

# Birthday

*(Continued from Page 1)*  
perhaps a different nation. But, it still does not excuse the fact that there are many issues in relationship to civil and human rights that still must be addressed."

People who do not normally watch politics are suddenly following Democratic primaries like a sport as news of inequities and injustices, such as the Jena Six case, noose intimidations, police misconduct, brutality and police shootings around the nation still flourish.

Simultaneously, key progresses are occurring such as record numbers of Black elected officials, African-Americans leading Fortune 500 Companies, Black Caucus members leading committees of Congress, and African-Americans breaking historic barriers of all kinds around the nation.

"Who would have thought that a Black would one day be the head of American Express, or that a Black would be the head of Time-Warner or Merrill Lynch?" King III quizzes. "That is very positive, just as if Barack Obama is able to garner the nomination and then become president. That would be phenomenal, but it does not mean the work is complete. That's the main point."

Others who marched with Dr. King echoed these sentiments to NNPA News Service this week as they discussed current events in America that would cause the slain civil rights leader to applaud and other issues that he would lament. "He would be the saddest to know that we're at war," said Dr. Dorothy Height, president emerita of the National Council of Negro Women and a peer of Dr. King and the Big Six civil rights leaders. "In his last speech from Riverside church in New York at the time of the Vietnam War, he said, 'Stop the bombing,' Height recalls. "But, I think

that he would be equally sad to see that we have so many people in poverty."

The U.S. Census Bureau reports that the number of Americans living in poverty is around 36 million, with African-Americans remaining nearly twice the national rate at around 25 percent.

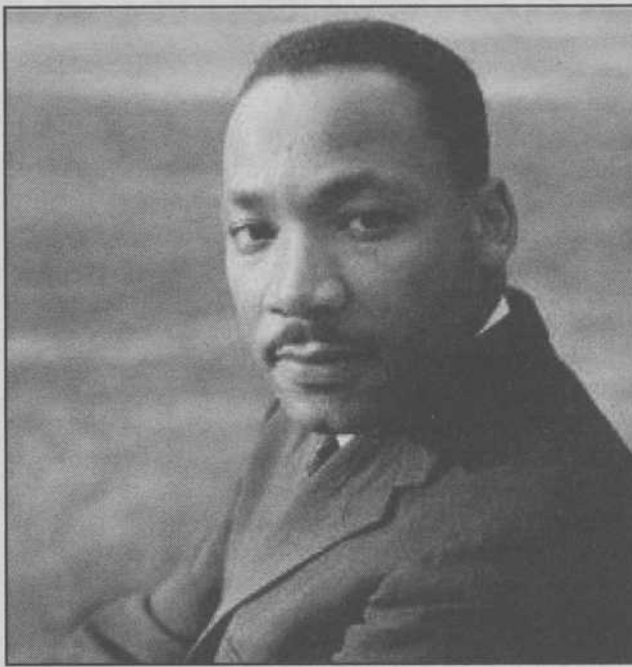
Rev. Dr. Willie T. Barrow, 82, a long-time board member of the Rainbow/PUSH Coalition and a behind-the-scenes organizer for King, says she thinks the health care crisis — often a result of poverty — would be foremost on his mind.

"He would be sad to see that [47 million] people don't have healthcare." At the same time, she said, he would be pleased to see that so many Black youth are actively involved in civil rights, such as the Jena Six marches, as well as involved in the Democratic campaigns for the presidency. "I think the Obama campaign is really showing that," she said.

Despite the excitement surrounding the candidacies, economic issues are foremost, said Rev. Jesse Jackson Sr., who marched alongside King and is considered one of his lieutenants.

"I preached at Ebenezer today at his church here in Atlanta, and I spent most of his last birthday with him at his church. His own last birthday was spent organizing the Poor People's campaign and preparing the march to Washington to engage in national civil disobedience," said Jackson in a recent interview. "Forty years later, we've seen the most wholesale shift of resources ever with losses, taking our land, taking our houses through these mortgages foreclosures and the sub-prime scam."

Jackson, who has announced a Jan. 22 march on the Department of Housing and Urban Development at noon, says he is certain that Dr. King would be crying out



Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

on behalf of the victims of defaulted sub-prime loans.

"He would be fighting, therefore, to save people's homes, to restructure loans and to repossess homes. I'm sure he would. And he'd be fighting to not only end the war in Iraq, but to redirect the resources from the war in Iraq to build America's cities, bridges collapsing in Minnesota and levies collapsing in New Orleans. Obviously the infrastructure is crumbling while we keep giving tax cuts to the rich and getting in deeper in debt with China."

Jackson said that on the other hand, Dr. King would be genuinely pleased with South Carolina, where the

race between Obama and Clinton will next be spotlighted.

"I think he'd be proud of just the real competition. Forty years ago when he died, we'd just gotten the right to vote for two years. And now in South Carolina, that vote could very well determine the launching pad for the next president. So, the empowerment of the masses of us, just the real talent would impress him."

Still, Dr. King's hopes would be that the candidates would do something for the poor, said Height: "His last effort on earth was to march on Washington to force the government to respond to poor people."

**Why Not a 42" flat screen instead of a 36". Why Not leather upholstery instead of that plaid. Why Not Bora Bora instead of the backyard. Why Not the fifty yard line instead of a nosebleed. Why Not a room with a view instead of a room. Why Not the sirloin instead of the chuck. Why Not sleepaway camp instead of day camp. Why Not a ski week instead of a ski weekend. Why Not a new wardrobe instead of a new suit. Why Not first class instead of coach. Why Not surround sound instead of 'what'd he say?'. Why Not April in Paris, Paris, Texas. Why well as the horses. trainer instead of a club membership Why Not a great wine rack. Why Not third of the balcony. Why party mix. Why Not of the regular. Why of the sapling. Why Not 80 gigs instead of 20. Why Not the yacht instead of the dinghy. Why Not the castle instead of the cottage. Why Not the antique instead of the repro. Why Not season tickets instead of scalping. Why Not the sloop instead of the sunfish. Why Not the signed print instead of the print. Why Not a house on the beach instead of the bay. Why Not 'I'll take it' instead of 'I'll think about it'. Why Not the autographed jersey instead of the jersey. Why Not Rome, Italy instead of Rome, New York. Why Not a 3-carat solitaire instead of 2. Why Not the gold instead of the silver. Why Not go to the playoffs instead of watching them. Why Not have your cake and eat it too, in Venice. Why Not five acres instead of two. Why Not the coupe over the sedan. Why Not the cruise instead of the jaunt. Why Not a limo instead of a taxi. Why Not a safari instead of a zoo.**

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