

What Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Means To Me

Vivian Burke, Northeast Ward alderman:

Dr. Martin Luther King was a soldier of the cross who put on his armor of peace, justice, humanity and love traveling across the United States to eradicate existing inhumane practices.

He seemingly never got tired of working for racial justice, which gained him the respect of many people

in the United States and around the world. Immediately when he spoke, you knew he was unselfish and cared for the oppressed. Dr. King could have used his outstanding ability for personal gain. Instead, he used his assets and efforts for the cause. He put God first and fought for civil rights because he wanted oppressed people to be free.

I was impressed with Dr.

King because of his non-violent tactics. Even though he preached non-violence, he was stoned in Chicago, stabbed in New York and bombed in Montgomery. The man never retaliated in a violent manner. These kinds of inhumane practices made him take every opportunity to work even harder to move over unfairness. He did not give up or in.

I was impressed with him because he was a

courageous, strong leader who was not afraid to stand up and be counted as a person. He was proud to be a minority and not ashamed or afraid to struggle for a cause he felt one day would make life better for so many people.

Larry Womble, Southeast Ward Alderman:

Martin Luther King Jr. represented a sincere desire to unite all men as brothers. He served as the light of our future, an example that good overcomes evil. His dedication to the oneness of all people is the one thing that shall always be remembered.

Much of what the United States represents today can be traced or attributed to his unselfishness. And his influence has helped to shape the minds and lives of many individuals.

Martin Luther King Jr. stood as a bulwark, a mighty fortress in a raging storm. He represented hope and aspirations for what America should and could be. He showed us that a person must be willing to stand for something, or fall for anything.

He instilled in blacks that we must love our fellow man, yes, even our enemies, that we must not hate, for hate is all-consuming.

This, and much more, is what Martin Luther King Jr. means to me, for he was, and still is, a giant among giants.

There will never be another.



Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. delivers his famous "I Have A Dream" speech at the 1963 March on Washington. Last year, a similar demonstration was held to commemorate the 1963 march.

Hansel E. Hentz, playfield director at 14th Street Recreation Center:

In the fall of 1967, Dr. F.W. Jackson brought Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. to Winston-Salem for a speaking engagement at Goler Metropolitan A.M.E. Zion Church. As Dr. King began to speak, a hush fell over the congregation. His message was that of toughmindedness tempered with tenderheartedness (Matthew 10:16). I knew when Dr. King had completed his message that I had heard one of the most

dynamic speakers of modern times.

In 1964, Dr. King received one of the world's foremost honors by being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for effecting social change through non-violent means. He believed in using peaceful means to change laws that were unfair to blacks. He was arrested and jailed many times for breaking laws that he felt were unjust.

Though his views were unpopular in many segments of American society and his methods unorthodox, he was able to

effect social changes, which was evident with the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the strides black people have made thus far in American society.

In reality, we still do not have total equality. We have only scratched the surface, and if we are not careful to keep the dream alive and well, we will lose the gains that we have made.

Twenty-one years ago, Dr. King marched on to Washington with thousands of Americans poised to bring the message of equality

to our government and to all of America.

I was still in high school at that time, but my heart was there with the masses in Washington. I promised myself that if ever there was another march, I would be there. On Aug. 27, 1983, I was an eyewitness to unity, and the masses assembled again to bring the message of equality to America.

We as black Americans should be proud of the legacy of Dr. King and should work each day to ensure this dream of freedom and equality for future generations.

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Many of these are aimed at helping the service-disabled, ex-POWs, war widows and orphans. Others have broader eligibility — consult your county or state veterans' office.

About a dozen states have recently passed laws to assist Vietnam veterans who fear long-term health damage from exposure to the herbicide Agent Orange. Thirty-three states and the District of Columbia offer care for elderly vets in state soldiers' homes.

In Washington state, the Department of Veterans Affairs this year opened a statewide toll-free hotline for veterans and dependents. Illinois recently passed legislation providing up to \$1,670 to certain disabled vets for remodeling a home to meet their needs — in addition to the \$5,000 available from the Veterans Administration for this purpose.

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