

On Wednesday, Jan. 20, the message came home to UNC as the 1999 Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday Celebration Committee presented a lecture given by the youngest daughter of King, the Rev. Bernice King. Filled with the resonance of an inspirational sermon and the striking resemblance to King's voice, Rev. Bernice King touched the hearts of listeners and delivered words to move the campus into action.

"Unconditional Love, Getting Up Close and Personal, Taking Personal Responsibility." These were the themes running through Rev. King's address as she reflected on her father's life and brought teachings of her own experiences. "Racism is your problem," were the words Rev. King had audience members to repeat to their neighbor. Rev. King drove home the message that racism is not a Black person's problem or a White person's problem but a problem which effects all of us and that each of us must work to resolve.

"My father challenged us and his legacy still challenges us to deal with this massive problem head on to avert grave consequences," Rev. King proclaimed. King was a man who confronted the battle of racism by through love that "transcended cultural and sectional differences." And while the world celebrates the birthday of King, what are we doing to follow in his footsteps? "It is essential to our survival," said Rev. King, "that we must continue to not only celebrate Dr. King's birthday, but com-

mit ourselves to those things he lived and died for."

To ever realize our true potential as human beings living together in harmony we must "get up close and personal" to the real problem we are facing, a point emphasized by Rev. King. "Getting up close and personal allows us to see things as they are, rather than assuming and prejudging." If we are to ever overcome the detrimental effect of those assumptions and prejudgments on our humanity, we must not be afraid to go beyond the surface and get personal with one another.

As Rev. King spoke on the importance of being able to love one another unconditionally and the building of personal relationships, she also encouraged audience

members to take personal responsibility in the fight to overcome the ills plaguing our society. Challenging students in particular, Rev. King reminded students "that the reason we have gotten where we are today in this society is because of students who became involved in the Civil Rights Movement." Students at UNC and educational institutions across the country have an obligation to stand up, take personal responsibility and make a personal sacrifice to end racism and oppression. As the leaders of tomorrow, let us take the message delivered by Rev. Bernice King home to live in our hearts not only to celebrate, but act upon for the empowerment of our people and the elevation of our world.

