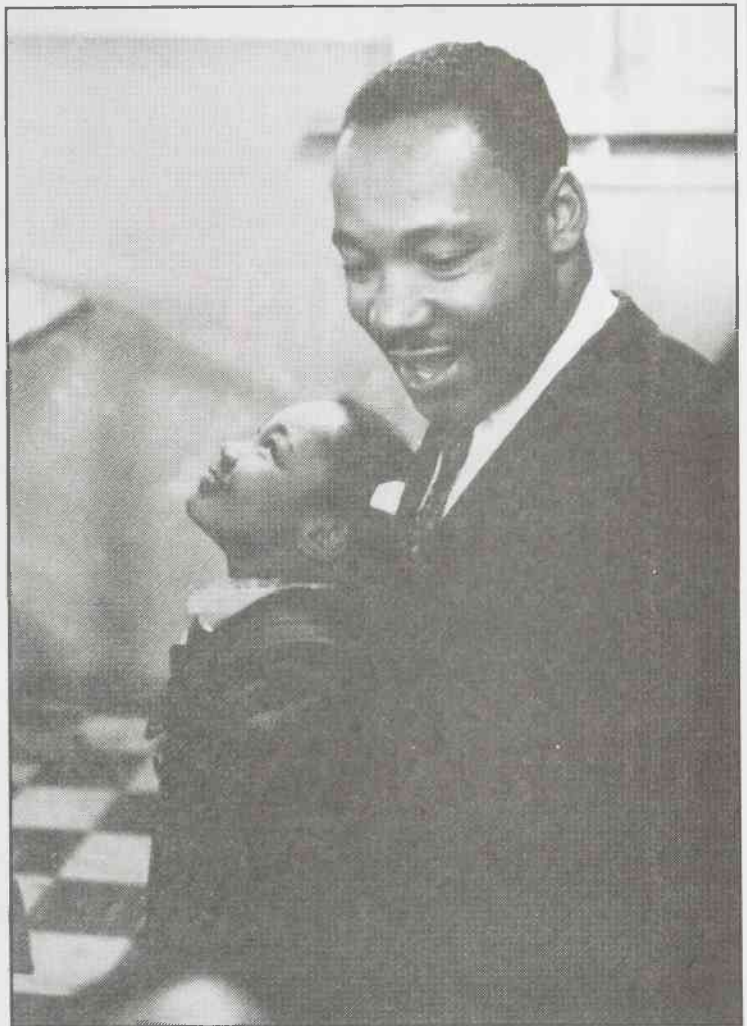


Commemorating Our King

By Courtney McSwain

Throughout the week of Jan. 17 - 24, UNC held its 18th Annual Birthday Celebration for Martin Luther King Jr. Filling the week with guest speakers, cultural events, and candlelight vigils, the birthday celebration brought to life not only the memory of King, but the legacy he left behind. On Monday, Jan. 18, more than 500 students and citizens of Chapel Hill came together on Franklin Street to hear community leaders speak at the Martin Luther King Jr. March and Rally. The topic was the importance of providing affordable housing for Chapel Hill residents. That night, UNC was entertained and enlightened by C.O.T.O.: Chocolate on the Outside, an original play written, directed and produced by UNC alumnus April Turner. On Tuesday, Jan. 19 and Wednesday, Jan. 20, the celebration continued with candlelight vigils to commemorate King. The Rev. Bernice King, King's youngest daughter, delivered an eloquent address to students and community members on the contribution of her father to this world and our continuing struggle to carry on his legacy. Following the lecture, Rev. King spoke with audience members and autographed copies of her book *Hard Questions, Heart Answers* at a reception in the Morehead Planetarium Banquet Hall.

Rounding up the week was the annual Martin Luther King Jr. Oratorical Contest. Nine contestants delivered addresses on the subject, "Our place in history, we are tomorrow's past." For his



speech entitled, "A response to Violence," Jeffrey Richardson received a first place prize of \$150, while Sylvia Bridges received \$100 for runner-up. Friday night proved to be a cultural celebration as performance groups from the campus and community participated in "I, Too, Sing America." This mixture of song, dance, poetry, and dramatic interpretations symbolized the coming together of different cultures in an effort to celebrate life and art.

The week of Jan. 17-24 was a week of remembrance, celebration and motivation to continue to work towards making King's dream our reality. All of the members of the MLK Celebration Committee did a remarkable job of displaying the reason we honor King and the importance of honoring him everyday of the year through our actions.