



Martin Luther King, Jr.
State Holiday Commission

**The State of West Virginia
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
2016 Commemoration
and
Celebration Activities**

**Monday, January 18, 2016
Charleston, West Virginia**

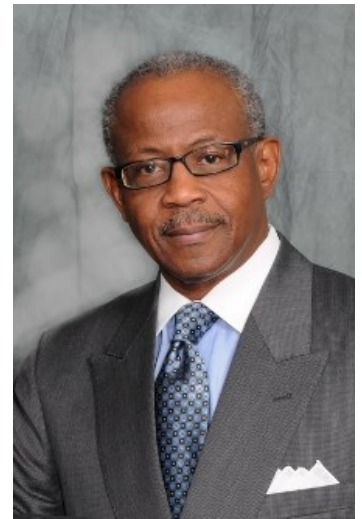


Ecumenical Service Guest Speaker: Reverend Nelson B. Rivers, III

Pastor, Charity Missionary Baptist Church, North Charleston, South Carolina
Vice-President, Religious Affairs and External Relations, National Action Network

Reverend Nelson B. Rivers, III, the son of Merelyn and the late Nelson Rivers, Jr. is from the small farming community of Bennett's Point, SC and nearby Charleston, SC. Reverend Nelson is a preacher of the Gospel, civil rights worker, and a life long servant in the fight for justice. Rev. Rivers is married to the former Carolyn Smalls of Charleston and has four children and seven grandchildren. He received his bachelor's degree from Wilberforce University in Ohio and is currently pursuing his Master of Divinity at Erskine Theological Seminary, Due West, SC.

For over 38 years Rev. Rivers worked at every level of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) including President, North Charleston, SC Branch; Executive Director, South Carolina State Conference; Director, Southeast Region; Chief Operating Officer, twice as Chief of Field Operations, and Vice President of Stakeholder Relations from 2008 until May 2014.



His civil rights work led to the election of more than 300 new black elected officials in South Carolina between 1986 and 1994. He was a leading organizer of the largest civil rights demonstration in the history of South Carolina when over 50,000 marched on the state capitol in January 2000 to demand the removal of the Confederate Battle Flag.

In September 2008, Rev. Rivers became the Pastor of Charity Missionary Baptist Church in the Liberty Hill community of North Charleston, SC. Under his leadership, there are 42 ministries with a dynamic Children's Church. Church membership has grown significantly and completion of a \$2 million, 500 seat new Sanctuary and Administrative Building has recently occurred. Charity's scriptural focus is Ephesians 4:3 **"endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."**

Rev. Rivers is co-president of the Charleston Area Justice Ministry (CAJM) and is a founding member of the organization in 2011. CAJM is an inter-faith, inter-religious group of 25 congregations in the Charleston, SC area committed to congregational work for justice to address the root causes of poverty and injustice, through the empowerment of marginalized people.

In July 2014, Rev. Rivers became Vice President of Religious Affairs and External Relations of the National Action Network (NAN) under the courageous leadership of the Rev. Al Sharpton. Rev. Rivers was honored to accept Rev. Sharpton's invitation to continue his work in the civil rights movement as a leader in an organization known for taking action in today's civil rights battles. Reverend Rivers has appeared on several national program and media outlets such as NPR, CNN, and 60 Minutes as well as has had a speaking role in the movie ***Separate but Equal*** starring Sidney Poitier.

Reverend Rivers is guided by the words of Jesus the Christ found in the Gospel of Mark 10:43: *"Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant."*

He is honored to serve as a servant of the people of God!



Ecumenical Service of Commemoration and Celebration Order of Worship

Asbury United Methodist Church, 9:30 a.m.
Reverend Dr. 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.....Mrs. Joanne Jaeger Tomblin
First Lady of West Virginia

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..... Mrs. Patricia Wilson*
Chair of the Living the Dream Awards Committee
Mrs. Sylvia Ridgeway*

- Advocate of Peace – Advocate of Social Change in a Non-Violent Way
- 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*

Ecumenical MessageReverend Nelson Rivers, III

Musical SelectionCombined Choirs

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 Nelson Rivers, III

* MLK State Holiday Commission Member

All are invited to participate in the symbolic march at 11:45 a.m. following the Ecumenical Service to the Liberty Bell on the West Virginia State Capitol Grounds for the Bell Ringing for Peace Ceremony at 12:30 p.m.



2016 Martin Luther King, Jr. Living the Dream Awards

Advocate of Peace

Reverend Garry D. Moore, Sr.
Bluefield, West Virginia

The Reverend Garry D. Moore, Sr. has been an advocate of social change in a non-violent way thereby exemplifying the King principle of peace. While serving as pastor of the Scott Street Baptist Church in Bluefield, WV, he organized a series of memorial and remembrance services in the southwestern Virginia community of Saltville to memorialize an unknown number of Union Army soldiers serving with the 5th and 6th U.S. Colored Calvary who were executed by Confederate forces for the crime of wearing Union Army uniforms. Reverend Moore worked with the youth of his church and conducted ceremonies involving lighting luminaries, placement of flags and offering prayer in memory of the African American soldiers who fought and died during and after the battle. Reverend Moore, assisted by Harold and Alcesta Wells, created an awareness of the sacrifice of these freedom fighters.

The services were not without controversy and organized protests occurred which focused on the display of Union symbols on Confederate memorials. It is important to note that most of the 600 men in the 5th and 6th US Colored Calvary were recruited directly from slavery into the ranks of the Union Army. At the most, the soldiers had only two or three weeks of training before being committed to battle at Saltville. Although they were the object of ridicule from their white comrades on the march to Saltville, their valor in combat earned them great respect following the attack.

Reverend Moore's tenacity in the organization of the Memorial and Remembrance Service exemplified the dedication of the congregation of the Scott Street Baptist Church in their focus on the symbol of healing—not just racial healing, but political reconciliation as well.

Sharing of Self

Sharon Smith Banks
Institute, West Virginia

Mrs. Sharon Smith Banks is a reflection of the word "sharing of self." Mrs. Banks has been referred to as an institution in the Charleston-Institute, WV community. A devoted member of St. Paul AME Church, Mrs. Banks serves as the president of the West Virginia Conference Women's Missionary Society and is employed as the Director of New Student Programs at West Virginia State University (WVSU). Mrs. Banks' love for young people has gained her respect in both the church and college communities. Her unique approach of plain speaking and forthrightness laced with a caring touch makes her unforgettable. Her spirituality crosses all boundaries and she is quick to give maternal advice.

Mrs. Banks is a gifted philanthropist who has served on the board of directors at Sunrise Museum, the Clay Center, and the Family Health Care Center. She sponsors a scholarship annually for a deserving student at her alma mater, Tennessee State University. She also received the West Virginia State University Legacy Society Award in 2014. As Director of New Student Programs, Mrs. Banks alternately wears the roles of secondary mother, counselor, pastor, teacher and resource officer to the WVSU students. She also leads Bible study for the WVSU football team on Thursday nights. Her commitment to students and young people is a demonstration of her selflessness and is verified by her students who commend her for her open, warm and engaging spirit.



Human and Civil Rights

Reverend Nelson E. Staples Beckley, West Virginia

Reverend Nelson Staples' life exemplifies his active involvement in the pursuit of equality for others and an advocacy for social change. Born in Besoco, WV, he grew up in the "Red Brush" of Beckley, WV. He earned his Bachelor's Degree from the University of Charleston and a Master of Arts Degree from Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary at Liberty University. He is in his 37th year as a minister and currently serves as Senior Pastor of the Mount Zion Baptist Church in Beckley, WV. He has served as the Vice President of the Raleigh County Branch of the NAACP. As a noted lecturer on issues of Civil Rights and the plight of African Americans and women in the history of America, he has served on panels with Attorney Generals Janet Reno and Eric Holder and noted civil rights activist Harry Belafonte. He has also been featured on *CNN News* and *Night Line with Ted Koppel*. Serving as the keynote speaker for the Summit on Race Matters in Lewisburg, he captivated the audience with his message on the "Human Race—Who Are We?" He has served as Moderator of the Tygart Valley Ministers and Deacon Conference and has served on the WV Advisory Group for the United State Commission on Civil Rights.

In his pragmatic approach to race relations in today's society, Reverend Staples feels in order for healing to occur in the United States, two important steps must be taken. He stated: "There is a minimizing effect of other people's suffering that must stop before we can move forward. I feel you have to admit that racism occurred and still does occur," he said. "Also, people who have been affected by discrimination must be careful not to discriminate against other people. You have to be careful not to do any more harm. If people who have been discriminated against would take it upon themselves not to put anyone else through it, it would be a great starting point."

Scholarship

Abby Freeland Morgantown, West Virginia

Abby Freeland is the fiction editor of West Virginia University Press in Morgantown, WV and has played an integral role in bringing innovative Appalachian fiction to readers throughout the world. During her tenure, M. Glenn Taylor's, "The Ballad of Trenchmouth Taggart" was published. This book was a fiction finalist for the 2008 National Book Critics' Circle Award, an award given by American book critics to recognize the best book of fiction. In addition, Ms. Freeland played an integral role in publishing literary stars like Lee Maynard and Jessie van Eerdan.

It is no coincidence that the *Charleston Gazette-Mail* once dubbed her "WVU Press publicity agent extraordinaire" for her continued advocacy for literature and Appalachian authors. As a result, she was asked to join the *Charleston Gazette-Mail's* "West Virginia Books Team" where she regularly contributes reviews and essays on books of note to West Virginia readers. Ms. Freeland's work in promoting Appalachian literature is unsurpassed in West Virginia because of her tireless advocacy and her role as one of the foremost leaders in educational publishing in the United States.

Dr. Martin Luther King once said: "The function of education is to teach one to think intensive and to think critically." Ms. Freeland's work embodies that function in that she has diligently fostered thought-provoking literature. Through her work as editor and publicist, she has shared her talents with West Virginia residents and the world.



Governor's Living the Dream

**Dr. Michelle Mickle Foster
Dunbar, West Virginia**

Michelle Mickle Foster was born in Guyana. After immigrating to the United States, Dr. Foster earned a bachelor's degree in chemical engineering from City College of New York, a master's degree in engineering management at Marshall University, and a doctorate in community economic development from Southern Hampshire University. While completing her master's degree she began volunteering at Ferguson Memorial Baptist Church. Through this volunteer experience, Dr. Foster found her true passion in community service and began working for the Kanawha Institute for Social Research and Action, Inc. (KISRA), a faith-motivated, nonprofit organization established by the church. Dr. Foster used her systems thinking, problem-solving ability and other engineering skills to transform KISRA into one of the most impactful and enterprising community-based organizations in the state. It currently serves and empowers over 2,500 West Virginians annually.

Her leadership experience with KISRA has made her a sought-after speaker at local and national conferences. She presents on topics related to nonprofit development and management; program design utilizing logic models; program evaluation; sustainability; best practices in responsible fatherhood; social enterprises; family economic security; grant writing and grants management. She is also a subject matter expert with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Family Assistance. In 2010, she launched Foster Solutions with a goal of providing development evaluation, research and leadership consulting services on a global scale.

Dr. Foster's work has been recognized locally and nationally. She has received: a Civil Rights Day Award from the WV Human Rights Commission; Fatherhood Champion of Change recognition from President Barack Obama; an Award for Community Service from the Charleston Police Department; Minority Business Champion from the U.S. Small Business Administration; and West Virginia State University's President's Award for Community Service.

Dr. Foster states that she is living the American Dream, realizing that there is no limit. She proudly states: "No one should put limits on themselves." In fulfilling this dream, Dr. Foster was recently appointed as the Executive Director of the Greater Kanawha Valley Foundation.



Service Organization

The West Virginia Center for African American Art and Culture, Inc., Charleston, West Virginia

The West Virginia Center for African American Art and Culture, Inc., is a non-profit organization located in Charleston, WV. Founded in 2000 by Anthony L. Kinzer, the Center seeks to provide an enhanced cultural learning experience and to promote public recognition and understanding of the record of African Americans in local, state and national history. The center is organized around the belief in cultural and ethnic diversity — the embodiment of a multicultural society. The purposes of the center are to collaborate with individuals and organizations across the state and others to offer information relative to social and other changes affecting the African American community.

Service Organization

The Kelly Miller Foundation, Inc., Clarksburg, West Virginia

The Kelly Miller Foundation was incorporated on October 25, 1983. The mission statement of the 501 (c)(3) foundation is to provide financial aid and counseling to eligible individuals in the under-served African-American community of the Clarksburg area, who are pursuing vocational or educational goals. Targeted counties include Harrison, Doddridge, Taylor, Lewis, Upshur, Barbour, Braxton and Clay; African-American students in these counties were served by Kelly Miller High School in Clarksburg, WV. Alumni have donated more than \$250,000.00, with over \$134,000.00 being awarded in scholarships. Twenty members, who meet three times yearly, serve on the Board of Directors with no financial compensation.



A brief history of the “We Shall Overcome” song

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 Segal, 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 gift 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 sing it today not only because of its simple structure—only one line changes in each verse but because it provokes us to ponder 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
We shall overcome someday.



Bell Ringing For Peace

North Side, State Capitol, 12:30 p.m.

Deputy Commissioner Jacqueline Proctor*, Presiding

ORDER OF CEREMONY

Presentation of the Colors.....Charleston WV Police Department Honor Guard

Invocation.....Reverend David M. Fryson, Esq.*

Musical Selection.....Appalachian Children’s Chorus and Martin Luther King, Jr. Male Chorus

Introduction of Governor.....Deputy Commissioner Jacqueline Proctor*

Remarks and Recognition of Elected OfficialsThe Honorable Earl Ray Tomblin
Governor, State of West Virginia

Musical Selection.....Appalachian Children’s Chorus and the Martin Luther King, Jr. Male Chorus

Bell Ringing for Peace

Benediction.....Reverend Roberta Smith
President, Charleston Black Ministerial Alliance

*MLK State Holiday Commission Member

**Reception will be held immediately following the ceremony
in the Lower Rotunda of Building 1 in the State Capitol.**



Martin Luther King, Jr.
State Holiday Commission

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

Dr. Hazo W. Carter, Jr. (deceased)
West Virginia State University, President Emeritus

Commissioner Randall Reid-Smith
WV Division of Culture and History

Dr. Michelle R. Easton
University of Charleston School of Pharmacy, Dean

Ms. Sylvia C. Ridgeway
ACT-SO, Chair

Mr. David M. Fryson, Esq.
West Virginia University, Vice President, Division of
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Reverend Dr. B.J. Roberts
Kingdom Life Fellowship Church, Pastor

Secretary Kay Goodwin
West Virginia Department of Education and the Arts

Justice Larry V. Starcher
WV Supreme Court, Retired and Senior Status Justice

Ms. Julie C. Palas, J.D.
James "Tiger" Morton Catastrophic Illness Commission,
Executive Director, and West Virginia Women's
Commission, Interim Executive Director

Mrs. Patricia Wilson
West Virginia State University, Associate Professor

Deputy Commissioner Jacqueline A. Proctor
WV Bureau of Senior Services

Dr. Anthony T. Woart
Bluefield State College, Professor

**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 2016 State of West Virginia Martin Luther King, Jr.
Commemoration and Celebration activities.**

Appalachian Children's Chorus

University of Charleston

Asbury United Methodist Church

West Virginia Bureau of Senior Services

Bluefield State College

West Virginia Department of Admin/General Services Division

Charleston Black Ministerial Alliance

West Virginia Department of Education and the Arts

Charleston Police Department Honor Guard

West Virginia Division of Culture and History

Herbert Henderson Office of Minority Affairs

West Virginia Office of the Governor

Huntington (WV) Chapter of The Links, Inc.

West Virginia State University

James "Tiger" Morton Catastrophic Illness Commission

West Virginia University

Martin Luther King, Jr. Male Chorus

West Virginia Women's Commission

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