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CIAA Celebrates Its 90th Anniversary

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The Compass

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ANNUAL MLK MARCH MARKED BY PRIDE AND UNITY



ECSU Students Hold University Banner During March

Shebony Davis, Tiffanie King and Melody High

-photo courtesy of Keisha Williams

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Despite the cold, dreary and wet weather conditions, the annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. march, held on Monday, Jan. 21, was still a success.

The march of pride and unity included nearly 300 participants, including Elizabeth City State University faculty, staff, students and community. Dr. Jean Holt, director of student life and activities, was especially proud of the ECSU student participation.

Holt, who was a first-time participant at the annual MLK march said of their participation: "It's great. Especially on a holiday morning when it's kind of cold outside."

Another ECSU faculty member Dr. John Luton said: "I am very impressed. I think we have a good representation. We should be able to make a very powerful statement today."

The event began with the opening prayer by ECSU student government association president, Keith Richardson, who is also a member of King's Fraternity, Alpha Phi Alpha. The march left G. R. Little Library at about 10:15am onto Southern Avenue, to Martin Street and stopped briefly at City Hall, where they were led in prayer by ECSU professor, Rev. Charles Foster.

At about 11:00am the marchers arrived at the former Martin Street where the crowd cheered as Mayor John Bell and Rev. John E. Trotman, pastor of Cornerstone Missionary Baptist Church, unveiled the sign that read: Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Dr.

At 11:30am the marchers were welcomed into the sanctuary of Cornerstone Missionary Baptist Church, which is located on the newly named street, Dr.

Martin Luther King Jr. Dr. The church was overflowed with eager guests, who readily cooperated with the organizers. There were so many guests that some individuals had to be moved into another room with a television screen so that they could view the ceremony and be seated comfortably.

First the Albemarle Youth Choir graced the audience with a selection called "He's Just That Kind of God." Then the speaker for the occasion, Rev. Viola R. Spivey, who graduated from ECSU in 1984 with a Bachelor's degree in Psychology, delivered a speech that she said was inspired by God. Her message was mainly focused on King's vision to set his people free, in which she often compared with the Bible story of Moses' vision to set his people free.

"Dr. King was a man with a vision and a purpose...to set his people free," Spivey said.

"Dr. King Gave great importance to the Exodus story and God's deliverance of the Israelites from slavery and oppression," she said, "He saw a parallel between the Israelites oppression in Egypt and that of black people in America."

Spivey continued to hold the attentive audience's attention as she further elaborated on the definition of freedom and how God was able to deliver blacks from oppression and bondage as He did the Israelites.

"Freedom is to be able to deliberate, make decisions, and be responsible," she said.

"Just as God was able to deliver the Israelites, He was also able to deliver black America," she said, "That is what God does...He delivers. He takes men from where they are and put them where He wants them to be...it is in His nature to deliver those who are oppressed."

Spivey used a Bible verse to explain how King was able to find the strength to keep the movement alive and make his vision a reality despite constantly being

discouraged by so many people, black and white.

Again comparing blacks to the Israelites she said, "We were depersonalized and disenfranchised...and living in fear... but still he knew that the mission was possible with God"

Then she quoted Ephesians 3:20: "Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that work in us," which she said was the verse that helped King keep the dream alive and can help America to continue letting freedom ring.

A first time participant of the ceremony, Elizabeth Greene, 72, marched with her daughter Sharon. Greene said: "I'm new to Elizabeth City and have worked in New Orleans for several years with many great black friends, that are deceased now. And I have always supported equality... and still do. I'm honored to be a part of this parade."

Angie Willis, who marched with her daughters, Sierra, 11, and Kristian, 9, said that this was not their first march; she has been bringing her girls since they were in strollers. "I just felt it was necessary that we come out for the cause. I'm simply trying to teach them what Martin Luther King and his struggle was all about," she said.

Sharon Goodson, executive director of Elizabeth City Neighborhood Corporation said, "If he were here today, Doctor King would say this is the perfect street to be named in his honor. It was once a thriving African-American business district that has withered. It's now home to houses that need nurturing."

Goodson explained that the Hugh Cale community had received a 1.75 million dollar revitalization grant, which will be used for housing, job training, and business development in the Hugh Cale district. The Hugh Cale community encompasses Martin St. and its sur-

rounding area.

Students who were first time participants in the annual event were very proud of witnessing a historical moment.

"As the younger generation we have only heard about the struggle. But today I am marching to show my appreciation for what King did. If he and others didn't do what they did, I couldn't do what I am doing right now," said ECSU sophomore Jason Potter.

"I am here because I would like to thank Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., but I would also like to I thank the right and left hand people who were beside him," said ECSU sophomore Bradley Waddy.

"It was altogether fitting that a street in Elizabeth City be named for an American so great as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.," Mayor Bell said, "Most cities of our size have already made just a designation. We are long overdue in Elizabeth City."

Editor's Note

"After about two hours of deliberation Tuesday, January 29, a 15-member committee, appointed recently by Mayor John H. Bell Jr., voted to recommend that City Council rescind its November decision to rename Martin Street as Martin Luther King Drive. However, they said no action should take place until council finds a "suitable primary street" to rename for King."—courtesy of www.dailyadvance.com