

Tells Davidson Audience

Dr. Adair: Martin L. King Raised Americans' Awareness

Martin Luther King Jr. raised Americans' awareness of their responsibility to the oppressed, noted black leader Thelma Davidson Adair said January 20 at a Davidson College memorial service for King.

Adair, one of Davidson's 51 trustees, was Pastor in Residence at Davidson January 19-22. She reminisced in the memorial service about her work with King during the civil rights movement of the 1960s. She was elected a trustee of Davidson in 1983 and has a long history of involvement with education in the Charlotte area.

Adair attended Barber-Scotia College in Concord and Bennett College in Greensboro and is professor emeritus of education at Queens College of the University of the City of New York. She currently serves as a consultant to Barber-Scotia College, as well as Chairman of Barber-Scotia's education department.

In her address in Lingle Chapel, Adair said King became the voice of the people and encouraged his followers to love their enemies.

"The crux of the battle," he said to us, "is if you begin to hate now, you're no better than those who fight against you. I can be non-violent because if I respond with violence, I create a world of destruction. I am no better



Davidson College Trustee Thelma Davidson Adair talks with students at Davidson during her stay as Pastor in Residence. From right: Adair, Freshman Sonja Ann Miller, Assistant Chaplain Brenda Tapia and Sophomore Vincent K. Knight, Sharon Spong.

than these who perpetrate the crimes and dastardly deeds."

Adair has also worked with other civil rights

leaders, including the Rev. Jesse Jackson. Adair accompanied Jackson to Syria in January 1984 to negotiate the release of

U.S. Navy Pilot Lt. Robert Goodman. With her late husband, Adair founded a church in Harlem in the 1940s which provided

services for children, families and the elderly. She was the second woman to serve as moderator of the 188th General Assembly of the United Presbyterian Church.

King was the champion of peace of all persons, Adair said, and sought a better life for those oppressed by injustice. "He was not afraid to die,"

she concluded. "He said so often to us who faltered, 'If there's nothing in your life worth dying for, there's nothing worth living for.'"

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