighty God. May he bless us with fruitful tomorrows filed with hope, love and brotherhood.

The Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change, Inc.
449 Auburn Ave. NE • Atlanta, Georgia 30312 • Phone: 404.526.8900 • Fax: 404.526.8962

www.thekingcenter.org



Founder
Coretta Scott King

Message From Dr. Bernice A. King
Chief Executive Officer and Board Member
The King Center

Greetings and welcome to The King Center's 55th annual observance of my father, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s, birthday. As we commemorate his 94th birthday and the 38th observance of the King Holiday, our 2023 King Holiday Observance (KHO) theme is **It Starts with Me: Cultivating a Beloved Community Mindset to Transform Unjust Systems**. The theme and corresponding messaging and events for the 2023 KHO are inspired by our commitment to our vision of the Beloved Community, where injustice ceases and love prevails. The theme, messaging and events also reflect our unflinching belief that, if we are to change the trajectory of our World House, cultivating a Beloved Community mindset is vital and must precede, then correspond with, sustainable work to transform unjust systems. Therefore, the 2023 charge and invitation is to "start with me," then connect with others, in "Cultivating a Beloved Community Mindset to Transform Unjust Systems."

This is a critical, consequential juncture in the history of the United States and the world. We face collective and individual choices that will determine whether we will continue to diminish and devastate humanity and the earth, or if we will elevate our thinking and our engagement to "cut off the chain of violence," as my mother and founder of The King Center, Mrs. Coretta Scott King, would often say. Cutting off the chain of violence, in all of its manifestations, includes transforming, and, if needed, reforming the systems that were founded in and/or perpetuate injustice.

Transformation encompasses more than ensuring temporary outcomes. To transform means to make a thorough change in the form, appearance, and character of. This is precisely what systems in the United States and across the globe require for us to avoid our collective ruin: a thorough, and deliberate, change in form, appearance, and character.

From our destructive rhetoric and divides to our policies and practices concerning the climate, international trade, militarism, racial equity, immigration, democracy, and poverty, we are in moral distress. That moral distress necessitates cultivating a new way of thinking and transforming unjust systems, both of which happen in tandem with what my father called a "radical revolution of values." As he wrote in his last book, *Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community*?, "Nothing could be more tragic than for men to live in these revolutionary times and fail to achieve the new attitudes and the new mental outlooks that the new situation demands."

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Founder
Coretta Scott King

We cannot facilitate and embrace new situations without new attitudes and new mental outlooks. We cannot transform unjust systems without cultivating a Beloved Community Mindset. As Albert Einstein's words convey, problems cannot be solved with the same thinking and on the same level on which they were created. I am also reminded of my father's words that we "must forever conduct our struggle on the high plane of dignity and discipline." This demands that we reach higher in our thinking and dig deeper in love to get ourselves out of this human-made conundrum of inhumanity, inequity, and injustice. We can do it, if we are first compelled by our current condition and the possibility of a healthy condition to prepare and develop a mindset that challenges our biases, deconstructs our "isms," and lifts our language. This is a Beloved Community Mindset.

Today, as I consider my mother's call that we cut off the chain of violence and my father's insight that we need a radical revolution of values, which incorporates a Beloved Community Mindset, I invite you to join The King Center in cultivating a Beloved Community Mindset to transform unjust systems, encompassing healthcare, criminal "justice," education, housing, banking, and lending, as well as corporate policies and practices. A Beloved Community Mindset entails understanding that we are interconnected, interdependent, and interrelated; the ability to disagree without demeaning each other; employing peaceful means in our quest for peaceful ends; mental and spiritual conditioning to correct injustice and inequity without canceling, wishing destruction upon or seeking to destroy the person who propagated the injustice or inequity; evolving from mere pity and apathy to compassionate action; collaborating without compromising on justice; and embracing the philosophy and methodology of nonviolence as the pathway to the Beloved Community.
Kingian nonviolence, which The King Center rebranded as Nonviolence365Æ, provides us with Six Principles and Six Steps for achieving and sustaining the Beloved Community. It is a strategic approach to equipping and galvanizing global citizens around doing the work of both cultivating a new mindset and transforming the unjust systems that deter the creation of a just, humane, equitable and peaceful world. I encourage you to study nonviolence with The King Center via our virtual and in-person trainings and via our self-paced online master class in nonviolence, which you can learn more about and register for at www.thekingcenterinstitute.org.

It is my hope that you will accept my invitation. At this critical, consequential juncture in history, be a part of cultivating a collective Beloved Community Mindset and transforming systems so that they work in the best interest of humanity. "It Starts with Me" It starts with you. It matters for us.

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

January 16, 2023

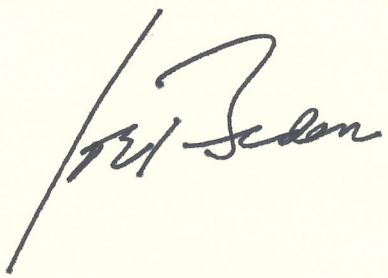
I am honored to join the King family and distinguished guests of the Beloved Community Commemorative Service in reflecting on the timeless words, righteous work, and lasting legacy of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

From the pulpit to the podium to neighborhoods across the United States, Dr. King imagined that America might one day become a "Beloved Community." In this place, racism, bigotry, and prejudice would erode because citizens would value the dignity and worth of every human being. Poverty would cease because human decency would not allow it. Animosity would give way to peace because we would recognize the interconnectedness of all humanity. Dr. King gave every part of himself in pursuit of this dream, and now it is our charge to continue his unfinished work and redeem the soul of America.

Dr. King marched for access to the ballot box, so we carry on the fight to protect the sacred right to vote for all Americans. He campaigned to end systemic racism, so we work to embed equity into all of our policies and programs. He fought for economic justice and the rights of workers, so we strive to make the American dream a reality for every family. He called for greater fairness in our health care system, so we push to put quality, affordable health care within reach of all people. He preached that only light could drive out darkness, so we condemn hate and extremism as we build a country of grace and goodness.

The question before us now is if America will honor Dr. King's legacy by rising together—buttressed by each other's successes, enriched by each other's differences, and made whole by each other's compassion. I believe we can. Like Dr. King, I know that there is nothing beyond this Nation's capacity and that we will fulfill the promise of America for all Americans, perfecting the union we love and must protect.

May God bless the King family. May God bless you all.





This photograph shows President Johnson signing the Voting Rights Act of 1964 into law. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. appears in the photo standing behind Johnson among politicians and civil rights activists.

© Public Domain. Lyndon B. Johnson Presidential Library, National Archives

JON OSSOFF
GEORGIA

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WASHINGTON, DC 20510
(202) 224-3521

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1011

January 16, 2023

Dr. Bernice King
Chief Executive Officer
The King Center
449 Auburn Avenue, NE
Atlanta, Georgia 30312

Thank you all for being part of this gathering in remembrance of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and in continuation of his work.

Dr. King gave us so much of the language we use today to describe the ongoing struggle for civil and human rights.

The phrase "beloved community," from which Dr. King drew his theological learnings, is so powerful because it describes not just a place where we could live, but a mindset we could carry with us everywhere we go.

In my work as Georgia's U.S. Senator, I carry Dr. King's teachings with me in my work in Washington, as well as that of my mentor, our beloved former Congressman John Lewis, who worked so hard alongside Dr. King to realize his vision of the Beloved Community.

The Beloved Community is not a utopia or unattainable goal, but instead a realistic ambition that I believe can be our destination.

May we all answer Dr. King's call to build that beloved community and elevate humanity's condition.

Sincerely,

Jon Ossoff
U.S. Senator



RAPHAEL WARNOCK
GEORGIA

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1012

January 15, 2023

The Reverend Bernice A. King
Chief Executive Officer
The King Center
449 Auburn Avenue, NE
Atlanta, Georgia 30312

Dear Reverend King,

With great admiration, I commemorate the Birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. with you and The King Center. The annual King Holiday Observance allows us to look inward, celebrate, and honor the life and impact of Georgia's greatest son and one of history's greatest global thought leaders, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

As we celebrate Dr. King's 94th birthday, the work to complete his mission of creating the beloved community continues. The 2023 King Holiday Observance theme of 'Cultivating a Beloved Community Mindset to Transform Unjust Systems' will, without a doubt, guide us as we seek sustainable solutions to the most critical challenges we face as a nation.

It is an honor to celebrate the life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. May his legacy continue to serve as a compass and inspiration for us all.

Sincerely,

Reverend Raphael Warnock
United States Senator

CONGRESSWOMAN NIKEMA WILLIAMS
GEORGIA'S FIFTH DISTRICT



January 16th, 2023

Dear Dr. Bernice A. King,

It is my pleasure to extend my heartfelt greetings to you, to the King Center, and to all those gathering to mark Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s 94th birthday and the 55th Annual King Center Beloved Community Commemorative Program.

As the first Black woman to give voice to Georgia's Fifth Congressional District in Congress, I stand on the shoulders of giants, from Congressman John Lewis to the guiding light of Dr. King, to everyone who has carried on his legacy and message.

Your father, your tireless work, and the work of the King Center have given us moral clarity in the face of injustice and systems that were not designed for us. By keeping your father's legacy of love and nonviolence alive, you have prepared us to heed his call for every generation to help build the Beloved Community. As we do our individual parts to build that better future, we are thankful.

In the words of our friend and my predecessor Congressman Lewis, and on behalf of all those who call the Fifth Congressional District home, keep getting into Good Trouble to build the Beloved Community!

Yours for the People,

Nikema Williams
Member of Congress

CONGRESSMAN SANFORD D. BISHOP, JR.
WASHINGTON, DC

January 16, 2023

Dr. Bernice A. King
Chief Executive Officer
The King Center
449 Auburn Avenue, NE
Atlanta, Georgia 30312

Dear Dr. King:

I am honored and humbled to extend my heartfelt greetings to you and all who are virtually attending the Martin Luther King, Jr. Annual Commemorative Service, which marks the King Center's 55th birthday and Dr. King's 94th birthday. Given the current state of affairs in America and across the world, there is no greater urgency than for us to halt and revisit the prophetic legacy embodied in the 2023 National King Holiday Observance theme: " Cultivating A Beloved Community Mindset to Transform Unjust Systems."

Your father, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., taught us and demonstrated with his life that bringing about justice for all requires the individuals in a community to develop like-minded ideas and work together to provoke change. Only then can effective work begin to create a better society that truly reflects the ideals we hold dear.

It is my hope and prayer that today's commemorative service led by you and the Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change, Inc. will be a catalyst to reignite a universal quest for justice—economic justice, health justice, social justice, criminal justice, and electoral justice. On behalf of myself and all people of goodwill in the Second Congressional District of Georgia, you have our best wishes for a very inspiring and motivating celebration!

With warmest personal regards, I remain

Sincerely yours,

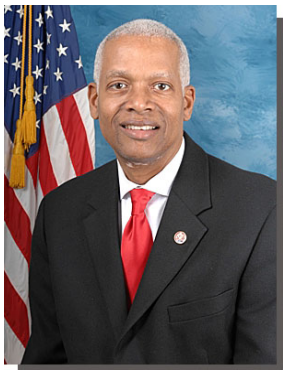
Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.
Member of Congress

CONGRESSMAN HANK JOHNSON
Georgia's Fourth District

January 16, 2023

Dr. Bernice A. King
Chief Executive Officer
The King Center
Auburn Avenue
Atlanta, GA 30303

Dear Dr. King:



As we gather today to honor the work of Dr. King and Mrs. Coretta Scott King, we pause to give reverence to the struggle against prejudice, hatred, and intolerance.

On this hallowed national holiday, we once again rededicate ourselves to keeping the dream alive and fostering peace and equality.

Because of Dr. King's work and legacy, we can joyfully say as we go forth today: "Let Freedom Ring from Stone Mountain of Georgia" and throughout our nation and the world!

Yet, we must continue to commemorate "King's 2023 Holiday Observance: It Starts With Me: Cultivating A Beloved Community Mindset to Transform Unjust Systems." This annual observance is a chance to renew our vow to keep the dream alive – never shirking in our duty to make the progress we have achieved real and permanent.

On behalf of the 4th Congressional District of Georgia, I send my heartfelt best wishes for an uplifting and inspiring commemorative observance.

Very truly yours,

Hank Johnson

Hank Johnson
Member of Congress

LUCY McBATH
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MCBATH.HOUSE.GOV

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515–1006

COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY
SUBCOMMITTEES:
CRIME, TERRORISM, AND HOMELAND SECURITY
ANTITRUST, COMMERCIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE LAW

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND LABOR
SUBCOMMITTEES:
HEALTH, EMPLOYMENT, LABOR, AND PENSIONS
EARLY CHILDHOOD, ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

January 16, 2023

Dr. Bernice A. King
Chief Executive Office
The King Center
Atlanta, Georgia

Dear Dr. King,

On behalf of my office and the United States House of Representatives, I am pleased to send greetings on the occasion of the 2023 King Holiday Observance. As communities across the country and around the world celebrate the life and legacy of your father, may we take this opportunity to reflect on the mission and mandate we must carry out to realize his vision of the Beloved Community.

From the time I was a little girl, I was expected to take an active role in civic engagement. As the child of civil rights leaders, I saw the tremendous power each voice can have in a community. This year's MLK Holiday Observance theme reminds us that we each have the power to change the world we live in. As a mother, as an activist, and now as a legislator, I know this to be true. We have a sacred responsibility to put an end to injustice by leaning on the principles of love and peace. May we be reinvigorated by our power as individuals, encouraged by the strength of our unity, and always guided by the principles which led Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s remarkable life on earth.

I thank you for the work you do every day to honor the life and legacy of your father. As we celebrate his 94th birthday and the 55th annual King Center Commemorative program, I pray that we rededicate ourselves to the path of healing and reconciliation as we work to realize his dream every day.

Sincerely,

Lucy McBath

Lucy McBath
Member of Congress



PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

DAVID SCOTT
13TH DISTRICT, GEORGIA

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DAVID.SCOTT@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515–1013

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL SERVICES

January 16, 2023

Dr. Bernice A. King

Chief Executive Officer of The King Center

449 Auburn Ave NE, Atlanta, GA 30312

Dear Dr. Bernice King:

As the United States Congressman for the Thirteenth District of Georgia, I am honored to commemorate the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. As we celebrate what would be Dr. Kings 94th birthday and the 37th anniversary of the MLK Day Observance, I would like to reflect on this year's theme: "It Starts With Me: Shifting Priorities to Create the Beloved Community."

The phrase "the beloved community" is aptly borrowed from Dr. King's 1957 speech "Birth of a New Nation". In this speech he illustrates a need for love and compassion in our fight for equality. Dr. King says "Our aim must be to defeat the evil that's [within Mr. Sellers, Mr. Gayle and Mr. Parks]. But our aim must be to win the friendship of [them]"

In our current age of bitterness and rage we must not forget that our enemy is not our fellow man, but the evil that resides inside of them. Fighting fire with fire breeds resentfulness and chaos, so we must choose to fight evil and unjustness with love and compassion. To do so is to strive to follow the example of Dr. King. To do the hard work of building today for a better tomorrow. The arc of the moral universe is long so our job must be to bend it closer to us.

This MLK day, I invite all to join me in recommitting ourselves to the work of building the beloved community. Honoring the legacy of Dr. King and other freedom fighters by choosing love over hate, compassion over rage, peace over chaos and I am thankful to continue this work in the U.S. Congress.

God Bless.

Sincerely,

David Scott

Member of Congress

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2023 KING HOLIDAY OBSERVANCE

KING



IT STARTS WITH ME:

CULTIVATING A BELOVED COMMUNITY MINDSET TO TRANSFORM UNJUST SYSTEMS

THE KING CENTER
FOUNDED 1968

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STATE OF GEORGIA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
ATLANTA 30334-0090

Brian P. Kemp
GOVERNOR

January 16, 2023

Dr. Bernice A. King
449 Auburn Ave. NE
Atlanta, Georgia 30312

Greetings,

On behalf of the State of Georgia, allow me to extend my warmest regards as you gather for this year's Martin Luther King, Jr. Beloved Community Annual Commemorative Service. Georgia is proud of his enduring legacy of fighting injustice which transformed our nation during his years of activism and continues to inspire us all to this day.

Despite facing resistance that included imprisonment, threats, and physical violence, Dr. King remained steadfast in his commitment to truth, justice for all, and the power of love over hate. Because of his perseverance in the quest for change, we are able to live in a more just society as we continue his efforts to ensure the ideals of equality are upheld.

On this Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, we reflect not just on the heroic actions of Dr. King during the civil rights movement, but also on the values he held dear. Let us always strive to embody his belief in nonviolence to create lasting change, and in Christ's love for all His children.

Sincerely,

Brian P. Kemp



Andre Dickens
MAYOR

CITY OF ATLANTA

55 TRINITY AVE, S.W.
ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30303-0300

TEL (404) 330-6100

Dr. Bernice A. King
Chief Executive Officer
The Martin Luther King, Jr. Ctr for Nonviolent Social Change, Inc.
449 Auburn Avenue NE
Atlanta, GA 30312

January 16, 2023

Dear Dr. King:

As an Atlanta native, I was born after your father passed away. But growing up in Adamsville, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr's legacy loomed large over my life. Whether it was in church Sunday School lessons or home teachings from my mother, I knew how blessed I was to be a son of the same city that gave the world Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Dr. King's legacy has never been stronger, and his message continues to resonate around the globe. He called for a "worldwide fellowship," one in which countries saw themselves as interdependent and loyal to the preservation of all mankind. Dr. King believed that all people should be the beneficiaries of social justice, economic inclusion, and health equity.

Recently, in a speech to Italian schoolchildren and educators, Pope Francis called your father a "prophet of our times," and challenged the students to have a dream for the world, just as Dr. King did.

Every day, as I show up to do the people's work, I am reminded of Dr. King's instruction to us. "If you can't fly, then run. If you can't run, then walk. If you can't walk, then crawl. But whatever you do, you have to keep moving forward."

Today, I want to thank you for always graciously sharing your father and his legacy with us. And I also want to thank you for tirelessly continuing the enduring legacy he has left with the world. Let us follow Dr. King's plea to all; let us keep moving forward, together.

Sincerely,

Mayor Andre Dickens



ATLANTA CITY COUNCIL

DOUG SHIPMAN
PRESIDENT

55 TRINITY AVENUE, S.W.
SECOND FLOOR EAST
ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30303
DIRECT (404) 330-6052
E-MAIL DSHIPMAN@ATLANTAGA.GOV

January 16, 2023

Greetings,

It is my honor to join the King Family, The King Center, Ebenezer Baptist Church, and countless global citizens in celebrating the ***2023 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday***.

As we fellowship over the course of this national celebration, let us remember that cultivating a Beloved Community mindset and agenda to transform unjust systems is not only a responsibility – it is a necessity. We must collectively establish a transformative disposition which is inclusive of every segment of our society while also embracing the differences of our neighbors. Our spirit is critical as it is what influences our actions and determines how we engage in every moment that life presents. In simpler terms, we must love our neighbors as we love ourselves.

We cannot consume our way to the Beloved Community. It will not happen with the accumulation of likes, followers, or possessions. Development of the Beloved Community will require an ongoing engagement with our neighbors on their territory. It will require us to shed the fear of ignorance, develop a cultural competence, and lead with a respect for what makes us different while holding onto a deep belief that we are fundamentally human.

When examining the dynamic of today's unjust systems, it is evident that these systems stem from challenges which are communal in nature. For this reason, it is my belief that building the Beloved Community is not just *a* solution to the problems we face today…it is the *only* path forward and it begins with our mindset.

Dr. King wisely stated, "One day we will learn that the heart can never be totally right when the head is totally wrong." I hope that one day is today.

In Service,

Doug Shipman

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF FULTON COUNTY

FULTON GOVERNMENT CENTER

141 PRYOR STREET SW, SUITE 10032

Robert L. (Robb) Pitts
CHAIRMAN

ATLANTA, GA 30303

TELEPHONE (404) 613-2330
Robb.pitts@fultoncountyga.gov



January 16, 2023

Dr. Bernice A. King
Chief Executive Officer
The King Center
449 Auburn Avenue, NE
Atlanta, Georgia 30312

Dear Dr. King,

On behalf of the Fulton County Board of Commissioners, I am honored to join in the Annual Commemorative Service for the 2023 King Holiday to observe and celebrate the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

The King Holiday Observance means so much to so many. Dr. King fought against injustice with his words, actions, and, ultimately, his life. It is a debt that no one can repay. Instead, each year, we gather as a community in remembrance, respect, and celebration of each other and our progress as a nation.

Today's theme, *"It Starts With Me: Cultivating A Beloved Community Mindset to Transform Unjust Systems,"* illustrates that our communities serve as our backbone, both in times of hardship and times of joy. This past year has been an example of both; let us continue to lean on each other.

Sincerely,

Robb Pitts

In Loving Memory of Cleophus Orange and Jamida Orange



The Beloved Community is based on the belief that love and justice will prevail over hate and injustice. Practitioners of agape love have carried this belief through generations.

Jamida and Cleophas "Cleo" Orange, a mother and daughter team, were two very important change agents and members of our Beloved Community. Both transitioned into eternal rest in October 2022 and January 2023, respectively. Cleo and Jamida were dedicated activists, with an affinity for service and loyal partners of The King Center through the Students with King program and leaders of the MLK March Committee. They were a true testament to the potency of nonviolence as a way of life. The King Center Family will always remember the laughter, life, and legacy of these two courageous women. They have left us with a blueprint for excellence and will forever be in our hearts!

Jamida Orange
August 25, 1969- October 16, 2022

Cleophas "Cleo" Orange
November 23, 1944-January 4, 2023

Lift Every Voice and Sing

By James Weldon Johnson

Lyrics:

Lift ev'ry voice and sing,
'Til earth and heaven ring,
Ring with the harmonies of Liberty;
Let our rejoicing rise
High as the list'ning skies,
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.
Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us,
Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us;
Facing the rising sun of our new day begun,
Let us march on 'til victory is won.

Stony the road we trod,
Bitter the chastening rod,
Felt in the days when hope unborn had died;
Yet with a steady beat,
Have not our weary feet
Come to the place for which our fathers sighed?
We have come over a way that with tears has been watered,
We have come, treading our path through the blood of the slaughtered,
Out from the gloomy past,
'Til now we stand at last
Where the white gleam of our bright star is cast.

God of our weary years,
God of our silent tears,
Thou who has brought us thus far on the way;
Thou who has by Thy might
Led us into the light,
Keep us forever in the path, we pray.
Lest our feet stray from the places, our God, where we met Thee,
Lest, our hearts drunk with the wine of the world, we forget Thee;
Shadowed beneath Thy hand,
May we forever stand,
True to our God,
True to our native land.

STUDENT RECITATIONS – EXCERPTS

The Future of Integration

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. • April 27, 1965

IN SHORT, there is still a great deal of work to be done. And as I said, no community can boast of clean hands in this area, and this problem will not be solved until we develop a sort of divine discontent all over America.

There are certain technical words within every academic discipline which soon become stereotypes and cliches. Every academic discipline has its technical nomenclature. Modern psychology has a word that is probably used more than any other word in psychology. It is a word maladjusted. And certainly we all want to live the well-adjusted life in order to avoid neurotic and schizophrenic personalities.

But I must honestly say to you this afternoon, my friends, there are some things within our world and our nation of which I'm proud to be maladjusted, by which I call upon all people of goodwill to be maladjusted until the good society is realized. I must honestly say that I never intend to become adjusted to segregation and discrimination. I never intend to adjust myself to religious bigotry.

I NEVER intend to become adjusted to economic conditions that will take necessities from the many to give luxuries to the few. But I recognize that there are between 40 and 50 million of our brothers and sisters in this country who are perishing on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity. And I will NEVER adjust myself to these conditions. I will NEVER be satisfied until ALL OF GOD'S CHILDREN will have the basic necessities of life.

I must honestly say that I NEVER intend to adjust myself to the madness of militarism and the self-defeating effects of physical violence. But in a day when Sputniks and Explorers are dashing through outer space and guided ballistic missiles are carving highways of death through the stratosphere, NO NATION CAN WIN A WAR. It is no longer the choice between violence and nonviolence. It is either nonviolence or nonexistence. And the alternative to disarmament, the alternative to a greater suspension of nuclear tests, the alternative to strengthening the United Nations and thereby disarming the whole world may well be a civilization plunged into the abyss of annihilation.

And so maybe we need a new organization in our world, the International Association for the Advancement of Creative Maladjustment. Men and women who will be as maladjusted men and women who will be as maladjusted as the prophet Amos, who in the midst of the injustices of his day could cry out in words that echo across the centuries, "Let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream." As maladjusted as Abraham Lincoln, who had the vision to see that this nation could not survive half slave and half free.

As maladjusted as Thomas Jefferson, who in the midst of an age amazingly adjusted to slavery, could etch across the pages of history words lifted to cosmic proportions, "We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal. That they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights and that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

As maladjusted as Jesus of Nazareth who could say to the men and women of his day, "Love your enemies. Bless them that curse you. Pray for them that despitefully use you." And through such maladjustment, we will be able to emerge from the bleak and desolate midnight of man's inhumanity to man into the bright and glittering daybreak of freedom and justice.

And may I say to you in conclusion, that I believe we will go that additional distance. I still have faith in America. And I still believe that even though we have some more difficult days in Alabama and Mississippi and all over, that somehow this problem can and will be solved. That we are mobilizing forces and we have a coalition of conscience and a grand alliance now that will bring an end to the injustices that have been with us for so long.

I still have the faith to believe that we shall overcome. Before the victory is won, some more will get scarred up a bit. Before the victory is won, some more will be thrown into jail. Before the victory is won, many will be misunderstood and called bad names simply because they're determined to stand up. Before the victory is won, maybe somebody else like a Mrs. Liuzzo, a Reverend James Reeb, or Jimmie Lee Jackson may have to face physical death.

But if physical death is the price that some must pay to free their children and their white brothers from an eternal death of the spirit, then nothing can be more redemptive. Yes, WE SHALL OVERCOME. And I have faith in the future because I know somehow that although the ARC OF THE MORAL UNIVERSE IS LONG, IT BENDS TOWARD JUSTICE. And there is something in this universe which justifies Carlyle in saying, "No lie will live forever."

There is something in this universe that justifies William Cullen Bryant in saying, "Truth, crushed to earth, will rise again." Yes, we shall overcome because James Russell Lowell is right, "Truth forever on the scaffold. Wrong forever on the throne. Yet that scaffold sways the future. And behind the dim unknown, standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above his own."

WITH THIS FAITH, we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope. WITH THIS FAITH, we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. WITH THIS FAITH, we will be able to speed up the day when all of God's children, Black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands all over this nation and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual, "Free at last, free at last, thank God almighty WE ARE FREE AT LAST."



KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Bryan Stevenson

Founder and Executive Director of the Equal Justice Initiative

Bryan Stevenson is the founder and Executive Director of the Equal Justice Initiative, a human rights organization in Montgomery, Alabama. Under his leadership, EJI has won major legal challenges eliminating excessive and unfair sentencing, exonerating innocent death row prisoners, confronting abuse of the incarcerated and the mentally ill, and aiding children prosecuted as adults.

Mr. Stevenson has argued and won multiple cases at the United States Supreme Court, including a 2019 ruling protecting condemned prisoners who suffer from dementia and a landmark 2012 ruling that banned mandatory life-imprisonment-without-parole sentences for all children 17 or younger. Mr. Stevenson and his staff have won reversals, relief, or release from prison for over 135 wrongly condemned prisoners on death row and won relief for hundreds of others wrongly convicted or unfairly sentenced.

Mr. Stevenson has initiated major new anti-poverty and anti-discrimination efforts that challenge inequality in America. He led the creation of two highly acclaimed cultural sites which opened in 2018: the Legacy Museum and the National Memorial for Peace and Justice. These new national landmark institutions chronicle the legacy of slavery, lynching, and racial segregation, and the connection to mass incarceration and contemporary issues of racial bias.

Mr. Stevenson's work has won him numerous awards, including the prestigious MacArthur Foundation "Genius" Prize; the ABA Medal, the American Bar Association's highest honor; the National Medal of Liberty from the American Civil Liberties Union after he was nominated by United States Supreme Court Justice John Stevens; the Public Interest Lawyer of the Year by the National Association of Public Interest Lawyers; and the Olaf Palme Prize in Stockholm, Sweden, for international human rights. In 2002, he received the Alabama State Bar Commissioners Award. In 2003, the SALT Human Rights Award was presented to Mr. Stevenson by the Society of American Law Teachers. In 2004, he received the Award for Courageous Advocacy from the American College of Trial Lawyers and also the Lawyer for the People Award from the National Lawyers Guild. In 2006, New York University presented Mr. Stevenson with its Distinguished Teaching Award. Mr. Stevenson won the Gruber Foundation International Justice Prize and was awarded the NAACP William Robert Ming Advocacy Award, the National Legal Aid & Defender Association Lifetime Achievement Award, the Ford Foundation Visionaries Award, and the Roosevelt Institute Franklin D. Roosevelt Freedom from Fear Award. In 2012, Mr. Stevenson received the American Psychiatric Association Human Rights Award, the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute Fred L. Shuttlesworth Award, and the Smithsonian Magazine American Ingenuity Award in Social Progress. Mr. Stevenson was inducted into the American Academy of Arts and Science in 2014 and won the Lannan Cultural Freedom Prize. In 2015, he was named to the Time 100 list recognizing the world's most influential people. In 2016, he received the American Bar Association's Thurgood Marshall Award. He was named in Fortune's 2016 and 2017 World's Greatest Leaders list. He received the Martin Luther King Jr. Nonviolent Peace Prize from the King Center in Atlanta in 2018.

Mr. Stevenson has received over 40 honorary doctoral degrees, including degrees from Harvard, Yale, Princeton, the University of Pennsylvania, and Oxford University. He is the author of the critically acclaimed New York Times bestseller, Just Mercy, which was named by Time Magazine as one of the 10 Best Books of Nonfiction for 2014 and has been awarded several honors, including the American Library Association's Carnegie Medal for best nonfiction book of 2015 and a 2015 NAACP Image Award. Just Mercy was recently adapted as a major motion picture. He is a graduate of the Harvard Law School and the Harvard School of Government.

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Rev. Natosha Reid Rice
Minister for Public Life, All Saints' Episcopal Church and
Global Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer, Habitat for Humanity Int'l

OPENING ANTHEM
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The Commemorative Service Choir

Tyrone Webb
Director Commemorative Service Choir
Accompanied by The Covington Regional Ballet

VIDEO PRESENTATION
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Pastor Sam Collier
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SCRIPTURES AND READINGS

Old Testament Scripture Reading
Rabbi Ellen Namhauser

New Testament Scripture Reading
Rev. Hiro Sakamaki

Quran Reading
The Honorable Fatima El-Amin

THE CALL TO COMMEMORATION

Rev. Dr. Bernice A. King
CEO, The King Center

MUSICAL PERFORMANCE

"Change Me"
Ashling Cole
Recording Artist

GREETINGS

The Honorable Governor Brian Kemp (video)
State of Georgia

The Honorable Mayor Andre Dickens
City of Atlanta, State of Georgia

The Reverend Raphael G. Warnock, Ph.D.
Senior Pastor Ebenezer Baptist Church,
United States Senate, State of Georgia

INTERNATIONAL MUSICAL PERFORMANCE

"God Bless America"
Far East Broadcasting Company Korean Children's Choir

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YOUTH PRESENTATION
Presentation I: The Purpose of Education

"The Purpose of Education," Maroon Tiger Book edition, 1947, Morehouse College Printed and Published Collection, Atlanta University Robert W. Woodruff Library

Connie F. Smith-Lindsey, Creative Director and Speech Coach
Mr. D'Marre Justin Lamar Craddock, Sophomore, Morehouse College
Miss Katherine "Kari" Harper, Senior, Spelman College
Mr. Anthony Pleitez-Rivas, 12th Grade, Central Gwinnett High School

MUSICAL PERFORMANCE

"Spiritual Medley"
Dr. Uzee Brown
Mark Norwood, Pianist

"Thank you, Jesus. You've Brought Me from a Mighty Long Way."
"I've Got the Love of Jesus in my Heart" (Freedom Song from Civil Rights Movement)
"Every Time I Feel the Spirit"

TRIBUTE TO DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

Leo Smith
CEO, Engaged Futures Group, LLC

Veronica Maldonado-Torres
President and CEO, Georgia Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

Rick West
Founding Director and Director Emeritus,
National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution

MUSICAL PERFORMANCE

"Hang On"
Kierra Sheard
Recording Artist

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TRIBUTE TO MRS. CORETTA SCOTT KING

Coretta Scott King Young Women's Leadership Academy Student
Somalia Gilliard, Senior

TRIBUTE TO DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR

Renee Montgomery
Co-Owner / VP of the Atlanta Dream

Pastor Dennis Rouse
Author, Mentor, and Founding Pastor of Victory Church

MUSICAL PERFORMANCE

"Falling in Love"
Justin Lee Schultz, Recording Artist
Morton Perry, Saxophonist

YOUTH PRESENTATION

Presentation II: "The Future of Integration," April 27, 1965

Connie F. Smith-Lindsey, Creative Director and Speech Coach
Miss Chielotam Akabueze, 12th Grade, Mountain View High School
Mr. Philip Bryan Fishbein, 10th Grade, The Temple & Druid Hills High School
Miss Katherine "Kari" Harper, Senior, Spelman College
Miss Sydney Dawn Johnson, 11th Grade, Ebenezer Baptist Church & Archer High School
Miss Gargi Konteti, 10th Grade, Milton High School
Miss Cali Yasmin Fiona Paterson, 11th Grade, Atlanta International School
Miss Monica Saddique, Senior, Clark Atlanta University
Miss Adoria Imani Strickland, 10th Grade, Beloved Community Leadership Academy & Global Impact Academy

INTRODUCTION OF KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Rev. Dr. Bernice A. King

2023 MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.
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MUSICAL PERFORMANCE
"In the Midst of it All"
Yolanda Adams
Recording Artist

KEYNOTE SPEAKER
Bryan Stevenson, Esq.
Founder and Executive Director, Equal Justice Initiative

MUSICAL PERFORMANCE
"Worship and Justice"
Bishop William Murphy
The dReam Center Church of Atlanta

OFFERING

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Members of the Atlanta Consular Corps

BENEDICTION
Reverend Pam Driesell

ANTHEM OF THE MOVEMENT
"We Shall Overcome"
Dr. Uzee Brown with The Commemorative Service Choir

The Chairman and Board of Trustees of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change, Inc., express appreciation to The Management of WAGA-TV/Fox-5 for presenting the live Telecast of the Commemorative Service.

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Wells Fargo is proud to support The King Center and its work to honor the life and advance the ideals and enduring contributions of Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. We congratulate the 2023 Beloved Community Award honorees.

Through service and activism, Dr. King fought for equal treatment and economic opportunity for everyone. By working together, companies and communities can continue to strive for the more equal and peaceful world Dr. King envisioned. At Wells Fargo, we're committed to advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion by helping ensure that all people across our workforce and in our communities feel valued and respected, and that they have access to the resources and opportunities they need to succeed. On behalf of Wells Fargo, congratulations again to the Beloved Community Award honorees.



Charlie Scharf
CEO, Wells Fargo



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