

Yolanda

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was the daughter of Martin Luther and Coretta King. She was fiercely loyal to her friends, loving and kind and gracious. She was funny, she was smart, caring and conscientious. When she grew older, she assumed more and more of the legacy of her parents."

Robinson and King also attended Smith College together in Northhampton, Mass. "Our high school guidance counselor was instrumental in introducing us to Smith College," said Robinson, noting that she and King considered the schools in Atlanta. "Once I got there [to Smith], I wanted Yolie to come. New England was very new to both of us. We lived in the same dorm."

Wendell Williams, president of the local Las Vegas Martin Luther King Jr. Committee, says Yolanda King's death is devastating, particularly because her mother died last year and her father's dream of peace is unfulfilled.

Yolanda Denise King — nicknamed Yoki by the family — was born Nov. 17, 1955, in Montgomery, Ala., where her father was then preaching.

She was just two weeks old when Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on a bus there, leading to the Montgomery bus boycott spearheaded by her father. When the family's house was firebombed eight weeks later, she and her mother were at home but were not hurt.

She was a young girl during her father's famous stay in the Birmingham, Ala., jail. She was 12 years old when he was assassinated in Memphis, Tenn., in 1968.

"She lived with a lot of the trauma of our struggle," said Rev. Jesse Jackson, who worked with her father. "The movement was in her DNA."

Rev. Al Sharpton called King a "torch bearer for her parents and a committed activist in her own right."

White House Press Secretary Tony Snow said President Bush and the first lady were sad to learn of King's death, adding, "Our thoughts are with the King family today."

Yolanda King founded and led Higher Ground Productions, billed as a "gateway for inner peace, unity and global transformation." On her company's website, she described her mission as encouraging personal growth and positive social change.

"She didn't want to be a child of the movement, she wanted to be what God wanted her to be," Young said. "She could never escape

being a child of the movement, though. She was really feeling that she didn't just want to be the daughter of Coretta and Martin King. That was her struggle."

The flag at The King Center, where she was a board member, flew at half-staff Wednesday.

In 1963, when she was 7, her father mentioned her and her siblings at the March on Washington, saying: "I have a dream that my four little

children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character."

Her brother Martin III was born in 1957; brother Dexter in 1961; and sister Bernice in 1963.

King was a 1976 graduate of Smith College in Northampton, Mass., where she majored in theater and Afro-American studies. She also earned a master's degree

in theater from New York University. Yolanda King was the most visible of the four children during this year's Martin Luther King Day in January, the first since her mother's death. When asked by The Associated Press at that event how she was dealing with the loss of her mother, she responded: "I connected with her spirit so strongly. I am in direct contact with her spirit, and that has given me so much peace

and so much strength."

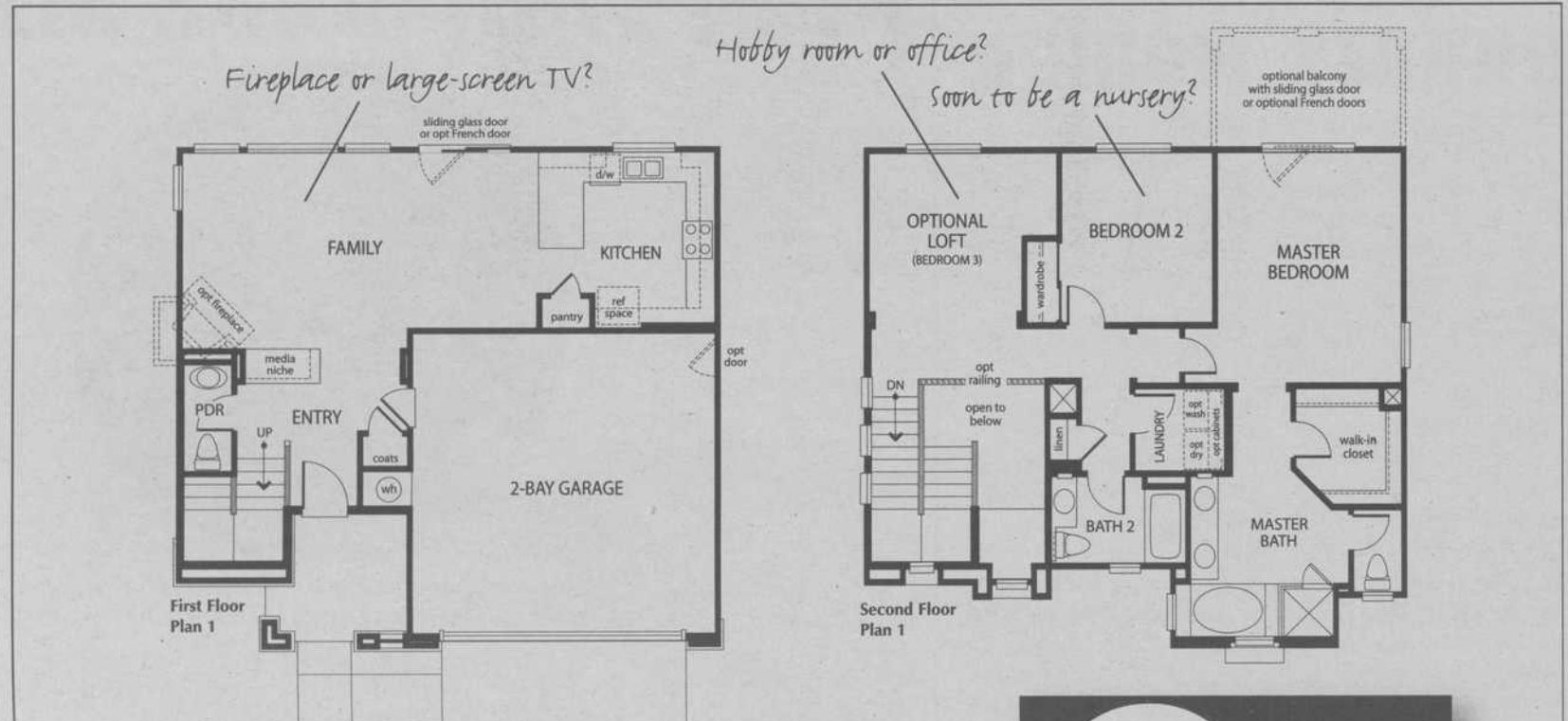
At her father's Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta, she performed a series of solo skits that told stories including a girl's first ride on a desegregated bus and a college student's recollection of the 1963 campaign to desegregate Birmingham, Ala. She urged the audience to be a force for peace and love, and to use the King holiday each year to ask tough questions about their own beliefs about

prejudice.

Robinson credits Yolanda King with helping her become more spiritually mature. She didn't preach or judge, Robinson says.

"Yoki could take people where they were—she accepted you as you were. She was able to be friends with everybody. The high school we went to, at that time, was just beginning to diversify."

Joseph Sawyer Jr. contributed to the article.



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