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"THE TRUTH SHALL SET YOU FREE"

King's vision still in reach

By Hazel Trice Edney
Special to Sentinel-Voice

WASHINGTON (NNPA) - If he were still alive, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. would be turning 78 on Monday, Jan. 15. And more than likely, he would still be preaching the gospel on behalf of the oppressed. Even in death, his former aides say, King still provides an example for us to follow.

"Martin was theologically grounded to keep the boycott morally based and spiritually motivated," said Rev. Joseph Lowery, 85, who co-founded the Southern Christian Leadership Conference with Dr. King in 1957.

"Martin's training and personal commitment to 'love everybody' came shining through in his leadership. He was willing and did endure unearned suffering without bitterness and hate... 'We must hate the sin while loving the sinner.'"

The 381-day Montgomery bus boycott that began Dec. 1, 1955, was the first major civil rights leadership role for Dr. King, a young preacher then only 26 years old. Rosa Parks, a young seamstress, was arrested for refusing to sit in the back of the bus. But, by then, King had received his bachelor of divinity from Crozer Theological Seminary in Chester, Pa., and was pastor of Montgomery's Dexter Avenue Baptist Church.

He also had been severely tested.

"I was present when he addressed media following the bombing of his home," said Lowery, the dean of the Civil Rights Movement. "I was present in Birmingham when, as he was speaking, a young White man leaped upon the stage and struck him in the face before anyone could intervene. I marveled at his refusal to insist that the confused young man be arrested, but engaged him in dialogue with forgiveness and compassion."

He not only had passion and compassion, but he always had a plan, says Jesse Jackson Sr., who dropped out of the Chicago Theological Seminary in 1965 to participate in the Selma-to-Montgomery March for voting rights.

"He planned and then acted on the plan," said Jackson. "For example, our last staff meeting we had with him, his last work day, we were planning a Poor People's Campaign to organize for jobs and income and health care for every American. He was pulling together a multi-racial coalition of Blacks, Hispanics, Latinos and Native Americans."

Today's leaders should take a lesson from that, Jackson said.

"The King week should be the busiest week for voter registration and voter restoration for those 5 million who have lost the right to vote. And for the ending of the war in Iraq, because it's taking away the budget we need for development," Jackson said. "That would be a very simple plan, a plan for action."

More than 58 years since Dr. King was assassinated at the Lorraine Motel in Memphis on April 4, 1968, many still remember him most for his melodic and powerful oratory that communicated the human misery and injustice of Jim Crow segregation amidst viscous racism and violent attacks.

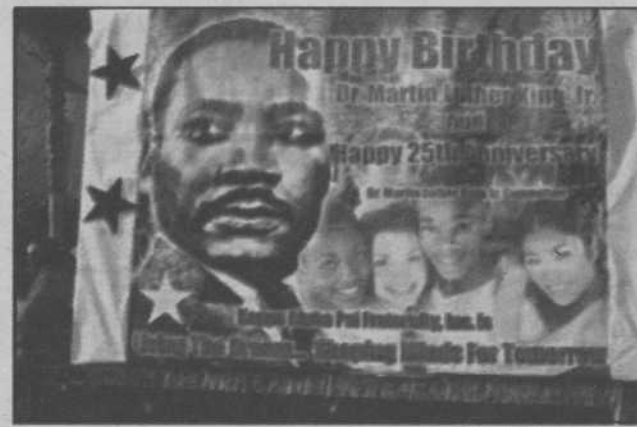
But, Dr. King was not always certain he would be a
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MLK parade marshals set

Las Vegas Sentinel-Voice

Continuing its tradition of honoring the best and brightest locals, the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Committee has selected Deloris G. Sawyer and Dr. Tyree Carr as parade marshals for the 2007 King parade that runs in downtown Las Vegas this Saturday.

Born in Los Angeles, the 10th of 11 children, Sawyer has lived in Las Vegas for 27 years. She currently serves as director of housing programs for the City of Las Vegas Housing Authority and is responsible for the oversight and administration of the agency's Admission and Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Departments. She supervises a staff of 44, and



Sentinel-Voice file photo

The visage of late civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. adorns a poster. The photo collage appeared on a float entered in last year's annual MLK Day Parade.

her department has received an A grade in Section 8 Management Assessment from the federal department of Housing and Urban Development for the past five years and has garnered 62 national

awards.

During a 16-year stint in the medical profession, Sawyer developed a life credo by which she decided that second-guessing herself was detrimental. In medicine, the

difference between life and death can be the decision made — or not made — in a split second.

Sawyer has earned a reputation as a no-nonsense person who's also caring and compassionate. She carries that attitude with her to the various professional organizations she belongs to, which include the National Leased Housing Association and the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Membership Committee.

Her community activity is similarly extensive. She is a founding member and was the first executive director of the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Committee of Las Vegas. Under her leadership and
(See MLK, Page 2)

Stamp honors Ella Fitzgerald

WASHINGTON (AP) - The lady is a stamp! The U.S. Postal Service honors the First Lady of Song — Ella Fitzgerald — with her own postage stamp released earlier this week.

The 39-cent stamp was released during ceremonies at Jazz at Lincoln Center in New York, and it goes on sale across the country.

People who don't know about her will see the stamp and think: "What makes this person special? And perhaps find out about the person and about the music," said her son, Ray Brown Jr.

Fitzgerald wasn't self-important, perhaps reflecting the values she sang about in the Rodgers and Hart song "The Lady is a Tramp":

"I don't like crap games, with barons and earls. Won't go to Harlem, in ermine and pearls. Won't dish the dirt, with the rest of the girls. That's why the lady is a tramp."

Phoebe Jacobs, executive vice president of The Louis Armstrong Educational Foundation and a longtime friend of Fitzgerald, described the singer as "a very private lady, very humble."

After Fitzgerald confided in 1961 that she had never

had a birthday party, Jacobs gathered a star-studded collection of people for the special event.

The party was a secret, so Fitzgerald was told to dress up because there was a television interview.

"When the lights came on she took her pocket book and hit me on the shoulder," Jacobs recalled. "She was like a little kid, she was so happy."

Fitzgerald was a baseball fan and the guests included

her favorite player, Yankees slugger Mickey Mantle. They embraced and traded autographs.

Fitzgerald's appearance on a stamp comes less than a year after Mantle was fea-
(See Ella, Page 3)



In this handout photo released by the United States Postal Service, Blossom Magnolia Brown, who is Ella Fitzgerald's granddaughter, left, Ella Fitzgerald's son, Ray Brown Jr., and long-time Ella Fitzgerald friend Phoebe Jacobs, who is Executive Vice President of the Louis Armstrong Educational Foundation, look at the Postal Service's newest stamp, the Ella Fitzgerald stamp, which was released in a ceremony at Jazz at Lincoln Center in New York, on Wednesday. The stamp became available nationwide.