

**2015 STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA
MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.
COMMEMORATION & CELEBRATION
ACTIVITIES**

*"Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that.
Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that."*

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.



MONDAY, JANUARY 19, 2015

SPONSORED BY





STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
1900 KANAWHA BOULEVARD, EAST
CHARLESTON, WV 25305
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EARL RAY TOMBLIN
GOVERNOR

GREETINGS FROM THE GOVERNOR

January 19, 2015

Martin Luther King, Jr. State Holiday Commission Commemorative Celebration

As Governor of the Great State of West Virginia, it is my pleasure to welcome you to this morning's celebration of the life of a truly invaluable icon of American history, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. I offer my sincere regrets that I cannot personally join you at this portion of today's scheduled events.

Dr. King's spirit of compassion along with his faith in mankind that we can unite and overcome and become a stronger nation is one we all should strive for and today I am honored to take this moment in time and applaud with each of you the magnitude of his contributions to our society.

Dr. King was among the greatest leaders of the 20th century and, having been endowed with this incredible gift, he accepted what must surely have seemed like insurmountable 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 sterling example for us all.

On behalf of the citizens of the Great State of West Virginia, please accept my most sincere best wishes for a successful and enjoyable celebration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Earl Ray Tomblin".

Earl Ray Tomblin
Governor

Dr. Christina King Farris is the eldest sister of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the only living member of the family of origin. Dr. Farris recently retired as the oldest member of the faculty at Spelman College in Atlanta College where she graduated in the same year her brother Martin graduated from Morehouse College. This greeting is an exclusive to the 2015 State MLK Celebration in tribute to West Virginia's recognition of Dr. King's birthday as a State holiday before it became a National holiday.



To Governor Earl Ray Tomblin and Dr. Carolyn Stuart, Executive Director of the Herbert Henderson Office of Minority Affairs,

I bring greetings to the Martin Luther King Jr., State Holiday Commission and the people of the "Mountain State" of West Virginia, where "Mountaineers are always free".

I was surprised and pleased to learn that West Virginia led the nation in declaring Dr. King's Birthday a State Holiday before it became a national holiday. I understand that this was the result of House Bill 1368 initiated by Delegates Booker Stephens and Ernest Moore which established the King Holiday as a State Celebration in 1982—four years before it was officially declared a national holiday in 1986.

I pray that God's richest blessing be with all who diligently work for justice, equality, and peace in pursuit of my brother's vision of the "beloved community."

Dr. Christine King Farris

Ecumenical Service of Commemoration and Celebration

Collaboration, Compassion, Commitment...Transforming and Building Community
Asbury United Methodist Church, 9:30a.m.

ORDER OF WORSHIP

Reverend B.J. Roberts, Presiding

Call to Worship and Invocation.....Reverend Joseph Jarrett
Pastor, Asbury United Methodist Church, Charleston, West Virginia

Meditations and Prayers from the Islamic and Jewish Community

Greetings.....Dr. Carolyn Stuart
Chair, MLK State Holiday Commission and Executive Director, Herbert Henderson Office of Minority Affairs

Musical Selection.....Appalachian Children's Chorus

Presentation of Living the Dream Awards

Jacqueline A. Proctor, Chair, Living the Dream Awards Nomination Committee

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

Human and Civil Rights – Advocate for Social Change and Equality

Scholarship Award – Significant Contributions in the area of Education Excellence

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

Service Organization Honor Roll – Excellence in Service to the Community

Musical Selection.....Martin Luther King Jr. Male Chorus

Introduction of Ecumenical Message SpeakerDr. Michelle R. Easton
WV Martin Luther King Jr. State Holiday Commission Member

Ecumenical MessageDr. Darrell W. Cummings
Pastor, Bethlehem Apostolic Temple, Wheeling, West Virginia

Musical SelectionCombined Choruses

Unison Prayer

God of Justice, whenever we settle for the way things are instead of the way you would have them to be, forgive us. When we are paralyzed by fear or limited in vision, increase our trust in you. Whenever we offer charity, but fail to work for justice, show us the more excellent way that your love requires. When we tire of the struggle, restore our hope. Whenever we forget those who have gone before us or act as if we were the first to follow in the Way, allow us to recognize our arrogance. May the witness of our brother Martin encourage us to dream and work toward building the Beloved Community. Ignite within us fires of creative compassion to sustain our connection with each other and confirm our kinship with all creation. Amen.

Hymn of the Movement..... "WE SHALL OVERCOME"

Benediction.....Reverend Jeff Allen
Executive Director, West Virginia Council of Churches

Refreshments will be served immediately following the benediction.

Participants in the symbolic march from Asbury Church to the Liberty Bell on the West Virginia State Capitol grounds will assemble outside of the church at 11:55a.m. and proceed to the State Capitol beginning at 12 noon.

**2015 Martin Luther King, Jr.
Living the Dream Awards**

**SHARING OF SELF
Dr. Anthony J. Major
(Posthumously)
Weirton, WV**

Dr. Anthony J. Major was a reflection of the definition of the word “selfless.” Having moved to Weirton in 1930, Dr. Major continued his focus on educating young minds, having started his teaching career in Tampa, Fla. He became principal of Dunbar High School in the fall of 1932 after receiving his undergraduate degree from West Virginia State College in 1931. Dr. Major received both his Master of Education and Doctor of Education degrees from the University of Pittsburgh in 1935 and 1940 respectively. As the only African American high school principal who held a doctoral degree, Dr. Major was recognized as a leading educator and was invited to speak during many graduation programs in Ohio, Virginia, Missouri and Florida. In 1946, Dr. Major was sought and offered the presidency of Bethune-Cookman Negro College in Daytona Beach, Florida to succeed Mrs. Mary McCloud Bethune. He declined the offer stating, *“I have come to like Weirton so well that I have decided, after long consideration to remain here and try to finish some of the projects we need so badly. The college presidency naturally carries more prestige, but I believe the greater responsibility rests with the educators dealing with youngsters in the grades and high school.”*

His enduring commitment was the demonstration of civic involvement to the education of grade school and high school students of Weirton. It was his extensive involvement in the very fabric of the community that influenced the peaceful process of desegregation five years after his death. Dr. Major died on December 20, 1949 at the age of 50. Both in life and for many years after, his influence on the Weirton community remained as a beacon to follow and a role model to emulate.

**Human and Civil Rights
Janice Cooley
Lewisburg, WV**

Janice Cooley exemplifies the personal and passionate pursuit of equality for others. A native of Greenbrier County, Ms. Cooley developed the concept and is the curator of “Invisible Roots and Legends: A Photographic View of African Americans in the Greenbrier Valley.” The exhibit showcases the contributions of African Americans to the growth and development of the Greenbrier Valley in the areas of business, religion, education, sports, politics, entertainment, and family life.

When researching her own family history in the valley, Ms. Cooley noted that there was little that recognized the many contributions of African Americans to the community. *“I found that the contributions of African Americans had made for over 100 years to the growth and development of Greenbrier County had not been truly recognized nor celebrated in the typical venues throughout the county, said Ms. Cooley.” “As one Greenbrier Historical Society archives researcher said to me, ‘they are almost invisible.’ That comment helped give me the title and focus for my effort to create an awareness, to educate and to inspire members of our community.”* Ms. Cooley’s work as represented by the exhibit has been seen by over 500 people including many visitors to the state. In addition, there are plans for an expanded exhibit with the participation of Carnegie Hall and the Greenbrier Valley Theatre as well as other opportunities for outreach, education, and discussion of the many contributions made by the African American community. Ms. Cooley’s exhibit is to be applauded for the light it shines on these accomplishments as she so eloquently stated, *“My own roots go deep here and I realized that so many of my contemporaries as well as the younger generations had no idea of the struggles and achievements of our ancestors. If this information is not preserved, it will soon be lost.”*

**SCHOLARSHIP
Professor Atiba R. Ellis
Morgantown, WV**

Atiba R. Ellis is an Associate Professor of Law at West Virginia University College of Law. He earned his Bachelor of Arts, with Distinction in History at Duke University in 1996. In May 2000 he earned his Master of Arts, History and his Juris Doctor also at Duke. His primary research is in the field of the Law of Democracy with a focus on the theoretical, doctrinal, and ideological dimensions of the problem of vote denial. As such, Professor Ellis demonstrates the value of scholarly pursuit with this central theme, and continues to write and publish on issues pertaining to the subject of poll tax, voter identification laws, voter suppression, and the redefining of citizenship. He frequently writes blog posts on real-time topics such as “Seeing Ferguson through the Lens of Structural Racism,” and “Where Do We Go from Here: Civil Rights, Equality, and Class” both for the American Constitution Society and Hip Hop Law.com as a guest contributor among others.

**2015 Martin Luther King, Jr.
Living the Dream Awards continued**

**SCHOLARSHIP (continued)
Professor Atiba R. Ellis
Morgantown, WV**

In addition to a demanding teaching schedule and participation on a number of boards and committees at West Virginia University, Professor Ellis is a sought after presenter and moderator, speaking at a number of meetings and programs across the country. In 2014 alone, Professor Ellis presented "Race, Class and Voter Suppression: Structural Inequality and the Political Underclass at Tulane Law School (Forum on the Future of Law and Inequality), "Two Thoughts on Reviving the Dream: Race, Class, and How to Re-enforce Democracy" at the University of Nevada-Las Vegas (Twelfth SALT/LatCrit Faculty Development Workshop), and "A (Qualified) Defense of Race Conscious Remedies in Election Law" (Law and Society Annual Meeting, Minneapolis, MN), among several others. Professor Ellis is also an active member of the Advisory Board of the J.R. Clifford Project.

**The Governor's Living the Dream Award
Jada C. Hunter
Williamson, WV**

Jada C. Hunter was born and raised in Chattaroy, West Virginia. Her life is a living, breathing example of the characteristics that define justice scholarship, sharing of self, human and civil rights, advocacy of peace and a sense of civic awareness and public service. Ms. Hunter experienced controversy first hand during the integration of her high school in Chattaroy. As a graduate of West Virginia State College (now University) with a degree in Business and French, she was unable to obtain a teaching position in Mingo County after being told "these children here don't need to learn French." Recognizing the difference in faculty experiences in Mingo County, Ms. Hunter lodged a formal complaint against the school system with the Civil Rights Commission. Despite phone threats received by her parents at home and other pressures, the school eventually complied.

Moving forward in other arenas of her life, Ms. Hunter was the first African American to win the Miss Eastern West Virginia Beauty Pageant, and the first African American to compete in the Miss West Virginia pageant. As a business woman, she owned and operated a modeling school while also teaching in Mingo County. She went on to become Dean of Students at Williamson Jr. High School. Ms. Hunter also served as both the first African American principal and the first female Principal of a Mingo County Senior High School. She retired on June 7, 2013 as Principal of Burch High School in Delbarton. Jada Hunter continues to be fully engaged in her community and state. Among her many activities, she is President of the Huntington Chapter of the Links, Incorporated, a member of the Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College Board of Governors, The American Association of University Women, and a Program Planning Committee member of the Williamson Branch of the NAACP just to name a few. Ms. Hunter is a loving mother, an even more loving grandmother and never hesitates to be a friend.

With all these accomplishments, one of her fondest thoughts is that of receiving a phone call of gratitude and appreciation from Harvard University Professor, Dr. Henry Louis Gates, Jr., one of her former students from Piedmont High School.

**Service Organization Honor Roll
The Huntington Chapter of The Links, Incorporated
Huntington, WV**

The Huntington Chapter of The Links, Incorporated was organized on November 12, 1955 with a mission to eliminate social disparities through advocacy, education and service. Throughout its existence, the chapter has maintained a viable community presence which has responded to the needs of the community. It has been, and continues to be a catalyst for change and empowerment upholding and promoting the vision of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The chapter works independently and collaboratively to foster and move forward the ideals and vision of Dr. King through the creation of events and activities that keep his legacy alive. In the past year, the chapter has developed and hosted "We Will Not Forget" Voter Registration Drives & Voter Education/Empowerment Activities, a "Right to Vote Reader's Theater & Voter Registration Drive" at several churches and colleges, the "Bring Back Our Girls" Candlelight Vigil in Ritter Park and the Black History Bowl during Black History Month.

A brief history of “We Shall Overcome”

The song “We Shall Overcome” was based on a gospel hymn “I’ll Overcome Someday” from the pen of Reverend Charles Albert Tindley, a Methodist minister from Philadelphia in 1901. The published text was derived from Galatians 6:9, “And let us not be weary in doing good, for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.” The text inspired Tindley to write:

*The world is one great battlefield
With forces all arrayed
If in my heart I do not yield,
I’ll overcome some day.*

Although, the popularity of the song waned for a time in the gospel world, a front page story featured in the *United Mine Workers Journal* in February 1909 reported that every union meeting opened with this hymn and a prayer. While it is uncertain if Tindley’s gospel song was the source, the connection cannot be denied. It was the first time a gospel song was used in a secular setting that was racially mixed because it codified common ground shared among people whose backs were against the wall. The simplified structure of “I’ll Overcome” resembled another folk-based spiritual sung by slaves working under the threat of death and the terrifying sting of the master’s whip on plantations in the Old South. “I’ll Be Alright”, suited this situation because the original refrain, “If in my heart, I do not yield”, was simplified to “Deep in my heart, I do believe I’ll Overcome Some Day”

The late legendary folk singer, Pete Seeger, shared insights in a NPR interview on the final and most significant transition of this transformational tune. In 1945 union workers in Charleston, South Carolina went on strike against the American Tobacco Company. Union leaders had been schooled at the Highlander Folk Center in Tennessee where blacks and whites had been meeting together for many years. Labor activists at the Highlander Center gradually shifted focus from labor issues to civil rights which would eventually attract Rosa Parks, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and student activists in the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC).

Consequently, the transition of a gospel song to a work song, to the Freedom Song that changed America can largely be attributed to a simple but powerful shift in personal pronouns from “I Shall Overcome” to “WE Shall Overcome”. Rooted in the Black Religious experience and groomed in the grit of a picket line, this transformational tune electrified a Movement that grew in intensity as others joined the chorus of the masses in their movement from disgrace to dignity. With similar enthusiasm we should sing it today not only because of its simple structure but because it provokes us to ponder individually and in community, **WHAT shall WE overcome...NOW?**

Sources used in this article can be found in Wikipedia and Noah Adams' 1999 story about "We Shall Overcome" at nprmusic.org.

We Shall Overcome

We shall overcome, We shall overcome,
We shall overcome someday
Oh deep in my heart, I do believe
We shall overcome, someday.

We'll walk hand in hand,
We'll walk hand in hand,
We shall overcome, someday.
Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe
We shall overcome, someday.

The Lord shall see us through
The Lord shall see us through
The Lord shall see us through, someday
Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe
We shall overcome, someday.

We shall overcome, We shall overcome,
We shall overcome, someday
Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe



**Dr. Carolyn L. Stuart, Martin Luther King, Jr. State Holiday Commission Chair
Herbert Henderson Office of Minority Affairs, Executive Director**

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Bluefield State College, Professor

Deputy Commissioner Jacqueline A. Proctor
WV Bureau of Senior Services

The Martin Luther King, Jr. State Holiday Commission would like to thank all program participants along with the following departments, and/or organizations for their support of the 2015 State of West Virginia Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemoration and Celebration activities.

Appalachian Children's Chorus
Asbury United Methodist Church
Black Diamond Girl Scout Council Troop 1853
St. Paul AME Church
Bluefield State College
Herbert Henderson Office of Minority Affairs
Horace Mann Middle School
Kingdom Life Fellowship Church
Martin Luther King, Jr. Male Chorus
Mary C. Snow West Side Elementary School
Mountaineer Montessori School
State NAACP

Unique Productions
University of Charleston
West Virginia Bureau of Senior Services
West Virginia Department of Administration/General Services Division
West Virginia Department of Education and the Arts
West Virginia Division of Culture and History
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