



**State Holiday Commission**

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**2019**

**Commemoration  
and Celebration of  
Dr. Martin Luther King,**

**#UNITY**

*"Unity has never meant uniformity."*

- Martin L. King, Jr.



**Monday, January 21, 2019  
9:30 a.m.**

**Asbury United Methodist Church  
501 Elizabeth Street  
Charleston, West Virginia**



*Jim Justice*  
*Governor of West Virginia*

## GREETINGS FROM GOVERNOR JUSTICE

As Governor, it is my pleasure to welcome you to today's celebration of the life of a truly invaluable icon of American history, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

It is truly heartening to see such an important tribute take place in the Mountain State as we honor both his life and his contributions to our society.

Dr. King was among our country's greatest leaders of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He accepted what surely must have seemed like countless challenges with immeasurable resolve. His extraordinary vision and perseverance were cornerstones of a revolution, which changed the face of America forever. Dr. King made his mark upon individuals and society alike, working diligently toward the advancement of improved racial relations and understanding. His tireless efforts are to be praised and looked upon as a lasting example for us all.

On behalf of the citizens of West Virginia, please accept my best wishes for a successful and enjoyable event today and in the future. It has been a privilege to work with this commission on these efforts to celebrate and commemorate the life and legacy of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jim Justice".

Jim Justice

Governor

Manchin III  
WEST VIRGINIA



*United States Senate*  
WASHINGTON, DC

# Greetings from Joe Manchin United States Senator

*In honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*

ate and entire country celebrate Dr. King because he was a man of conviction and a national symbol of strength and perseverance. His actions and speeches for civil rights inspired the world. However, he was more than just an advocate for one issue. He promoted equality, meritism and education and he challenged everyone, regardless of their circumstances, to bring about the change they wanted to see in the world. Dr. King understood that we must constantly work for unity in order for all to achieve the American Dream. In that regard, we are proud to emphasize the notion that "unity has never meant uniformity."

are joined together for this beautiful ecumenical service and symbolic march at our state capitol. Let us reflect on the challenges that have faced our nation, as well as on the countless individuals who fought valiantly for years to overcome them. I truly appreciate keynote speaker Dr. Foster, President and CEO of the Greater Kanawha Valley Foundation, the Martin Luther King Jr. State Holiday Commission, Herbert Henderson Minority Affairs director Jill Upson, and other community leaders who strive to make a difference for the greater good every single day.

Dr. King once said, "Life's most persistent and urgent question is 'What are you doing for others?' West Virginia and this great nation are home to countless leaders who – in the spirit of Dr. King – are inspiring others and making substantial contributions to their communities and our nation. Thank you for your passion and for your innovative ideas that honor Dr. King's legacy every single day.

Warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Manchin".

Manchin III  
United States Senator

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

## Greeting from Senator Shelley Moore Capito

I am honored to be able to welcome everyone to this celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s remarkable life and lasting legacy.

Dr. King is one of the most revered figures in our country's history and so deserving of that distinction. His message of compassion and brotherhood, his calls for peace and equality, and his strength of character, conviction, and humanity helped shape our nation. Even today, he continues to be an inspiration to individuals across the country, and I'm certain that will be the case for generations to come. His vision and his actions forever changed America and its history.

Today, we continue to honor and remember the principles and values Dr. King embodied and fought for, and we acknowledge how important it is that we continue to unite together behind him. Thank you for your participation. I am.

Sincerely,



Shelley Moore Capito  
United States Senator

Foster has been the President and CEO of The Greater Kanawha Valley Foundation (TGKVF) since February 2016. With approximately \$250 million in assets, TGKVF is the largest community foundation in Central Appalachia and among the largest community foundations in the United States. TGKVF funds initiatives in education, health, community economic development, basic needs, and social services, granting more than \$10.0 million annually to initiatives that benefit thousands of individuals.

Before joining TGKVF, Michelle was the CEO of the Kanawha Institute for Social Entrepreneurship, Inc. (KISRA), a community-based, non-profit organization that serves West Virginia families through health, employment, asset development, and job training initiatives. Michelle used her systems thinking, problem-solving, and other engineering skills to transform KISRA into one of the most impactful and successful organizations in West Virginia.

Michelle's original career was as a chemical engineer and she worked most recently at Union Carbide. She earned a chemical engineering degree from City College of New York. Michelle also has a Master of Business Administration (MBA) in economic development (CED) from Southern New Hampshire University and two other MBAs, one in CED from SNHU and another in engineering management from Marshall University. She has completed additional university-level studies in impact investing at the University of Virginia's School of Business as well as in nonprofit management and leadership at Harvard University's School of Government.

Over the past 20 years, Michelle's work has been recognized locally and nationally. She has received the Living the Dream Award from the WV Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Foundation; the Mission Award from Union Mission (2016); Civil Rights Day Award from the West Virginia Office of the Governor (2015); Dr. Martin Luther King, Humanitarian Award from the West Virginia Material Association (2015); Fatherhood Champion of Change recognition from President Obama and the White House (2012); National Association of University Women, Charleston Branch Award (2012); Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc., Theta Psi Chapter, Citizen of the Year (2012); West Virginia Department of Community Development, Award for Community Service (2011); U.S. Small Business Administration, Entrepreneurship Champion (2009); and West Virginia State University, President's Award for Community Service (2009).

Michelle has a life of community service and is actively engaged with several organizations in the West Virginia Appalachian region. She is a member of the Charleston Rotary. In the philanthropy sector, she is a philanthropy West Virginia board member, Appalachia Funders Network steering committee member, and a founding member of African American Philanthropy in Action (a giving circle). She has served as the Minister of Administration of Ferguson Memorial Baptist Church since 2009 and as a member of the Charleston-Institute Chapter of the Links, Incorporated, since 2011. She has also served on the boards of the WV Community Development Hub, Kanawha County Economic Development Budget and Policy, WV Non-Profit Association, and Our Children Our Future.



**Presiders**

**Dr. Michelle Easton**

Dean of the University of Charleston School of Pharmacy  
Commissioner, Martin Luther King, Jr. State Holiday Commission

**Deputy Commissioner Jacqueline A. Proctor**

Bureau of Senior Services  
Commissioner, Martin Luther King, Jr. State Holiday Commission

**Worship and Invocation** ----- **Reverend Joseph**  
Pastor, Asbury United Methodist Church

**Scriptural Hymn** — **“Lift Every Voice and Sing”** ----- **Congregation**

----- **The Honorable**  
Chair of the Martin Luther King, Jr. State Holiday Commission  
Executive Director, Herbert Henderson Office of Minority Affairs

**Guest Selections** ----- **Capital High School VIP (Voices in Perfect Harmony)**

**Prayers and Prayers** ----- **Dr. Ibtesam “Sahar”**  
Vice President of the Islamic Association of West Virginia

**Rabbi Vivian**  
Congregation

**Special Selection** — **“Total Praise”** ----- **Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial**

**Dream Awards Presentation** ----- **Mrs. Patricia**  
Chair of Education Department, West Virginia State University  
Commissioner, Martin Luther King, Jr. State Holiday Commission  
Chair of the Living the Dream Awards

**Mrs. Sylvia**  
President, Huntington Branch

*order of service continued . . .*

**“We Shall Not Be Moved”** \_\_\_\_\_ **Curator Randall I**  
West Virginia Department of Art, Culture  
Commissioner, Martin Luther King, Jr. State Holiday C

**on of MLK Jr. State Holiday Commissioners** \_\_\_\_\_ **Dr. Mich**

**on of Keynote Speaker** \_\_\_\_\_ **J**  
Commissioner, Martin Luther King Jr. State Holiday C

**peaker** \_\_\_\_\_ **Dr. Miche**  
President and CEO, Greater Kanawha Valley F

**lections** \_\_\_\_\_ **Martin Luther King Jr. Ma**

**he Movement — “We Shall Overcome”** \_\_\_\_\_ **Con**

**n** \_\_\_\_\_ **Reverend Jos**  
Pastor, Asbury United Metho

**Please join us immediately after the service for the symbolic march  
the north steps of the State Capitol Complex for the Bell Ringing Cerem  
followed by a reception at the Culture Center.**

**Everyone is welcome!**

## **Scholarship – Significant Contributions in the area of Education Excellence**

**Dr. Jerome A. Gilbert**

**Marshall University—Huntington, WV**

“Jerry” Gilbert became the 37th President of Marshall University in January 2016. He is a graduate of Marshall University with a Ph.D. in Biomedical Engineering. His background in biomedical engineering. President Gilbert previously served as provost and vice president of Mississippi State University. Prior to that he served as head of the Department of Agricultural and Mechanical Engineering and coordinator for the biomedical engineering graduate program in the Bagley College of Engineering at Marshall University.

At Marshall University his goals and initiatives speak to his commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. He has received numerous awards for his scholarship and a recognizable sense of civic awareness and public service. His accomplishments at Marshall University include his initiation and support of the Commission on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, the Commission on the Status of Women. His focus on scholarship at Marshall University has included his support of numerous learning opportunities for MU students while emphasizing the importance of students working on campus. He has worked to improve equity for women on campus.

During his presidency the Alliance for the Economic Development of Southern West Virginia was organized. His commitment to scholarship can best be summarized by his powerful statement which demonstrates his leadership: “At Marshall, we welcome and embrace all members of our university and local community regardless of their national origin, race, color, sex, sexual orientation, religion, veteran status or disability. We believe that our university and it is an open access campus. In the context of an institution of higher learning we have the hope that we can exchange ideas and points of view in a civil manner that will inform and educate us even when we do not agree. Dr. Gilbert’s goals for the future include increasing the enrollment of students, promoting research, and helping advance the state of West Virginia in terms of economic development.”

## **Living the Dream Service Organization Honor Roll**

**Health Sciences & Technology Academy (HSTA)**

**Morgantown, WV**

HSTA is a unique program in the state of West Virginia that helps participating high school students to gain hands-on experience in health science-based undergraduate and graduate degree programs. HSTA’s mission is to increase the number of students from underserved and other underrepresented students in West Virginia who pursue degrees in health science, engineering and mathematics (STEM) majors, thereby increasing the number of health professionals in the medically underserved communities of West Virginia.

**Thanks! Plain and Simple, Inc. (aka: “Thanks!” and Rosie the Riveter Project)**

**Charleston, WV**

Thanks! Plain and Simple, Inc. was established in West Virginia with the mission of creating ways for people to work together that is needed to improve America. In 2008, “Thanks!” started the Rosie the Riveter Project. The project, eleven years later, is to launch a new kind of social movement to guide people to work together and find ways for people to work together to improve their communities and themselves.



# Sharing of Self – Selfless Leadership in the Public and Private Sector

**Rev. Micah Blanks**

**Fairmont, WV**

emplifies Sharing of Self in countless ways. He willingly shares his gifts and graces by serving the community. On any given day, Rev. Blanks can be found actively engaging in the lives of others, serving food in the local soup kitchen, transporting people to hospitals, comforting the bereaved, playing Band, writing, teaching, preaching, and basically loving and serving God's people. His ministry reaches people of all ages and races.

Rev. Blanks was called to serve God at the age of six and is among the youngest pastors in the West Virginia United Methodist Church (WVUMC). His preparation for the ministry includes his Bachelor of Arts degree from State College and receiving his Master of Divinity Degree at the United Theological Seminary.

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During his ministry, he served on the Southern District Lead Team and assisted with the Radical Discipleship program, mentoring teens with discerning the call of God. Pastor Micah modeled his preaching after John Wesley's "Primitive Way of Salvation" and he traveled to the seminary located in Havana, Cuba. He received the Wesley Award for Pastoral Ministry.

Rev. Blanks currently serves as the pastor of the Highland Avenue United Methodist Church in Fairmont, WV. He and his wife were recipients of the WVUMC One Matters Award in 2017. One of their ways of sharing is hosting their Annual Communal Picnic which provides an opportunity for the church to serve the community. Rev. Blanks' inspiration for this event is best summarized by his words: "It is a way to be a part of the church. We always try to get out in our community as much as we possible can. The more we share our love, maybe that will be helpful to our "community".



**Governor's Living the Dream –**  
**The Embodiment of Dr. King's Vision and Legacy**

**Elliot G. Hicks, Esq.**  
**Charleston, WV**

or's Living the Dream Award is given to a person who best exemplifies all of the character of Dr. King: leadership, sharing of self, human and civil rights, and advocacy of peace. Elliot G. Hicks is a resident of Charleston, WV, was educated in Kanawha County and graduated from West Virginia University with a Juris Doctorate. Mr. Hicks is a long-time trial lawyer with extensive experience in litigation, including product liability, premises liability, corporate and commercial litigation, insurance law cases, personal injury, and higher education law. He has over thirty-seven years of practice experience and has spent the majority of those years; thus his law practice has evolved to a primary focus on conducting mediation and arbitration. The balance of his legal practice is devoted to assisting clients with resolving cases without the need for a trial and for less money. His experience in trial law helps clients with finding resolutions to disputes through mediation and arbitration.

Over the course of his years of service to his profession and to his clients, he has served as President of the Kanawha County Bar Association, representative to the West Virginia State Bar Board of Governors, and the West Virginia State Bar. In 2009, appointed by Governor Joe Manchin in 2009, Mr. Hicks has served as the Chair of the Commission on the Future of the State of West Virginia and has chaired the Academic Policy Committee of the West Virginia Higher Education Commission.

Mr. Hicks' community activities include election to the Board of Directors of the West Virginia Humanities Council, a position he has held since 2015. He created a fundraising dinner in 2013 for retiring Professor Dr. Robert M. Hicks, raising over \$33,000 in his honor toward the creation of the Innocence Project which provides legal representation for wrongfully convicted inmates. Other board appointments include the Legal Aid Society, Charleston Community Development Corporation, Kanawha County Housing and Redevelopment Authority, the First Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Charleston, Trustee Board for the First Baptist Church of Charleston Foundation, and the Charleston Jazz Series.

In addition to his professional complement to Mr. Hicks' varied professional and community obligations, he finds time for writing, research, and public speaking. He is a prolific writer and is passionate about matters of social justice. In short, he gives voice to the voiceless through his current columns and other publications. In the manner of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Mr. Hicks delivers inspiring and provocative speeches throughout the Kanawha Valley and beyond. He skillfully speaks truth to power.



# 2020 Living the Dream Award Nomination Form

Luther King, Jr. State Holiday Commission is now accepting names of persons and organizations for the "Living the Dream" awards. The awards will be presented on Monday, December 2, 2019, at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Observance.

Local awards, and up to three Service Organization awards will be given to those who best exemplify the qualities, and/or personal traits, the principles and ideals characterizing Dr. King in his public and private life.

Nomination categories and criteria are:

**Category of Peace:** A person who has been an advocate of social change in a non-violent way.

**Category of Self:** A person who has rendered service to others in the public or private sector.

**Category of Human and Civil Rights:** A person who has been actively involved in the pursuit of equality and justice, and has advocated for social change.

**Category of Leadership:** A person who has made significant contributions in the area of education.

**Category of Living the Dream Award:** A person who best exemplifies all of the characteristics of leadership, sharing of self, human and civil rights, and advocacy of peace; with a recognized record of community awareness and public service.

**Category of Service Organization Honor Roll:** Qualifying organizations must have demonstrated one or more of the principles for which Dr. King stood: the promotion of human and civil rights, providing services to underserved communities, promotion of tolerance, and resolving conflict in a nonviolent manner.

Nomination packets must include:

1. A typed statement (no more than one page) that discusses the qualities of the nominee and how the nominee best meets the standard of a specific award category.

2. A one-page biography with color picture of the candidate or mission statement/activities of the organization.

3. A newspaper article (e.g., newspaper articles) that describes the nominee's community involvement.

4. The award category in which your nominee is nominated.

5. All nominations by USPS mail, e-mail and/or fax must have a post mark or date stamp no later than 5:00 p.m. on December 2, 2019.

**Only complete (i.e., including nomination form and supporting documents) one nomination packet.**

Candidate/Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Candidate/Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Work Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Candidate/Org Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Complete Nomination Packet via USPS, Email or Fax to:

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## COMMISSIONERS

**The Honorable Jill Upson**, Martin Luther King, Jr. State Holiday Commission, Chair  
and Herbert Henderson Office of Minority Affairs, Executive Director

**Erzinger**  
West Virginia University, Medical Student

**Dixon**  
West Virginia University, Office of the Dean of  
Graduate Assistant

**R. Easton**  
West Virginia University School of Pharmacy, Dean

**L. Fryson, Esq.**  
West Virginia University, Division of Diversity, Equity and  
Inclusion, West Virginia University

**Jacobs-Jones**  
West Virginia University, Chief of Staff / Senior Vice  
President for Operations

**Palas, J.D.**  
West Virginia University, "Morton Catastrophic Illness  
Commission", Executive Director, and West Virginia  
Department of Health, Interim Executive Director

**Deputy Commissioner Jacqueline A.**  
West Virginia Bureau of Senior Services

**Curator Randall Reid-Smith**  
West Virginia Department of Arts, Culture and History

**Ms. Sylvia C. Ridgeway**  
Huntington –Cabell Branch NAACP, President

**Pastor Lonnie Leo Riley, Sr.**  
Christian Love Ministries, Senior Pastor

**Ms. Stephanie Tyree**  
West Virginia Community Development Hub, Executive Director

**Mrs. Patricia Wilson**  
West Virginia State University, Educational Director

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*We thank the following for their support and participation:*

**First Baptist Church**  
**Methodist Church**  
**West Virginia Company**  
**West Virginia School VIP Choir**  
**West Virginia Black Ministerial Alliance**  
**West Virginia Police Department**  
**West Virginia Rotary Club**  
**West Virginia Evangelical Ministries**  
**West Virginia B'nai Jacob**  
**West Virginia Henderson Office of Minority Affairs**  
**West Virginia Branch, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People**  
**West Virginia Association of West Virginia**

**Marshall University**  
**Martin Luther King Jr. Male Chorus**  
**University of Charleston**  
**West Virginia Army National Guard**  
**West Virginia Color Guard**  
**West Virginia Bureau of Senior Services**  
**West Virginia Community Development Hub**  
**West Virginia Council of Churches**  
**West Virginia Department of Arts, Culture and History**  
**West Virginia Office of the Governor**  
**West Virginia State University**