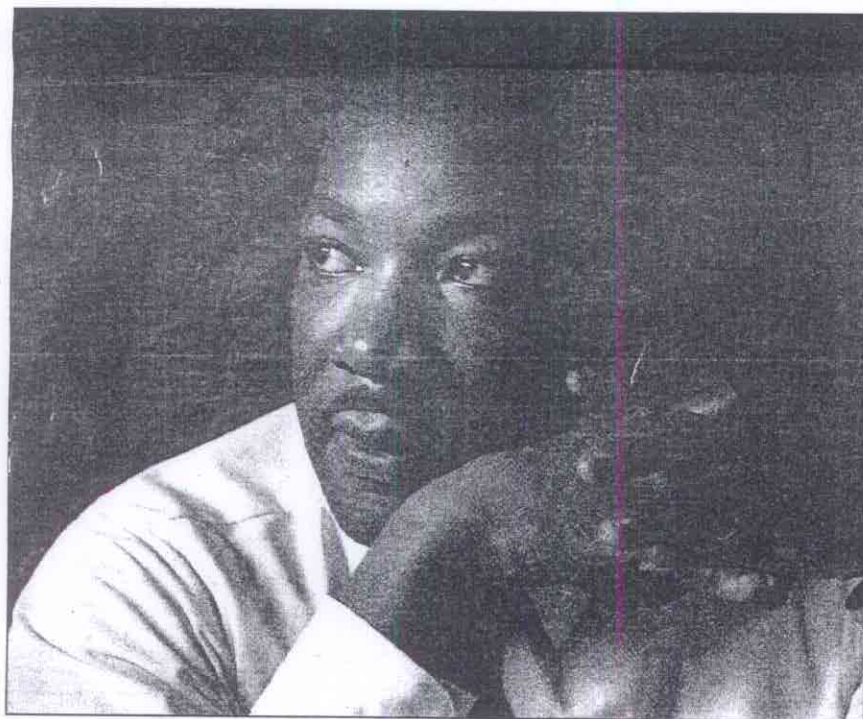


A NEWSDAY SPECIAL REPORT

Sunday, April 4, 1993

25 YEARS AFTER MEMPHIS
**MARTIN
LUTHER
KING**



January 15, 1929 - April 4, 1968

His Life. His Death. His Dream.

NEW

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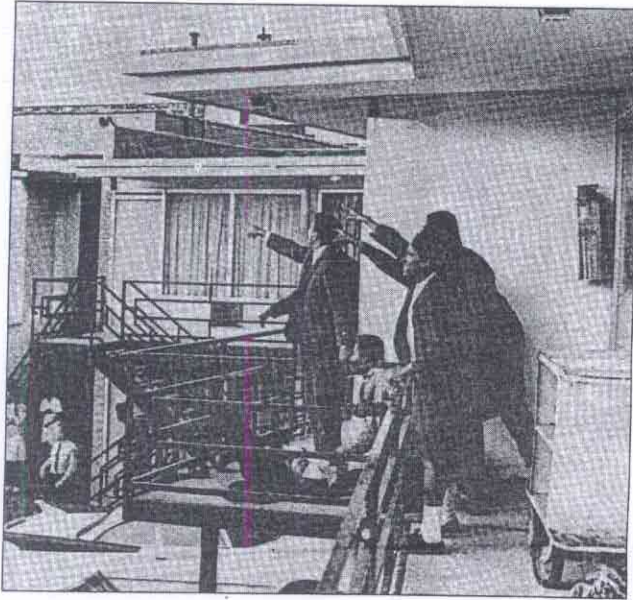
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25 Years Ago Today . . .



Fallen Leader. While aides point in the direction from which an assassin's bullet came, Martin Luther King Jr. lies mortally wounded on the balcony of Memphis' Lorraine Motel.

It was a Thursday. On Long Island it was an overcast day in early spring. Gov. Nelson Rockefeller still was deciding whether to run for president. Newspapers reported that the North Vietnamese might be ready for peace talks. In New York, President Lyndon B. Johnson arrived at St. Patrick's Cathedral for the installation of a new archbishop, the Most Rev. Terrence J. Cooke. At Westbury High, students returned after a three-day shutdown aimed at reducing simmering racial tension. The shot rang out at dinnertime. "Horror, just horror," said Kay Sanker, a white Oceanside woman. Even now, a quarter-century later, it is hard

not to summon up similar sentiments. Twenty-five years after Martin Luther King Jr.'s death in Memphis, the wound is still fresh. This section is a selective attempt to assess King's life, death and legacy. It includes one view — by historian David J. Garrow — that King remains misunderstood. There are updated reports from two cities that became markers in the civil rights struggle: Birmingham, Ala., and Cicero, Ill. There are reminiscences by Newsday's Murray Kempton and oral histories of some who bore witness to the turbulence of the times. Finally, there is an opportunity to meet again, through photographs and his own words, Martin Luther King Jr. — The Editors

Just a Phone Call Away



Three recorded excerpts, capturing dynamic moments in Martin Luther King Jr.'s most famous speeches and King's own narration of his historic letter from the Birmingham city jail, are available by phone now through Saturday. Each excerpt is on a separate phone number, and each call costs \$1. There is no profit to Newsday. The following are available:

'I Have a Dream'
 Call 1-(900)-448-6684 to hear a portion of King's address during the Aug. 28, 1963, March on Washington.

'I've Been to the Mountaintop'
 Call 1-(900)-438-8477 to hear a portion of King's last speech, delivered April 3, 1968, at the Mason Temple in Memphis, Tenn.

'Letter From a Birmingham Jail'
 Call 1-(900)-438-2483 to hear a portion of King's narration of his open letter to critics, written April 16, 1963.

Extended cassette tape recordings of the speeches and letter may be obtained from the Martin Luther King Jr. Center for Nonviolent Change, 449 Auburn Ave. NE, Atlanta, Ga. 30312. The center's phone number is 404-524-1956.

On April 4, 1968, James Earl Ray, a twitchy, small-time crook with no background in political assassination, fired one stogie-sized round from a 30.06 Remington pump rifle into the jaw of Martin Luther King Jr. and just that easily altered American history.

Never the sweet land of liberty it pretended to be, America suddenly seemed farther than ever from the prize. King's death was a setback to blacks demanding equality and — though they did not know it — to

whites resisting the demands. Without reconciliation there could be no peace, no plenty, no America as imagined, advertised and hailed with firebursts on the Fourth of July. Retreat was out of the question. Who would move America ahead?

It was a measure of the nation's dysfunction on matters of race in 1968 that one man counted for so much. Detractors, black and white, tried to diminish King's importance, but they were mistaken. The passion of his message, the durability of his presence, the grudging respect he demanded from his most entrenched opponents combined to make King, at 39, a huge, unique, and tragically vulnerable, public figure.

In a country sizzling with racial strife — "Burn, baby, burn" was becoming a standard summertime refrain — and corrupted by historic disparities, King, a Baptist minister, was the rare individual who understood the symbiosis between love and power. Mahatma Gandhi's non-violent teachings informed his work. The gospel of Jesus Christ nourished his soul. Yes, King's confidence often flagged and harsh treatment drained his spirit, and, he wondered, toward the end of his days, if the task ever would be completed. But King was resilient and, despite daunting obstacles and private misgivings, a stubborn optimist. If the nation did not yet meet its own high standards, one day, with prodding, the nation would.

"Let us rise up tonight with a greater readiness," King told supporters hours before his death in Memphis, where he had gone to aid striking city garbage haulers. "Let us stand with greater determination. And let us move on in these powerful days, these days of challenge to make America what it ought to be."

Just as his rhetorical cadences thumped like a mighty pulse in the body politic, King's notion of a made-over America registered on the national psyche. Cynics shrugged and hardliners sneered but followers of King found the prospect irresistible. Think of it — an America cut loose from the tensions and fears tethered to race, an America that no longer squandered its energy on hatred and discord, an America, at last, for all Americans.

King had a broad agenda in '68, and America had a heap of trouble. As he lay bleeding on the balcony of a Memphis motel, the nation already was tripping toward overload. The war in Vietnam — de-

nounced as "madness" in a controversial speech by King precisely one year before his death — had locked Americans into high anxiety. The civil rights movement challenged a long list of false assumptions, enraging many whites in the process. John Kennedy's murder five years earlier still summoned despair. Now James Earl Ray, a specialist in gas station heists, stepped forward to douse another shining soul.

Time accelerated, events blurred. King was dead and young blacks exploded, no matter that the fallen leader long had pleaded for restraint. Next thing you knew, Lyndon Johnson said he was packing for home. Sirhan Sirhan murdered Bobby Kennedy for the sake of Palestinian liberation. In Chicago, Democrats spit and hollered and called the rumble a national convention. Badgeless cops pounded demonstrators outside the hall and the party's nominee, Hubert H. Humphrey, left town looking pale.

Nightly news became a form of truth or dare. Across black-and-white TV sets burst amazing scenes. Longhaired kids with fingers in the faces of college presidents. Bedraggled GIs ducking for cover in the green and godawful jungles of Vietnam. America's cities blazing like tinder. All our spunk and ingenuity, our brawling bravado, our endless bragging that God was one of us — none of that would fortify against the surge and sprawl of so potent a succession of shocks and aftershocks.

The year began with North Korea grabbing the spy ship *Pueblo* and kidnaping its crew of 83. Then North Vietnam said no to a Washington peace overture, preferring instead to launch the crushing Tet offensive. Then George Wallace, the sneering, separatist Alabama governor who vowed he'd never be "out-segged" by a rival politician, announced he was running for the White House.

In Wallace, the nation took a look at racism personified, and instead of hooting him out of town, millions drifted to his corner. And people wondered why blacks were angry and impatient — why, in his 1968 book, "Soul on Ice," Eldridge Cleaver called the U.S. "a fossil of history," why, at the Summer Olympics, black athletes balled their fists at the playing of the national anthem. Wallace lost the election, of course, and so did the luckless Humphrey. The winner: Richard Nixon.

Some Americans may have survived the time unaffected, but not many. Up in smoke was the innocence that shaped the nation. Americans were at war with communism in Southeast Asia and with them-

1968 -A Time Of Deadly Turmoil

BY FRED BRUNING
STAFF WRITER



No Room for Retreat. Protesters of Georgia school conditions, arrested in February, 1968. UPI Photo

Please see 1968 on Page 4

His Life & Times



1968: Time Of Turmoil

1968 from Page 3

selves at home. "People Got to be Free" was a song by the Rascals, and Steppenwolf sang "Born to be Wild," and, in the streets, antiwar protesters added their own obstreperous chorus aimed at outgoing Lyndon Johnson: "Hey, hey, LBJ: How many kids did you kill today?"

When 1968 arrived, King had no doubt that America was in flux — that the canons of social gravity were being challenged. "We shall overcome because the arc of a moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice," he declared, a black Copernicus advancing starry notions. King was impatient for justice too long denied, and not content to wait for heavenly signs. Focusing on economic issues, he drew plans for a massive Poor People's Campaign, a program of fundamental reform masquerading as a civil rights demonstration.

Since leading the triumphant Montgomery, Ala., bus boycott of 1955-56, King knew how mighty was the buck in America. Aides say his view on the distribution of resources was more profound than may have been realized — that King believed financial parity was the key to minority progress. It was time to share the wealth. The Poor People's Campaign was intended to serve notice on national leaders: Slavery was dead 100 years. Blacks were reaching for their slab of pie.

So underpaid, out of work, trapped by circumstance, the poor of America arrived when Washington was in the blush of a brilliant spring. They pitched their tents in front of the Lincoln Memorial and called their curious duchy Resurrection City. There were stirring speeches, and strumming guitars, and "If I Had a Hammer," and "We Shall Overcome." There were blacks and whites together, a sense that something was taking root deep in the American firmament.

But there was no Martin Luther King Jr. His deputy at the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, Ralph David Abernathy, led demonstrators in June, and did his level best. King's presence hovered in the sweet, moist air of Washington like some splendid, idle butterfly — a monarch, wings outspread, paradise-bound.

At the end of 1968, three U.S. astronauts became the first to fly around the moon. King, if alive, might have been struck by the irony — his country soaring in the deep night of space, and floundering so badly below. His astronomy, radical and prophetic, far surpassed the imagination of his enemies. As the moral arc of the universe curved toward justice, King also bent himself. Martin Luther King found freedom a quarter-century ago. Like a rocket ship struggling for orbit, America speaks his path.

VOICES



He was the greatest influence in my whole life. I was a gangster, hustler, a pimp . . . I got a master's degree and became a research chemist, the first black chemist hired by the federal government. I was still filled with hatred and distrust . . . Here was a guy saying, "Get behind me, and I will tell you how to get free." . . . With King, I found myself.

— **Hosea Williams, a former King aide, is a DeKalb County commissioner in Atlanta**



Black America: Then and Now

DEMOGRAPHICS		1970	1990
Population		22.5 million	30.0 million
Students at Thomas Jefferson High School in Brooklyn.		1970	1990
Per capita income		\$1,818	\$8,859
U.S. average		\$3,139	\$14,420
Median household income		\$10,504	\$19,758
U.S. average		\$18,802	\$30,056

Newsday / Jim Cummins



At sewer site in Massapequa Newsday File Photo

BUSINESS		1972	1987
Black-owned businesses		194,000	424,165
Minority unemployment rate		1968	1992
White unemployment rate		6.7%	12.7%
		3.2%	6.5%
Farm operators		1969	1987
		2,626	2,043
Commercial airline pilots		1968	1992
		12	600

POLITICS		1968	1992
% of eligible blacks registered		66.2%	64.5%
House members		1968	1992
Senate members		5	39
Governors		1	1
		0	1
Federal judicial appointees		'61-'69	'81-'88
		14	7
Nassau county judges		1968	1992
		0	4
Nassau asst. district attorneys		1968	1992
		1	8



Va. Gov. L. Douglas Wilder announces his presidential candidacy. He later withdrew before the primaries began.

AP Photo

HEALTH		1970	1990
Life Expectancy		1970	1990
Male		60.0	64.5
Female		68.0	73.6
Cancer Deaths (rate per 100,000 people)			
Male		198.0	221.9
Female		123.5	156.1
Infant Mortality (rate per 100,000 people)		32.6	18.0
Heart Disease (rate per 100,000 people)			
Male		375.9	256.8
Female		251.7	237.0



A premature infant

SPORTS		1968	1992
Blacks on roster of the Boston Red Sox		5	4
Blacks on roster of the New York Yankees		5	10
Blacks on roster of the New York Mets		4	12
NBA coaches		'67-'68	'92-'93
		1	6



Cleveland Cavaliers head coach Lenny Wilkins. The former player also has coached at Seattle.

MILITARY		1968	1992
Annapolis Naval Academy graduating cadets		4	45
West Point Military Academy graduating cadets		10	95
U.S. Coast Guard Academy graduating cadets		2	2
% of armed services who are black		1970	1992
		10.2%	20.0%



West Point cadets celebrate their graduation

AP Photo

Compiled by Renee Lolya
SOURCE: U.S. Census, Congressional Quarterly, Dept. of Defense, U.S. Bureau of Health Statistics, military academies, Nassau County.

His Life & Times


Preacher's Path to Fame

A young Martin Luther King Jr. was happily pastoring the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in 1955, when a black seamstress named Rosa Parks was hauled off to jail for refusing to give up her seat to a white man on one of Montgomery, Alabama's segregated buses.

Local blacks seized on this latest insult as an opportunity to challenge a century of abuses to which they had been subjected there and elsewhere across the South.

A movement that transformed America sprouted from that Montgomery bus boycott, and the shy but oratorically gifted minister was catapulted to a sudden and star-crossed prominence as the boycott's leader.

Today, 25 years after his assassination in Memphis, Tenn., by a white sniper, Martin Luther King Jr. is an icon of an era in which America began to shed its hard, often brutal, legacy of segregation. Hailed as the primary exponent of nonviolent protest to virulent racism, he is honored with a national holiday on his Jan. 15 birthday — for the first time last year, in all 50 states. His "I Have a Dream" speech is memorized by schoolchildren of all hues as testament to the ideals of racial harmony.

King remains in death as controversial a figure as he was in life — an almost saintly image tarnished by charges that he plagiarized, had extramarital affairs and was a Communist sympathizer.

Those who know King complain that educators, politicians and the media have "sanitized" the life of a man with revolutionary ideas who was viewed with suspicion by a succession of U.S. presidents and hounded by the FBI. "Martin Luther King ought to disturb the body politic, and there is a danger in the fact that he is in vogue now and that there is this sentimental, romanticized view of him," said the Rev. Wyatt Tee Walker, who was chief of staff of King's Southern Christian Leadership Conference during the 1960s and is now pastor of the Canaan Baptist Church in Harlem. "In fact he was a radical revolutionary who was pragmatic with his revolutionary ideas," Walker said.

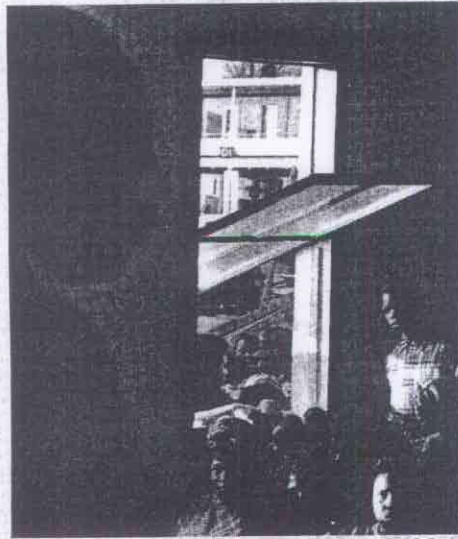
For 13 years, from Montgomery to Memphis,

BY RON HOWELL
 STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Black Star / Charles Moore

Please see IMAGE on Page 7 **Young Activist.** Authorities arrest King in Montgomery, Ala., in 1958.



Silhouetted King speaks at 1968 church rally in Eutaw, Ala.

King's Place In History

Here are the assessments of two noted historians

John Henrik Clark
 Professor emeritus of African world history at Hunter College. Author of "Christopher Columbus and the African Holocaust" and "Notes for an African World Revolution."

He was in my opinion one of the great theologians of the 20th Century, black or white. But he gave America a lesson that Americans did not listen to, a lesson that could have saved it . . . Time, I think, has validated his methods, but in my opinion his approach to nonviolence was somewhat naive. Nonviolence can only be successful when the enemy gives some serious consideration to it, and the enemy was not willing to give any serious consideration to it . . . Nonetheless he was a remarkably committed human being, and the fact that he's dead and I'm alive proves he's braver than I am.

Nicolaus Mills
 Professor of American studies at Sarah Lawrence College. Author of "Like a Holy Crusade: Mississippi 1964. The Turning of the Civil Rights Movement in America."

He assumed that for justice to take place, the entire society had to be changed. I think we've given up on the notion of changing the entire society and settled for increments. Radical politics now means getting a piece of the pie for one group or another. What King understood acutely was that once the barriers to segregation passed, what had to follow were the barriers to economic segregation. But in trying to give King sainthood, we've lost sight of the economic realities of his vision.

NEWSMAN, SIMONY, APRIL 4, 1983



WHAT INFLUENCED HIM

King Showed Early Promise

BY GEORGE DEWAN
STAFF WRITER

"My parents taught me something very early. Somehow they instilled in me a feeling of somebodyness, and they would say to me over and over again that you're just as good as any child in Atlanta, Georgia." — Martin Luther King Jr., 1966

For the young Martin Luther King Jr., the first influence was his parents. They made him feel that he was somebody.

We know much about the mature King, the Nobel Peace Prize winner, the civil rights leader, the martyr at age 39. What of King the student, growing up in segregated Atlanta, skipping two high school grades and entering college at age 15?

These were King's formative years, and his parents were merely the earliest of the people who left their mark on him. Many were teachers. Others were writers, for King was a voracious reader. And one was the world's most famous pacifist, Mahatma Gandhi.



At Morehouse. King at 1948 lecture.

King was born in 1929 in a middle-class section of the heart of black Atlanta. The house was close to the Ebenezer Baptist Church, where King's father — "Daddy" King, he was called — was the pastor.

King spent hours in the church, listening to his father preach and his mother play the organ and singing gospel songs. At the all-black Booker T. Washington High School, King skipped two grades, and was ready for college at 15.

Active in athletics, King also took violin lessons, and earned money delivering newspapers. He spent most of his money on stylish clothes.

In 1944, King entered Morehouse College, an all-male, all-black school in Atlanta. He majored in sociology, and considered becoming a doctor, then a lawyer, but later decided to follow his father into the pulpit. One of his favorite books at that time was Henry David Thoreau's "On Civil Disobedience."

One of the most influential people in King's life was the president of Morehouse, Benjamin Mays, also a minister. From his weekly pulpit, Mays preached the need for blacks to protest for social change. King listened, and took extensive notes.

King next went to Crozer Theological Seminary, a small, mainly white institution in Chester, Pa. Although an average student at Morehouse, he had a perfect A average as the valedictorian of his class at Crozer. It was at Crozer that he heard a lecture about Gandhi, and he was hooked.

"It was so profound and fascinating that I left the meeting and bought a half-dozen books on Gandhi's life and works. Gandhi, a Hindu lawyer born in India, developed a philosophy of nonviolent resistance as a form of civil disobedience. He was assassinated in 1948, but his nonviolent tactics were adopted in the United States by King and others.

Having won a \$1,300 scholarship as the Crozer valedictorian, King enrolled at Boston University to study for a doctorate in theology, which he earned in 1955. (In 1990, Stanford University researchers compiling King's papers found that in his doctoral dissertation, King had used the works of other writers without attribution. Studying the matter, Boston University defined the act as plagiarism, but said that King's degree would not be revoked.)

In 1955 King became pastor of a Baptist church in Montgomery, Ala.; at 26, he was chosen to lead a city bus boycott to protest segregated seating. The private man had become a public man.

Student Briefing Page on the News

Please send us questions you'd like answered about news events, along with your written opinions and thoughts. Send them with your name, school and grade to: Bill Zimmerman, editor
Newsday Student Briefing
235 Pinelawn Road
Melville, NY 11747-4250

THINGS YOU CAN DO

You Can March. To commemorate the 30th anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s civil rights march, where he delivered his "I Have a Dream" speech, a march on Washington has been planned for Aug. 28. Write to the Martin Luther King Center at 449 Auburn Ave. NE, Atlanta 30312. The New York State Martin Luther King Jr. Commission will be joining today with other groups for a march marking the 25th anniversary of King's assassination. The march will start at 3 p.m. at 42nd Street and Second Avenue and proceed to Dag Hammarskjold Plaza, United Nations. For information, call: 1-800-647-KING (1-800-647-5464).

You Can Study and Practice Nonviolence. Students, 14 to 18, can apply to the New York State Martin Luther King Jr. Institute for Nonviolence to participate in its Youth Leadership Programs. The programs teach young people leadership skills and nonviolent techniques. Applications are being accepted for a three-week summer program. Call the Institute at 1-800-647-KING (1-800-647-5464) or write to it at 41 State St., Albany, N.Y. 12207.

DO THIS TOGETHER

What Dr. King Meant to Me

Here's a place for you and your parents or older brother, sister, or even a neighbor, to share a moment recollecting what impact the ideas, words and practices of Martin Luther King Jr. have had on your lives.

Here are my thoughts:

Here's my memory:

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Student's name.....
School, town.....

Older person's name.....
Relationship.....

Please send in your intergenerational memories to us. We'll publish some of them on a future Student Briefing Page.

COLLECT THIS NEWSDAY PEOPLE-IN-HISTORY CARD

Born: Jan. 15, 1929 **Died:** April 4, 1968
Marriage: Coretta Scott; four children
Education: Morehouse College, BA, 1948; Crozer Theological Seminary, bachelor of divinity, 1951; Boston University, PhD, theology, 1955.

Life and Career
Born in Atlanta, the son of a Baptist minister and a schoolteacher... began as a Baptist preacher, first in Montgomery, Ala., then at his father's Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta... thrust into the civil rights spotlight in 1955 as a leader of the Montgomery bus boycott... the first president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, 1957... increasingly involved with civil rights protests, including the beginning of the "sit-in" movement... his "I Have a Dream" speech was a highlight of the 1963 March on Washington... awarded Nobel Peace Prize, 1964... while in Memphis, Tenn., to demonstrate support for striking sanitation workers, was shot and killed on the balcony of the Lorraine Motel.

Quote
"I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood."

Compiled by George Dewan



Newsday/Neil Levine

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.
Civil rights leader

Cut along the broken line, fold in the middle, and paste on a cardstock. You've got your Newsday People-in-History trading card — add it to your collection.



One Road, Unique Paths

BY GEORGE E. JORDAN
STAFF WRITER

The King clan — the first family of the civil rights movement — lives with the triumph and tragedy of a heritage that has put their own lives under a powerful microscope.

His widow, Coretta Scott King, 65, never remarried and still lives in the same four-bedroom home on Sunset Avenue in Atlanta where she and Martin Luther King Jr. brought up their children. She has made the slain leader's legacy her life, and in the process she has emerged as a leader in her own right as chief executive officer of the Martin Luther King Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change.

"There are a lot of people who would love to relegate me to a symbolic figure and that's it," she said in a recent interview with the Atlanta Constitution. "I have never been just a symbol of anything. I am a thinker. I have strong beliefs, and I try to be an example of what I believe in."

Although she suffers from phlebitis in her legs

and often works from bed at home, Coretta Scott King goes on the road to give about 50 speeches a year and participates in world conferences on peace and women's issues.

This year, in a break with tradition, she plans to mark the anniversary of her husband's assassination with a public statement. Never before on the anniversary has she discussed the assassination publicly, laid a wreath at his tomb or speculated on conspiracy theories, said her spokeswoman, Denise McFall. "Up until this point, Mrs. King has stayed away from discussing the assassination or his death," McFall said. "It's a departure for her to make a statement."

The break in protocol was prompted by the hundreds of requests this year for interviews with the martyr's widow and their four children by American and foreign media.

For the King children, name recognition and accompanying expectations have been a curse as well as a blessing, forcing them to balance the high



Black Star / Flip Schinke

Family Ties. The Kings share quality time at home.

expectations with their own wants.

Bernice Albertine King, at 5 the youngest of the children when her father was gunned down, is the only one to follow his call to the ministry. Family friends say her manner is the most reminiscent of her father's. She was ordained last year, after earning a law degree and a master of divinity degree from Emory University.

Dexter King, then age 7, owns an entertainment consulting firm and is a familiar face in Atlanta's nightclub scene. Although he was installed as president of the King Center in 1989, he resigned after only four months on the job. He continues to work with the center.

Martin Luther King III, age 10 when his father was killed, is serving his second four-year term as a Fulton County, Ga., commissioner, a part-time job that pays \$16,000. He also gives about 100 speeches a year, about half of them paid. Recently, he said he may run for statewide office when his current term expires next fall.

The slain leader's eldest son still lives at home and has often said he feels pressure to live up to his namesake, who at age 35 was a Nobel Prize winner. "I often think, 'I sure would like to have a father to talk to,'" he said in an interview last year. "It would be great to have fatherly advice. . . . But a lot of kids don't have fathers."

The eldest child, Yolanda, is the most outgoing. She is a stage actress who in 1980 founded a traveling theater company with Attallah Shabazz, the eldest daughter of slain Muslim leader Malcolm X. Their company performs in about 60 cities annually.

Preacher's Path to Fame

IMAGE from Page 5

King lived with daily premonitions of an assassin's bullet. His home was bombed, his family received death threats, and he was locked up more than a dozen times in southern prisons where his wife, Coretta Scott King, feared he would be killed.

King's nonviolence increasingly became a personal way of life, as he grew fascinated with the philosophy of the Indian ascetic Mahatma Gandhi. His associates tell of a time in 1962 at a Birmingham hotel when a self-described Nazi struck him again and again in the face as King stood and took the blows without a word and without retreating.

King's organized protests were another matter. While nonviolent, they were calculated to provoke violent reactions from racist authorities.

Walker, who called himself the "field general in Dr. King's nonviolent war," recounted how he used to maneuver black bystanders into tense faceoffs with notorious Birmingham Sheriff Eugene (Bull) Connor. "Knowing he would do something foolish."

As King's political vision expanded, he began to see injustice not only in the racial barriers of the South, but also in the racially segregated cities of the North, like Chicago and Cleveland — and later in the U.S. bombing of North Vietnam.

In the process, King earned the suspicion and enmity of political leaders in Washington. "He was the most powerful voice in America against the war, and the president was furious about that," recalled Roger Wilkins, a former official in the administration of President Lyndon B. Johnson.

FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover in particular disliked King with a passion and encouraged his agents to uncover dirt, through extensive bugging of King's sleeping quarters, focusing on King's extramarital liaisons. The FBI sent evidence of King's affairs to his wife. Even the Army spied on King and his associates as alleged potential subversives.

Scholars say that black activists often had ties to Communists, who for reasons of expediency as well as sympathy were out front in the struggle for black rights. King was no exception.

"The Communist Party and Communists played

an important role in the civil rights movement, although their numbers were fairly small," said Julian Bond, a Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee ex-leader, who teaches at the University of Virginia and American University. "We ought not to be ashamed of admitting these people were generally hard-working and skilled and played an important role in pushing black freedom forward."

Of particular concern to President John F. Kennedy and his brother, Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy, himself assassinated just two months after King, was King's relationship with Stanley Levison, a white New York attorney who for years was one of King's closest advisers and fund raisers.

On a number of occasions, the Kennedys sent intermediaries to King warning him that the FBI had information linking Levison, who died in 1979, to Communist organizations. This interference by the federal government still rankles Clarence B. Jones, a black New York lawyer who often served as a go-between for King and Levison.

Jones said the King-Levison relationship was the best and most productive example of cooperation between black and Jewish activists of the civil rights era. "It was Stanley who brought to our attention some of the parallels with the struggle of Jews in America, and introduced us to the works of Isaac Bashevis Singer, and I'm sure Martin would feel pleased at my saying this," said Jones, his voice choking at the recollection.

Twenty-five years after his death, even the most fiery black activists give King a measure of respect. The day after King's assassination, JeRoyd Greene, then a law student at Yale, writhed in anger and told a large gathering on the New Haven Green to come back that night with matchbooks and set fire to downtown buildings.

New Haven did not burn that evening, but other cities, including Washington, did.

Greene, a Richmond, Va., civil rights attorney who has since changed his name to Sa'ad El-Amin, now admits to a "revisionist" view of King.

"I didn't see him in the full dimensions of the giant that he is," said El-Amin, "a giant that has no peer in the Twentieth Century."

VOICES



Black people had a tendency to accept things as they were. After he demonstrated to us our potential, it changed our views in being more forceful about our rights. . . . But we as adults haven't been teaching our kids enough about our black heroes, about King, about Malcolm X. . . . As long as it is a fad they wear the T-shirts, but most of them don't know the reasons.

—Beacher Pratt, Greenville, subway motorman



Death, Doubt and Debate

BY MICHAEL DORMAN

"After you've been asked the question a thousand times, it becomes humiliating to have to answer it again. But, no, I did not kill Martin Luther King."

— James Earl Ray

It seemed clear enough at the time. James Earl Ray, a habitual criminal whose habits ran toward the two-bit burglary and stickup, stood before a Memphis judge nearly 25 years ago and pleaded guilty to one of the crimes of the century — the murder of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.

"Has anything . . . been promised to you to get you to plead guilty?" Judge Preston Battle asked. "No," Ray said.

"Has any pressure of any kind, by anyone in any way, been used on you to get you to plead guilty?"

"No."

"Are you pleading guilty to murder in the first degree in this case because you killed Doctor Martin Luther King?"

"Yes."

That plain colloquy notwithstanding, James Earl Ray — on the 25th anniversary of the assassination — protests more adamantly today than ever that his guilty plea was coerced, that he did not murder King and that he is being unjustly imprisoned.

Ray, at 65, is serving a 99-year prison sentence behind 12-foot razor ribbon fences at the Riverbend Maximum Security Institution near Nashville, Tenn. His cell is a concrete cube without bars and with only a four-inch-wide glass slit as a window.

Asked in a telephone interview how

On the Eve. King and his colleagues stand on the motel balcony the night before his assassination. AP Photo

he is holding up under those conditions, Ray replies: "About the same."

"About the same as what?"

"About the same as the last twenty years."

His voice seems curiously soft, tentative, perhaps even shy. Whatever subjective preconceptions exist about how a convicted assassin is expected to sound, this voice does not meet them. But Ray's words are tough — the language of a crusty old con.

By Ray's account, sundry villains are responsible for what he calls his unjust imprisonment: His defense attorney, the late Percy Foreman, a famed Houston criminal lawyer who represented more than 1,000 accused killers and saw only 56 sent to prison. William Bradford Huie, the late author who paid Ray \$40,000 for the rights to his story. The FBI. Prosecutors. Judges. And a supposed

mystery man called Raoul, who Ray says set him up to take the rap for the assassination.

The day before Ray entered his guilty plea, Percy Foreman asked him — "now that it's about to be all over" — why an experienced criminal would make such basic mistakes as Ray had in the King case. Why did he leave his fingerprints behind in the Memphis rooming house where the fatal shot had been fired? Why did he leave his prints on binoculars found at the scene? Why, when he fled the rooming house for his getaway car, did he discard on a sidewalk both the murder weapon and a transistor radio imprinted with his convict number from a Missouri prison he had escaped a year earlier.

"I thought I was going to get away," Ray told

VOICES



Dr. King's words and actions were studied more intensively after he died than they were listened to while he was alive. His teaching and struggles can be a model, and unfortunately it seems that we as black folks are not paying as much attention as we should.

— Lincoln Lynch, Manhattan, civil rights activist and former chairman of Long Island CORE

James Earl Ray never was tried for the 1968 murder of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. because he pleaded guilty. Three days later, he changed his mind and asked for a trial. Twenty-five years later, he's getting one.

On television, anyway. HBO staged a 10-day trial in Tennessee two months ago, with a real-life defense attorney, prosecutor, judge and jury — and with Ray's testimony and a verdict. None of the witnesses, however, was under oath.

"Guilt or Innocence: The Trial of James Earl Ray" premieres tonight at 8 o'clock on the payable channel as a three-hour digest of that 55-hour proceeding. "This is an attempt at recreating a reality that perhaps should have taken place 25 years ago," says HBO's legal consultant, New York University law professor Hurt Neuhorne, "and that will give us all an opportunity to take a look at the facts — raw facts, put on the table, cross-examined, vigorously tested before a neutral jury, using exactly the rules that a real

A Convicted Killer's Trial By Television

trial would use." HBO has done something like this before: In 1988, with Britain's Thames Television, the channel staged "a commission of inquiry" into Austrian chancellor Kurt Waldheim's involvement in World War II crimes.

Thames producer Jack Saltman returns for the trial, retracing ground he covered 15 years ago for a British TV documentary about the King assassination. Then, Saltman left convinced "about five percent of the story had been told."

Ray has steadfastly claimed innocence for the past 25 years, saying his late attorney, the flamboyant Percy Foreman, warned he'd get the electric chair if he didn't plead guilty. "If you plead guilty under American law you waive your right

to a trial," Neuhorne says. "That may be perfectly okay as a way to legally end it . . . but it can't be perfectly okay as a way to put the lid on the facts that have never been publicly aired."

HBO taped its trial Jan. 25 through Feb. 3 at Memphis' Shelby County Courthouse. There was no script, and no actors were used. The judge, Marvin E. Frankel, was U.S. District Court judge in New York for 13 years and a Columbia University law professor. Prosecutor W. Hickman Ewing, who was U.S. attorney in Tennessee for 10 years, had access to the government's original case against Ray. Defense attorney William Pepper has represented Ray since 1985. "Each lawyer was given an investigative budget and told to develop his case the best he could," says Neuhorne. Jurors were chosen from 1,600 people interviewed in areas of the country demographically similar to Memphis (which was excluded because of pretrial publicity).

— Diane Werts



TV Defendant. Ray during HBO trial.

Foreman. "I thought I could get to Africa and serve two or three years in one of them mercenary armies, and those folks over there wouldn't send me back."

Asked about that conversation now, Ray says: "If I knew I was going to get a murder case against me, I wouldn't have left those fingerprints and all that. But I didn't know that."

He shrugs the evidence aside, however, to launch an attack on Foreman. "Percy persuaded me to fire my first attorney, Arthur Hanes," Ray says. "He promised me he wouldn't get involved in any literary deals. But he didn't keep his promise. He was offered \$165,000 by William Bradford Huie and the book people. He didn't want me to go to trial because the facts all would have come out in court and my story wouldn't have been worth all that money. So he persuaded me to plead guilty and prevent a trial. But how are you going to prove it?" Ray faced a possible death sentence if he went to trial, and Foreman contended that the 99-year plea bargain he negotiated represented a major triumph.

As for the mysterious Raoul, Ray claims they met in a Montreal tavern in July, 1967, while Ray was on the lam from his Missouri prison escape. He says Raoul had "what sounded to me like a Spanish accent." Although the two of them supposedly worked together in smuggling — out of the United States to Canada and Mexico — and other criminal enterprises over the next eight months, Ray says he never learned Raoul's last name. "I figured if he wanted me to know it, he'd tell me," Ray says.

Ray admits buying the murder weapon five days before the assassination at a sporting goods store in Birmingham, Ala. It was a 30-06 Remington rifle, mounted with a high-powered scope. He claims Raoul told him to buy the rifle, take it to the Memphis boarding house and wait for him in a rented room there. They planned to use the rifle as a sample, Ray says, to show to some other mysterious figures who were expected to make an illicit "buy" of similar rifles from them.

But why, Ray is asked, would such a plot be necessary to buy rifles that could be obtained legally in sporting goods stores from coast to coast?

"Obviously, Raoul never intended to do that," Ray says. "That was just his cover story to me."

His cover story for what?
"To set me up for the murder case," Ray says.

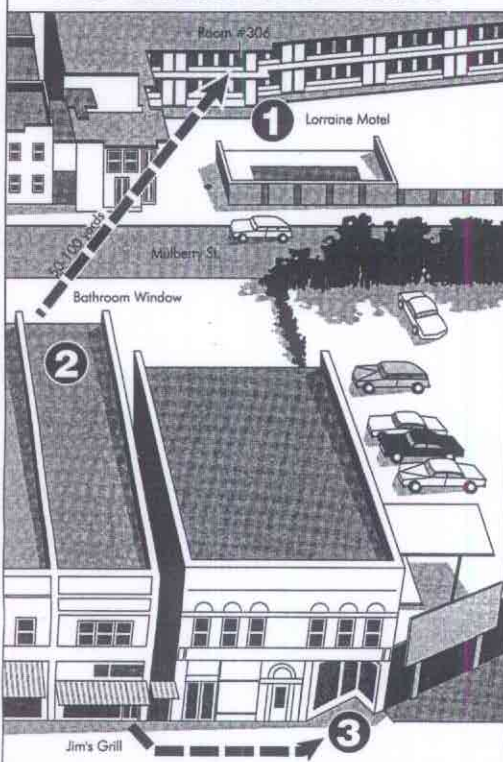
Ray says he then had no choice except to flee — taking a tortuous route to England, where he was eventually captured on June 8, 1968.

How come, Ray is asked, no one has produced any credible evidence in all these years that Raoul even exists?

"Ask [Attorney General] Janet Reno," Ray replies. "There are fifty-eight cubic feet of classified federal files on this case in the National Archives. This case has reached the point where it can be resolved if all the files are opened. All Janet Reno has to do is cart out the documents. I don't know what the documents will show. They haven't declassified any files to help me, that's for sure. But if they open the files and give me a new trial, I know I can win the case. They can trot out two hundred prison informants who say I confessed, and that won't be enough to convict me."

Assuming Raoul did exist, why would he pick for his presumably complex international crimes a small-time crook such as Ray — whose arrest record ran from vagrancy to the burglary of a dry-

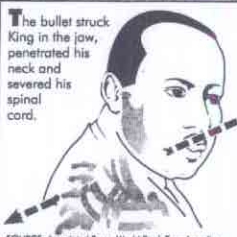
The Assassination Scene



1 On April 4, Martin Luther King Jr. was standing on the balcony outside Room 306 of the Lorraine Motel, where he had come to lead protests on behalf of the city's 1,300 striking sanitation workers.

2 A shot was fired from the window of a bathroom of a boarding house.

3 Immediately after the shooting, James Earl Ray came out of the building and dropped his gun in a nearby doorway.



The bullet struck King in the jaw, penetrated his neck and severed his spinal cord.

SOURCE: Associated Press, World Book Encyclopedia

cleaning store to the holdup of a grocery?

"I was never no big-time guy," Ray concedes. "And I don't know why Raoul picked me. I was just in Montreal when he was there. I guess all he wanted to do at the beginning was a little smuggling."

In 1978, the U.S. House Select Committee on Assassinations concluded after a two-year study that Ray had killed King and that "there is a likelihood" he did so as a result of a conspiracy. That supposed likelihood, never proved, was said to involve a group of St. Louis racists.

"I was never approached by any of those people in St. Louis identified by the committee," Ray says. "I knew just one of them. He was in prison with me once. But I don't think I talked to him four times in my whole life — and never about any assassination."

There is evidence that Ray stalked King in the days before the civil rights leader was shot down from the balcony of Memphis' Lorraine Motel, about 300 feet from the rooming house. Ray had ap-

peared in such cities as Atlanta, Memphis and Selma, Ala., when King was there. He concedes being in those cities, but denies any stalking.

Assuming Ray was the assassin, what was his motive? Some have described him as a racist. Two of his brothers, Jerry and John, have said Ray has been "wild against niggers" all his life. Prison records at the U.S. Penitentiary in Leavenworth, Kan., where Ray served time in the 1950s for cashing stolen postal money orders, show he declined an opportunity for a transfer to the softer life of a prison honor farm because dormitories there were integrated. A woman Ray knew in Montreal reported to the FBI that he told her: "You've got to be around niggers to know them."

Asked now to describe his attitude toward blacks, Ray replies: "There's no law saying you have to be for or against any people." He said he turned down the transfer from Leavenworth because he had a few months left on his sentence and had heard that blacks on the honor farm used marijuana. "You could get extra time on your sentence if they caught you around marijuana. So I just told them to forget it."

Another suggested motive was ego. As a small-time criminal, it was said, Ray had long harbored an ambition to make the FBI's list of 10 most-wanted fugitives. At the time of the King assassination, the television show "The FBI" regularly telecast alerts for those on the Top 10. Author William Bradford Huie described, from information provided by Ray, how Ray — on the run in Toronto 17 days after the assassination — searched out a bar with its TV set tuned to a Buffalo station carrying "The FBI." He then saw actor Efreim Zimbalist Jr., playing an FBI agent, urging the public to watch for an armed, dangerous fugitive named James Earl Ray. The experience left Ray both "elated and scared," Huie said in his book "He Slew the Dreamer."

Today, Ray says: "That's ridiculous. Anyone who wants to get on the Top 10 list by committing a murder has a serious mental problem. They should have sent me to a lunatic asylum instead of prison. Why should I break out of prison three times if I just wanted to get on the Top 10 list?"

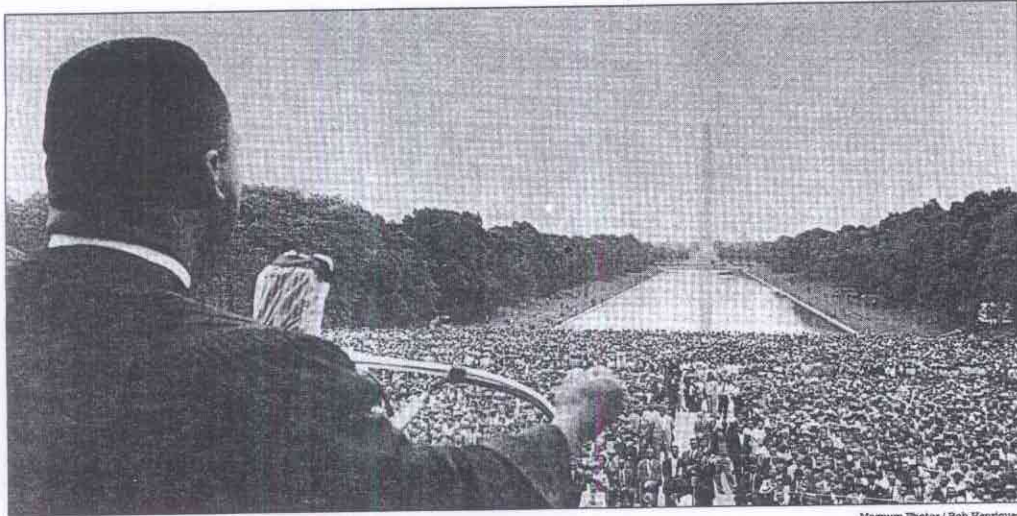
With the approach of the 25th anniversary of King's death, there has been renewed interest in Ray's case. The Rev. Jesse Jackson, then a King aide who witnessed the assassination, has called for reopening the investigation — saying he has never accepted the "one-crazy-man" theory of political assassinations. Others have demanded the opening of government files, including House committee documents now closed to the public until 2029.

A new paperback edition of Ray's autobiography is being published today. And an HBO docudrama produced by a British film company — using as its framework a mock trial of Ray (who plays himself) — premieres tonight.

Ray will spend part of the anniversary of the assassination watching a tape of the mock trial in prison this morning. He will not learn the verdict until he sees the film's ending.

But, then, Ray has known the truth of his guilt or innocence for 25 years.

Michael Dorman is a free-lance writer whose books include "We Shall Overcome" and "King of the Courtroom: Percy Foreman for the Defense."



Magnum Photos / Bob Henriques

Misconstrued Message. Erroneously remembered as a complacent dreamer, King's ideals moved thousands in the 1963 March on Washington.

Twenty-five years after his assassination, the militant part of Martin Luther King Jr.'s political legacy is often forgotten. Simultaneously, King's historical image is increasingly distorted by the popular misconception that he was primarily a philosophical "dreamer" rather than a realistic and often courageous dissident.

King's true legacy is not the 1963 March on Washington and his optimistically upbeat "I Have a Dream" speech; it is instead his 1968 game plan for a massively disruptive but resolutely nonviolent

"poor people's campaign" aimed at the nation's capital, a protest that came to pass only in a muted and disjointed form following his death.

Some of the distortion of King's popular image is a direct result of how disproportionately he nowadays is presented as a gifted and sanguine speech-maker whose life ought to be viewed through the prism of his "Dream." King had used the "I Have a Dream" phrase several times before his justly famous Washington oration, but on numerous occasions in later years, in speeches that are hardly ever featured in present-day video clips, he invoked his famous 1963 phrase only to emphasize

Legacy Of His Nonviolence Obscures Strength

BY DAVID J. GARROW

how the "dream" he had had in Washington had "turned into a nightmare."

Both the dilution of King's legacy and the misrepresentation of his image are also in part due to the national holiday stature now accorded his birthday. Making King an object of official celebration inescapably leads to some smoothing of edges and tempering of substance that otherwise would irritate and challenge those Americans who are just as eager to endorse "I Have a Dream" as they are anxious to reject any "Poor People's Campaign."

But another facet of King's erroneous present-day image as a milquetoast moderate, particularly among young people, is beyond doubt directly tied to the greatly increased prominence of Malcolm X. Even before the media boomlet that accompanied Spike Lee's 1992 movie, popular appreciation of Malcolm had expanded well beyond anything that existed in the first two decades following Malcolm's death in 1965. Even if young people's understanding of Malcolm's message is oftentimes embarrassingly faulty or nonexistent, among youthful Americans of all races the rise of Malcolm has vastly magnified the mistaken stereotype that "Malcolm and Martin" were bipolar opposites.

Far too many people presume that if Malcolm personified unyielding tenacity and determination, King, as his supposed opposite, was no doubt some sort of vainglorious compromiser who spent more time socializing with the Ken-

nedys than fighting for social change. Hardly anything could be further from the truth, for while Malcolm's courageous self-transformation is deserving of far more serious attention and study than it has yet received, King was a selflessly dedicated and utterly principled a public figure as America has seen in this century.

Perhaps King's most remarkable characteristic was how he became a nationally and then internationally famous figure without ever having any self-seeking egotistical desire to promote himself onto the public stage, as otherwise is the case with virtually every luminary in contemporary America. Drafted by his colleagues in Montgomery in 1955 to serve as the principal spokesman for the black community's boycott of municipal buses, King was far from eager to be any sort of "leader," and only a deeply spiritual sense of obligation convinced him that he could not refuse this call.

King's resolutely selfless orientation gave his leadership both a public integrity and a private humility that are rare if not wholly unique in recent American history. Perhaps the most tremendous irony of the hundreds upon hundreds of King's ostensibly private and ephemeral telephone conversations that have been preserved for history thanks to the FBI's indecently intrusive electronic surveillance — and the safeguards of the Freedom of Information Act — is how one comes away from a review of King's most unguarded moments with a distinctly

VOICES



Maybe the dream has lost its momentum. I think possibly that black people have become complacent. We have achieved some things as far as some black mayors. But it's like we still don't have enough political power to make large scale achievements for the black community.

— Deloris Stewart of Hampton, Virginia, counselor in children's home

heightened rather than diminished regard for the man. How many other public figures, lacking only a J. Edgar Hoover — or Gennifer Flowers — to preserve their off-the-cuff comments for posterity — could hope to pass such an ultimate test of civic character?

King's remarkable political courage and integrity was just as dramatically visible on the public stage, however, as in his self-critical private conversations. Unlike almost every other public figure, King had no interest in assessing which position on which issue would be the most popular or most remunerative for organizational fund-raising before deciding how and when to speak his mind.

Nowhere was this more starkly apparent than in King's early decision to speak out against American involvement in Vietnam at a time when Lyndon Johnson's war still had the support of most progressive Democrats. Many liberal newspapers — and even several "mainstream" civil rights organizations — vociferously attacked King for devoting his attention to an issue that did not fall within the "black" domain, and while King in private was deeply hurt by such criticism, he had decided to confront the Vietnam issue knowing full well that just such a reaction would ensue.

"Leadership" to King did not mean tailoring one's comments to fit the most recent public opinion poll, or shifting one's issue positions to win greater acclaim or support. King realized too that real leadership was not simply comprised of issuing press releases and staging news conferences, and he was acutely aware that most real "leaders" of the southern civil rights struggle — unheralded people who performed the crucial task of encouraging others to stand up and take an active part in advancing their own lives and communities — got none of the public attention and awards that flowed to King and a very few others.

King understood that in our culture of publicity, an individual symbolic figure such as himself was inevitable and essential to the movement's popular success, but he always sought to emphasize, as in his Nobel Peace Prize lecture, that he accepted such applause and honors only as a "trustee" on behalf of the thousands of unsung people whose contributions and aspirations he sought to represent. King realized, better than many people at the time, and far better than some subsequent disciples, that the real essence of the movement was indeed the local-level activists in scores of generally unpublicized locales. In private, King was sometimes very self-conscious that he personally deserved only a very modest proportion of all the praise and trophies that came his way.

Just as King would welcome our new-found appreciation of Malcolm, King too would be intensely discomforted by a national holiday that sometimes seems to celebrate his persona more than the movement. He would rue how our culture of celebrity has also become more and more a culture of violence, and how economic inequality in America is even more pronounced 25 years after his death than it was in 1968.

King also would rue how his own legacy is too oftentimes shorn of his later nonviolent radicalism, and how his image could be celebrated in death by people who proffered him and the movement no support when he was alive. But King would not worry about any decline in his reputation or fame, for he would greatly welcome increased credit and appreciation for those whom the media and history habitually overlook. If in the next 25 years, Martin Luther King Jr.'s individual image gradually continues to recede, King himself would be happy rather than sad, for personal fame and credit was not something he sought or welcomed either in 1955 or in 1968. □

David J. Garrow is the author of "Bearing the Cross," which won him a Pulitzer Prize and the Robert F. Kennedy Book Award. A visiting distinguished professor of history at The Cooper Union, his next book, "Liberty and Sexuality: The Right to Privacy and the Making of Roe v. Wade," is to be published next winter.

Dream of Opening Doors of Colleges Did Come True

BY WILLIAM DOUGLAS
STAFF WRITER

His teachers said he didn't have the smarts, his parents said they didn't have the money, but Frank Smith dared to dream about escaping the projects of East Harlem to attend college.

"I wanted the opportunity to advance myself," said Smith, now an official at Hofstra University. "But I didn't apply myself at all in high school. To say the least, I was a risk."

But in the days following the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr., many schools, which had been the targets of years of protests and pushes, now thought students such as Smith were risks worth taking.

Across the nation, colleges, universities, and philanthropic foundations honored King by creating scholarships and programs — many bearing his name — that gave black students greater access to higher education by easing the financial and academic restrictions that might have kept them out.

From Smith to Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas, thousands of blacks benefited from the assistance. Black enrollment surged to more than 1.3 million in 1991 — in the 1960s the number of blacks enrolled in colleges wasn't even tracked.

"I am the direct beneficiary of Martin Luther King," said Smith, 41, who was admitted to Hofstra in 1969 through a program called Negro Opportunities at Hofstra (NOAH). "I think King and the civil rights struggle forced Hofstra and other schools to open their doors further. Maybe further than they would have done."

Smith thrived at Hofstra and, after his freshman year, was awarded the university's first Martin Luther King Scholarship, which paid the rest of his tuition.

"It inspired me to receive something named after such a great man," Smith said. "Before coming to Hofstra, I never read a full book. I graduated from here magna cum laude."

After earning a bachelor's degree in history, Smith got a master's in education from Columbia University. Today he is Hofstra's affirmative action officer and the executive director of NOAH, which now stands for New Opportunities at Hofstra and serves all minorities.

"Many of the folks I grew up with are either dead, wounded or killed in Vietnam, or aren't

doing anything of consequence with their lives," Smith said. "I don't know where I would have wound up without NOAH or the King scholarship."

Like Smith, William K. Nelson also knew college was the path from poverty to prosperity. But Nelson, who's eight years older than Smith, never considered attending a predominantly white school.

"What we heard as black high school students in the 1960s was 'Don't bother to apply,'" said Nelson, a Rockland County judge who grew up in Washington, D.C. "That's just the way it was."

So Nelson took the traditional route: He went to Howard University, graduated in 1966 and was set to attend law school there until Vietnam intervened.

While in Vietnam, a fellow soldier who attended Columbia University urged Nelson to apply to the university's law school. He enrolled there in September, 1968, winning a Martin Luther King Fellowship that the nonprofit Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation had established in the wake of King's death. The fellowship, which was discontinued in 1975, covered tuition costs and living expenses for returning black Vietnam veterans.

"King's death eased my way," said Nelson. "Had I come in [to law school] a year earlier or a year later, things might have been different."

Many educators fear things are indeed different and more difficult for black students today. They say 12 years of political conservatism and the financial inability of some schools and foundations to continue minority programs have stalled the educational progress made by blacks after King's death.

Although black undergraduate enrollment increased by 7.1 percent between 1990 and 1991, according to last year's American Council on Education report, the gain was the lowest of all ethnic groups.

Blacks comprised 9 percent of the country's college enrollment in 1990 but only 6 percent of the bachelor's degrees and 5 percent of the master's degrees that were conferred that year, the ACE report said. And the number of blacks who earned doctorates dropped from 1,013 in 1981 to 933 in 1991.

"Martin Luther King was always positive," Nelson said, "and if he were alive, I think he would say, 'We have made a lot of progress, but we have a ways to go yet.'" □



A Beneficiary. Frank Smith.



Essed. William K. Nelson.

His
Martin

Images &

A sampler of snapshots and quotations

If you succumb to the temptation of using violence in your struggle, unborn generations will be the recipients of a long and desolate night of bitterness, and your chief legacy to the future will be an endless reign of meaningless chaos.

— Nov. 10, 1956

A handshake with Malcolm X March 25, 1964, to cement plans for protests if the Senate filibustered civil rights bill.

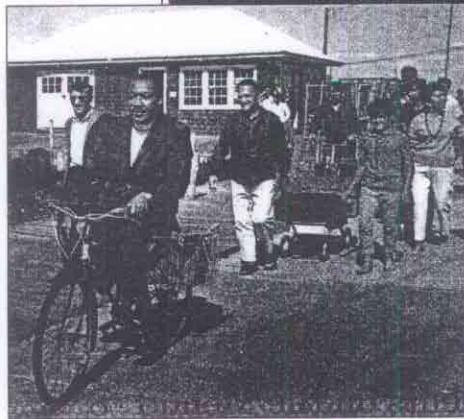


AP Photo

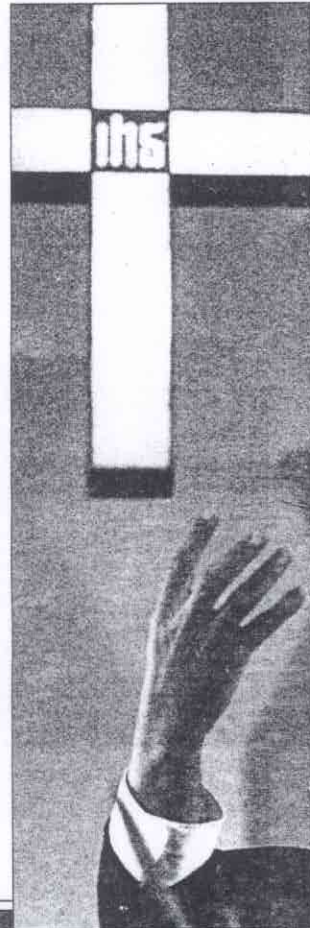
Followed by other ferry-riders, King pedals for the boat after a September, 1967, speaking engagement in Seaview, Fire Island.

I refuse to accept the view that mankind is so tragically bound to the starless midnight of racism and war that the bright daybreak of peace and brotherhood can never become a reality.

— Dec. 10, 1964



Harvey/Stanley Wolfson



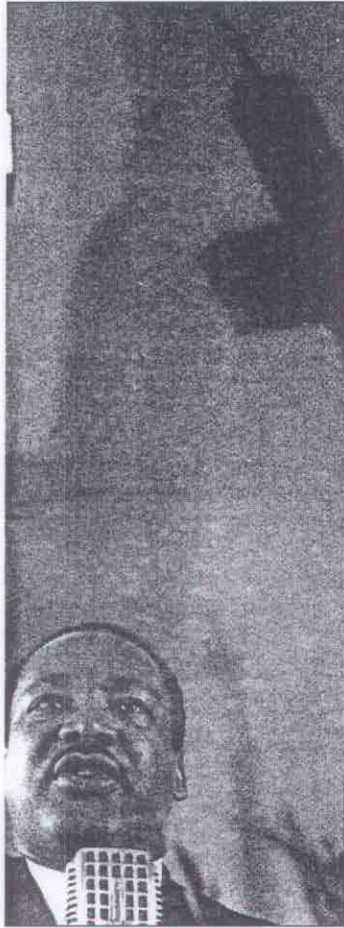
If we do not stop our war against the people of Vietnam immediately, the world will be left with no alternative than to see this as some horribly clumsy and deadly game we have decided to play.

— April 4, 1967



The Imagery

Images from King's struggle for civil rights



Preaching from the podium of an Alabama church in 1967.

© Jim Peppeler



Monetta Shinn / Ebony-64 Magazine

King's widow, Coretta, comforts her daughter, Bernice, 5, during the funeral service at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta, April 9, 1968.

Like anybody, I would like to live a long life ... But I'm not concerned about that now. I just want to do God's will. And He's allowed me to go up to the mountain. And I've looked over. And I've seen the Promised Land. I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight, that we, as a people, will get to the Promised Land.

— April 3, 1968



Magnum / Bruce Davidson

Holding hands with his wife, King led the 1965 civil rights march in Selma, Ala.

There is nothing in all the world greater than freedom. It is worth paying for, it is worth losing a job for, it is worth going to jail for.

— December, 1956

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His Legacy The Cities



he landmarks are still here. Kelly Ingram Park, where they held the daily rallies in the spring of 1963. Adjoining Sixth Avenue North, where schoolchildren marching to City Hall to demand their rights were turned back by water hoses and police dogs. And nearby, Sixteenth Street Baptist Church, where Martin Luther King Jr. inspired the masses with his speeches, and where four girls died one Sunday morning in a bomb blast fueled by racial hatred.

When King came to Birmingham, Ala., in the spring of 1963, the marches and demonstrations that followed, the jailing of thousands of black students, and the brutal retaliation of some of the city's white citizens hit the city like a tornado. When it subsided, the landmarks would remain, but Birmingham would never be the same again.

To understand King's impact on Birmingham, you must understand what the city was like 30 years ago. In 1963, it was a dreary steel town, lacking in culture, rigidly segregated, and infamous for the meanness of its racism. Blacks were abused by whites in public, degraded in stores, forced to stand in separate lines, and barred from most restaurants, theaters, libraries and parks. Blacks had no representation in the city government, and aside from the professionals who worked in their own communities, blacks labored in the steel plants or did menial work for whites.

King's goals were modest — desegregating the lunch counters and dressing rooms in the downtown department stores and opening up jobs for blacks with private businesses and the city. Birmingham's blacks had been pushing for these

changes for years, but King's presence turned the national spotlight on the city. Images of protesters being set upon by police dogs shamed local white leaders into making a truce with the civil rights leaders. By the summer of 1963, Birmingham had repealed all its segregation ordinances. And federal laws opened doors to blacks in voting, employment, housing and education.

Today, Birmingham is a dramatically different city.

"Birmingham has come a long way from being one of the most racist, oppressive cities to being a 'new Birmingham' in a great sense," says the Rev. Abraham Woods, a Baptist minister who helped plan the Birmingham campaign with King and now heads the city's branch of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. "As a black person I didn't feel

I was part of the city back then. I feel totally different now."

You can see the change in the easy mingling of blacks and whites on the expanded 60-block campus of the University of Alabama at Birmingham. The university has replaced the steel mills as the city's biggest employer, and its spiffy buildings and sprawling lawns give Birmingham a clean, modern look. Civility has replaced the city's former rawness. But progress has not solved all its problems, including deep political divisions between the races and the inability of poor inner-city blacks to



Photo by Charles Moore

The Way It Was. A black demonstrator is attacked by police dogs in Birmingham in May, 1963.

Revisiting a City Reborn

BY SHERYL MCCARTHY

enjoy the advantages progress has created.

The most dramatic symbol of the change is at City Hall. Once the only job a black person could get here was sweeping floors. Now blacks run the city government. Richard Arrington, Birmingham's first black mayor, has been in office since 1979. The police and fire chiefs also are black, as are the superintendent of schools and the heads of the departments of parks and recreation and sanitation. Blacks are a majority on the city council, and hold 44 percent of municipal jobs.

Unlike some cities, where black political power coincided with economic decline, Birmingham appears to be thriving. Because it lured white-collar employers — the university, BellSouth, regional banks — it has weathered the closing of the mills and factories. You see its prosperity in shopping malls, in modern apartment complexes and in picturesque subdivisions like Winewood, where blacks and whites live in huge, modern houses.

"King made Birmingham look at itself," Arrington says. "He broke down the barriers to communication between the races and brought people to the table, which eventually led to some of the progress we have today."

Birmingham probably has more biracial civic groups than any other city its size. Black and white business and civic leaders meet regularly to discuss issues

such as developing minority businesses and reducing racial prejudice.

Birmingham now attracts businesses and black and white professionals who in the past would have been scared off by its racist image. The races work together in corporate offices and eat together in restaurants, and a mixed audience turned out recently to hear opera singer Leontyne Price at the Civic Center.

"When I told my mother I was moving here in 1974, she cried," says Bobby Wilson, a black faculty member at the university. "This was a once pretty terrible place. But there's no place I'd rather be now than in Birmingham because the people here understand better than anywhere else in the United States the negative impact that racism can have."

"The Birmingham we see today would not have been possible without Martin Luther King," says Robert Corley, director of the Center for Urban Affairs at the university. "The forces in Birmingham were so strong against any kind of moderation of segregation, it would have been very difficult for any change to occur had it not been for King's boldness in taking on this city government against all the odds. He forced Birmingham to confront its legacy of racism and oppression."

But while so many things in Birmingham have changed, some things remain the same. Please see REBORN on Page 16



King made Birmingham look at itself.

Richard Arrington, the city's first black mayor.

VOICES

When he died, kids in Central Islip wanted to march. They marched, singing "We Shall Overcome." White folks standing along the street said, "We believe in King; can we march?" We said sure. The moment we marched into the parking lot, all of a sudden the kids started screaming, "We did it!" . . . I realized a feeling of second-class citizenship had been defused in a one-mile march . . .

— Jean Johnson, Islip Town clerk



Cicero is the hometown of trouble, 5 square miles of fear and fret. Al Capone sprayed bullets all over town in the bootleg wars of Prohibition. Forty years later, during the civil rights summers of the '60s, Martin Luther King Jr. gave Cicero the name that may still

fit: "Selma of the North." White mobs spilled black blood, and the word went out: Don't cross the bridge into sinister Cicero, brother, because you might not get out alive. Jerome Huey, a 17-year-old black from West Chicago, didn't get the word. Twenty-seven years ago this month, he crossed the bridge into all-white Cicero looking for a job, and four white thugs swinging baseball bats beat him to death.

The murder was a bloody symbol of the racial hatred rampant in America's second largest city and its suburbs, and it helped bring King's southern freedom movement north. During street demonstrations in the summer of 1966, King would be knocked to his knees by a rock in Chicago and blacks would march for the first and last time into Fortress Cicero — behind the protective bayonets of 2,700 National Guardsmen.

"Go, go — go to Cicero!" the marchers chanted. "Niggers, go home!" whites shouted along the route.

"Rocks on your left flank! Bottles on your right flank!" the police bullhorns blared.

The 250 marchers paused to pray on the street corner that had been stained by the blood of a boy who just wasted a job. Two years to the month after the murder, King was dead, too, gunned down in Memphis, Tenn.

And now, at the corner of 25th Street and Laramie Avenue where Huey died, Alexander's Floreria sells sad flowers from the front window: *arreglos funerales*, funeral arrangements. And on that corner today, a 13-year-old white schoolgirl, has just a foggy notion of King. "He's dead," she said, "that's all you need to know."

Twenty-five years after King's assassination, the town once ruled by Al (Scarface) Capone clings more to the memory of the gangster than to what the Nobel Peace Prize-winning black leader stood for, although town leaders say Cicero is no more racist than any other place.

Capone died of syphilis almost half a century ago, but he may blaze again this summer in the Windy City with the scheduled opening of a three-story entertainment complex called, "Capone's Chicago." "The rant of a white mob dies harder than an old mobster does."

Ten years ago, Cicero was the first U.S. city sued by the Justice Department for both housing and job discrimination against blacks. In 1983 not one city employee or one Cicero schoolchild was black.

And then just nine days ago, Cicero became the first U.S. city sued by the Justice Department for using an occupancy ordinance to discriminate again — this time against Hispanics.

The 1990 census listed 141 black residents among Cicero's population of 87,436. The number of Hispanics has grown from 5,000 in 1980 to more than 25,000 now — almost 40 percent of the town's population.

"They still hate the blacks, but now it's, 'The Mexicans are coming! The Mexicans are coming!'" said community activist Judy Contreras. "This is the Selma of the North still. The only thing that's changed is the color of the skin they hate."

Suspicion hangs like factory smoke in the air of this troubled old Rust Belt town hit hard by hard times. Red signs are on almost every traffic light and lamp post: "Warning! We report all suspicious activity to our police."

A woman once called the cops to report a black man impersonating an officer, wearing a police uniform, driving a squad car. That was Wesley Scott, Cicero's first black policeman. Six years ago, on his second day at the station, he found a Ku Klux Klan poster in his locker. "Who's going to kill Wesley?" somebody had written at the bottom, and some of his fellow officers laughed.

Cicero, the hometown of trouble, is also home to thousands of immigrant Poles, Czechs, Hungarians, Lithuanians, Germans, Italians and Greeks. Their small red-brick bungalows, sometimes 20 to a block, squat all over town.

Old World flavors mix now in a newer stew. The Christak Funeral Home is across the street from

Cicero, Illinois



Leading the Way. At a street demonstration in Chicago, King is hit by a rock in this 1966 photo.

5 Square Miles Of Fear

BY DONALD P. MYERS
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

the Prague Sausage Shop, where Krakow salami at \$2.29 a pound hangs in the front window. The Taqueria Jalapeno Mexican Cafe is next to Wing's Chinese Food. Amico's Ristorante Italiano sits caty-cornered from the Three Stooges Liquor Store. Dr. Cosimo Ferraro's Animal Hospital is down the street from the Acropolis Greek Restaurant.

Capone's old bullet-scarred headquarters, the Hawthorne Inn, burned down years ago, and now the Second Federal Savings is going up in its place. Ever since Capone brass-knuckled a balky mayor on the steps of City Hall more than 60 years ago, Cicero has been known for its political dirty tricks.

Down Carmak Road from Scarface's former fortress, the sign in front of Rosicky's Cleaners says, "We remove life's little wrinkles." These are a few of the latest wrinkles in Cicero:

- The longtime Republican mayor died in December. Town trustees replaced him with the wife of the town assessor, who was once listed as a mob soldier by the Chicago Crime Commission.

- In advance of the April 20 city election, the town assessor resigned after pleading guilty to his role in a crime-syndicate gambling operation.

- Local high school students helped topple a superintendent accused of squandering thousands of dollars in school funds.

- A church-based citizens' group, led by priests, questioned

spending by town officials and then had its trash bins removed. Health inspectors then cited the group for not having trash bins and threatened \$200 daily fines.

- The acting mayor, who's running for a four-year-term, said she would try to embarrass convicted youth gang members by making them wear pink aprons while doing town cleanup work. At a boisterous town meeting, an independent candidate for mayor tried to present the mayor's husband — the convicted mob soldier — with a frilly pink apron. It almost caused a fistfight. "What's the difference between street gangs and organized gangs?" the candidate asked.

"I came here five years ago and it was like someone dropped me off planet Earth and put me on Pluto," said the activist Contreras, 32, whose car windows have been broken. "Communist countries have fallen around the world, but here in Cicero they still control people with fear and intimidation."

Former Cicero Mayor Christy Berkos, 67, now a criminal court judge in Chicago, knows just about every political trick in town. Capone's killers did, after all, bounce him on the knees of their blue-serge suits. He criticized Cicero's latest wrinkles — town leaders attacking priests as "charlatans" and appointing the wife of



I don't hold any grudges. Ignorance is like a disease, and education is the answer.

—Det. Wesley Scott, first black police officer in Cicero, IL.

Please see CICERO on Next Page!

His Legacy The Cities



Revisiting A City Reborn

REBORN from Page 14

Birmingham have changed for the better, others have not. Desegregation has not meant integration. As blacks moved into formerly white neighborhoods whites fled east and into the suburbs. When King arrived in Birmingham, the city was 60 percent black. It's now more than 60 percent black.

Birmingham's public schools, which were integrated for a time in the 1970s, are now more than 85 percent black, and efforts to merge Birmingham with predominantly white Jefferson County have been defeated by whites' fears of sending their children to school with black children.

Political coalitions do not extend across racial lines. Arrington has never gotten more than 15 percent of the white vote.

"As soon as blacks took on positions of authority, it reinforced the view that certain things are 'theirs' and other things are 'ours,'" says Jim Jacobson, editor of *The Birmingham News*.

For years the city has been embroiled in a lawsuit brought by its firefighters union, challenging the city's affirmative action plan, which proposed promoting one black firefighter for every white promoted to lieutenant. The city won the last round in federal district court, but the appeals continue. And racial tensions were exacerbated last year when a black man was beaten to death by skinheads.

Ask people in Birmingham to describe how King's goals have not been realized, and they'll point to the poor blacks in the inner city. Unskilled, and with no factory jobs to fall back on, they work in low-paying jobs at McDonald's and Hardee's, or can't find work at all. The 1990 unemployment rate for blacks in the city was 12 percent, three times that of whites. With this growing underclass come homelessness, drugs, crime and infant mortality.

"The difficulty now is that a large number of blacks are not sharing the standard of living that makes it possible to enjoy what the movement brought about," says Odessa Woolfolk, a former schoolteacher and president of the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute.

If you drive past Metropolitan Gardens, the city's largest housing project, the long three-story brick buildings with terraces and outside staircases look luxurious compared to the stark high-rise projects up north. But a study done five years ago found that this community had the lowest average household income of any zip code in the United States.

"This is not King's dream," says Shelley McCall, 42, an unemployed former drug abuse and rehabilitation counselor who lives in Metropolitan Gardens with her 8-year-old daughter. "Did King have an impact on this city? At one time he did. But I think we're regressing instead of progressing. We've lost a



Photo by Sean P. Duffy

Object of Pride. Woods with King statue.

generation of our children to the streets."

On a recent evening in Metropolitan Gardens, one could hear the happy voices of 30 children who belong to a choir sponsored by the Center for Urban Ministries, which also runs a tutorial program, a jobs program and a Bible study group for young people in the project. Fittingly, on this night the children are singing a song whose refrain is "There's hope for the city!"

Thirty years after Martin Luther King Jr. came to Birmingham, he remains a strong presence. Ministers quote him in their sermons. Civic leaders refer to him in speeches. Across the street from the new Civil Rights Institute in Kelly Ingram Park, where schoolchildren once fled the water hoses, stands a statue of King. It was defaced by vandals last year, but has since been cleaned up. He holds a Bible in one hand, his face serene, his eyes fixed on a distant goal.

King challenged an unjust social system, and brought a civilizing influence to Birmingham, a philosophy that says blacks and whites can solve their problems only by working together. This legacy could explain why Birmingham has avoided the violent racial confrontations that have plagued New York and Los Angeles.

Yet there is the danger of treating King too much like an icon, a hero from the past, says the University of Alabama's Corley: "If we don't allow King to continue to challenge us, to build a community that includes and empowers everybody, then we are not honoring his legacy."

Sheryl McCarthy is a columnist for *New York Newsday*.

'Letter From a Birmingham Jail'

I have traveled the length and breadth of Alabama, Mississippi and all the other southern states. On sweltering summer days and crisp autumn mornings I have looked at her beautiful churches with their lofty spires pointing heavenward. I have beheld the impressive outflow of her massive religious education buildings. Over and over again I have found myself asking: "What kind of people worship here? Who is their God? ... Where were they when Governor Wallace gave the clarion call for defiance and hatred? Where were their voices of support when fired, bruised and weary Negro men and women decided to rise from the dark dungeons of complacency and the bright hills of creative protest?"

— Excerpt from King's open letter to the clergy on April 16, 1963, from Birmingham jail

(Call 1-900-438-2483 to hear part of King's narration of this letter. Cost is \$1.)

Five Square Miles of Fear

CICERO from Preceding Page

a convicted mobster as mayor.

The judge was born in Cicero and has lived in the town all his life. He doesn't believe the blue-collar burghers are any more evil or filled with hate than the residents of any other American town. "These Bohemians and Poles are just boxed in on three sides by black slums, all heavy crime," Berkos said. "They just want to preserve the most important thing they have — the homes built with hard work and then passed on from generation to generation."

Berkos, Cicero town attorney in 1966, said he told King the same thing when he brought his Southern Christian Leadership Conference movement north. "People in Cicero, you don't step on their lawns or else you'll get your head blown off," he recalls telling King 27 years ago. "Somebody will stick a shotgun out the window and let whoever's out there have it."

Ironically, King never set foot in Cicero. During street demonstrations in Chicago that summer, King used the threat of a march into Cicero to get Mayor Richard J. Daley and other Chicago officials to agree to attack housing discrimination.

Bob Lucas, who at the time was president of the Chicago chapter of the Congress of Racial Equality, said then that King's housing accord was nothing more than worthless white words.

Lucas, 68 now, is the director of a community-service organization on Chicago's south side. He said he led the only black march into the "Selma of the North" just to raise a little hell in all-white Cicero.

"Doc called me that morning — we called him Doc — and asked me not to go," Lucas said. "When he understood that we would go anyway, he said, 'I wish you good luck.'"

Fourteen people were injured in the march, some hit by rocks or bottles, and a few were jabbed by National Guard bayonets. Thirty-nine people were arrested. Nonviolence went out the window with the cherry bombs that Sunday afternoon. A few of the black marchers wore baseball gloves. They caught some of the rocks thrown by whites and threw them back.

After Huey's murder, after the march across the bridge into Cicero, after barrages of bricks and bottles, after King's assassination, has anything changed?

"Blacks are worse off in Chicago now than they were twenty-five years ago," Lucas said. "Blacks across the country are worse off, too, of course, but we've got a brand of racism in this town that's deep. If you think New York's bad, Chicago is worse. I guess the only rival we have is South Africa."

Lucas hunched forward in his chair, as if he was ready for trouble. "James Baldwin used to say — and I think he was right — sooner or later, somebody's got to pay. We're beginning to pay now."

Maybe attitudes haven't changed that much in Cicero since the days when someone called the cops to report a black man in a squad car impersonating a policeman. Officer Wesley Scott, 32 now, did take a lot of grief: "Practically every day, someone called me a nigger," he said. But he's been promoted to detective.

"I don't hold any grudges," Scott said. "Ignorance is like a disease, and education is the answer. I think I've been able to educate a few people about racism."

The town has hired two more black officers on its 90-man force. And Cicero is still the hometown of trouble, dirty tricks and all.

"Cicero hasn't changed much since the days of Capone," Lucas said. "Why will anything change now?"

It's still 5 square miles of fear and fret.

The week before the 25th anniversary of King's assassination, the marquee at the Olympic Theater on the main drag advertised a double-bill that symbolized the siege mentality of this sinister suburb of Chicago.

The two movies were "Loaded Gun" and "Nowhere to Run." □

VOICES



I'm not from the South. I'm not black, but as a woman I understand discrimination. I would have liked to have gotten to know him. People were jealous, ignorant and afraid of the changes he stood for. He would have done so much more. I can only think about what things might have been like, that he could have done more. . . . And for that, I feel like I was cheated.

— Dianne Baumert, Babylon Town office of citizens services



An Act That Overcame

BY PAMELA NEWKIRK
STAFF WRITER

Eight days after Bloody Sunday when hundreds of blacks, marching for the right to vote, were beaten and tear-gassed by Selma police, Martin Luther King Jr. sat transfixed before a television set.

"President Johnson was addressing Congress to introduce the Voting Rights Act and he kept saying 'We Shall Overcome,' the anthem of the civil rights movement, recalled Rep. John Lewis, who was among those gathered with King in the home of a Selma physician on March 15, 1965.

"Tears came from Doctor King's eyes," said Lewis, who was still bandaged from the beating he sustained at the hands of the Selma police. "It was very moving."

Twenty-five years after King's death, Lewis is among the King disciples and scholars who believe King's role in winning passage of that act is a key component of his legacy, a legacy which dramatically transformed the nation's political landscape. Among them are the Rev. Jesse Jackson, who made two runs for the presidency and Andrew Young, former United Nations ambassador and mayor of Atlanta.

In addition to spawning thousands of black elected officials, whose numbers nationally rose from about 400 in 1965 to nearly 8,000 today, black voters were also crucial in electing a number of white politicians, including Presidents Kennedy, Carter and Clinton.

"The seeds from these trees keep blossoming," said Jackson, whose 1984 and 1988 presidential campaigns — the latter in which he garnered seven million votes and came in first or second in 46 state primaries — underscored the shifting dynamics.

"He was the lead trumpeter of that movement [for political empowerment of blacks]," Jackson said. "Not only did it free a lot of blacks to vote for blacks, but for whites . . . It unleashed the dynamics."

The Voting Rights Act of 1965 suspended liter-

acy tests and other devices used by states to keep blacks from registering and called for federal challenges to the constitutionality of poll taxes.

Most agree the political gains by blacks over the past quarter-century have been impressive, capped in recent years by a succession of firsts: the elections of New York City Mayor David N. Dinkins, Virginia Gov. L. Douglas Wilder, and U.S. Sen. Carol Moseley Braun in Illinois.

"In terms of immediate transformation and how we arrived, it was key," Wilder said of the 1965 Voting Rights Act.

"I couldn't have been elected." Steve Suits, executive director of the Southern Regional Conference, said the impact of that act, particularly in the South, cannot be measured solely by the number of black elected officials, but by the shaping of policies.

He said in the 15 years after the act passed, members of Congress were four times more likely to support civil rights legislation. That, he said, has resulted in federal policies more sympathetic to blacks. The black vote has also resulted in a fairer distribution of jobs and services to blacks by local governments.

"It hasn't created heaven-on-earth, but there are new levels of government serving all the people," Suits said. "It's fair to call it America's quiet revolution of the last 25, 30 years."

While thousands of southern blacks had for years fought for the right to vote, it was King, a Nobel Peace Prize laureate, who in 1965 gave the cause a national platform by planning almost daily

demonstrations in Selma.

Despite the strides that blacks have made since then, some lament that black political advancement has not effectively translated into economic empowerment.

Ronald Walters, chairman of Howard University's Political Science Department, notes that much of the black political gains of the past decade occurred against a conservative backdrop marked by a transfer of \$261 billion in jobs from the cities to the suburbs and overseas between 1989 and 1990.

So instead of building on past achievements, he said, "the mandate has been to reconstruct and put back."

Former Rep. Walter Fauntroy, a former King aide, who represented Washington, D.C., as a non-voting delegate to Congress for 20 years, until 1991, agreed.

"We were outgunned," he said of the Reagan-Bush era. "As a consequence, our increased political leverage has not been matched with growing economic security."

The predicament has, in some segments, given way to apathy, leaving some to wonder whether black political empowerment holds the key to further black advancement.

And some, like Hosea Williams, 87, who was one of King's close aides and a leader of the march across Selma's Pettus Bridge, goes so far as to characterize black political leadership as virtually ineffective.

"The black leaders we had suffered and fought to get elected to high office, the white power structure co-opted them," Williams now says.

But the Rev. Joseph Lowery, a longtime civil rights leader who presides over the Southern Christian Leadership Council, which King founded, warned against the tendency to scapegoat black leaders. And he dismissed the notion by some that this is a post-civil rights era. "There's been a continuing fight," he said.

The challenge that black leaders face is defining and finding solutions for the increasingly complex problems plaguing black America, such as AIDS and homelessness. □

His Disciples: Then and Now

Here is a look at some of the members of King's inner circle, and where they are now:



The Rev. Jesse Jackson

When King died, Jackson was head of the Chicago office of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. He made history with his 1984 and 1988 presidential campaigns. He is founder and president of the National Rainbow Coalition, is a non-voting member of the U.S. Senate representing Washington, D.C., and has a talk show on CNN. He is a contender to succeed Benjamin Hooks as president of the NAACP.

Jackson, 51, said the seeds from King's movement "keep blossoming. All of the political empowerment emerges from Selma. All of it. He was the lead trumpeter of that movement." □



The Rev. Walter Fauntroy

Fauntroy, 60, directed the Southern Christian Leadership Conference's Washington bureau from 1960-70 and was a coordinator of the 1965 Selma-to-Montgomery march, the 1963 March on Washington and the 1969 Poor People's campaign. He was the District of Columbia's nonvoting congressional delegate from 1971-91 and chaired the Congressional Black Caucus in 1981. He now is a private political consultant and pastor of New Bethel Baptist Church, Washington, D.C.

"Dr. King did his job," he says. "It remains for us in every generation to exercise the leverage . . . We cannot do it alone." □



Rep. John Lewis

Lewis, 53, chaired the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee from 1963-66, helped lead the Selma-to-Montgomery march and was among those beaten by police and tear-gassed, on what is now known as Bloody Sunday. The Georgia Democrat was elected to Congress in 1986.

"If it hadn't been for the leadership of Dr. King, we wouldn't be where we are today," Lewis said. "He made it possible for politicians to say 'yes.' Those of us in high elected positions today owe it to Martin Luther King Jr." □



Andrew Young

Young, 60, was mayor of Atlanta from 1982-90. He served in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1973-77, and was appointed the first black U.S. ambassador to the United Nations under President Jimmy Carter. He is on the 1996 U.S. Olympics Committee and is with an Atlanta law and engineering firm.

In 1988 he told the Los Angeles Times, "It was only when the movement outside the political arena bogged down for lack of a strong leader like Martin Luther King that I became afraid that everything that Martin had worked for was going to be undone. That was one of the reasons some of us got into politics." □

His Legacy Long Island



Touring Long Island. King speaks in Rockville Centre on May 12, 1965, the same day he visited Lakeview.

Newsday / Alan Rala

It was already late in the afternoon on a sunny spring day by the time Martin Luther King Jr. arrived in Lakeview — a largely black community in the Malverne School District. It was May 12, 1965, another arduous day for the civil rights leader, who had been on the road since noon, bringing his message of hope and struggle to crowds from Long Beach to Rockville Centre.

Malverne was just another stopping point and, in fact, King could not stay long. He spoke briefly to the gathering of about 500, walked a bit in their civil rights march, and then was gone. *But what he said.* "Racial segregation is evil," he admonished,

"whether it is in Selma, Alabama, Atlanta, Georgia, or Malverne, Long Island."

Almost 28 years later, the moment still resonates for some of those who were there. "I'll never forget those words," says Sal Zaccaro, a white social studies teacher who has worked at Malverne High School for 32 years.

It was not by chance that King had chosen the Malverne school district for censure.

By 1965, the district was well known across the country as one of the battlegrounds where the struggle to integrate white and black schoolchildren was being waged. And if Malverne's racial barriers hardly made it unique in the nation or on Long Island —

where segregated "neighborhood" schools had long been an unchallenged way of life

Malverne Remembers His Impact

BY ERIC NAGOURNEY AND SID CASSESE
STAFF WRITERS

among many whites rather than a cause of moral disquiet — the passion and longevity of its battle elevated it above the landscape.

"It held up a mirror to the racists on Long Island," says Lincoln Lynch, a black civil rights activist on the Island then.

In many ways, the Malverne conflict embodied the civil rights struggle on Long Island in the 1960s — a movement led by increasingly militant blacks joined by a cadre of white liberals. Throughout the north, segregated schools were spawned by segregated housing patterns, rather than by laws. Able to make only token inroads into housing, the civil rights fighters turned their attention to the schools.

"Most people in New York believed that, 'Oh, nothing of that kind of sort would happen here,'" Lynch recalls. "This is not Little Rock. This is not Mississippi." . . . *De facto* segregation wasn't seen for what it was.

Malverne's schools were eventually integrated — but only after years of turmoil. Years marked by school boycotts by black families protesting segregation and later by white families protesting desegregation. By sit-ins and arrests. Of bomb threats, vandalism and epithets. And, often, by fear.

"It was somewhat violent and distasteful and uncomfortable," says Luis Bejarano, a school board president in the mid-1960s. "But it was a bitter pill that we did swallow."

The movement to desegregate Malverne grew out of one increasingly undeniable fact: The white children of the district attended two elementary schools, the black ones went to a third. Enrollment at the Woodfield Road school, which served Lakeview, was about 75 percent minority. At the Lindner Place and Davison Avenue schools, which served mostly white Malverne and Lynbrook, black enrollment was only about 15 percent. All students at-

tended the district's junior high and high schools. In June, 1963, after reviewing a complaint filed by the NAACP, state education commissioner James Allen ordered Malverne to fix the imbalance by dividing the grades among the three schools.

By August, an opposition group of white residents had formed — taking the name Taxpayers and Parents, or TAP — and the first legal salvo was fired. The group filed a lawsuit and began campaigning to gain control of the school board.

Edward Nasierowski, a white school board member who later quit the board to protest the desegregation plan, says that the parents were angered not by integration but by the disruption the plan posed to the district's community-based schools.

Supporters of desegregation had already been picketing, but now they turned up the heat to include sit-ins, attempts to register black students at white schools and a boycott against the Woodfield school. The protests intensified as it became clear that the district was not going to simply comply with the state desegregation order.

"We thought it would be a relatively simple thing," says the Rev. Bennie Whiten, a onetime NAACP chairman who moved to Lakeview in the midst of the turmoil. "I guess we just did not understand the — shall I call them the 'fears' — of the people from Malverne and Lynbrook."

In fact, it would be years before there was anything close to resolution of the conflict. It was not until 1966 — after the U.S. Supreme Court refused to hear the case — that desegregation was put into effect. And even then, the matter was hardly settled.

In the ensuing months, many white parents staged their own boycott of the elementary schools, placing their children in tutoring centers hastily established in people's homes, and picketing. On one occasion, nine white mothers were arrested

VOICES



I was in middle school and I knew Dr. King would come by car in a parade through Lakeview. I was going . . . to get permission to go, but no one was home. I broke into the house, because there was no way to see Dr. King unless I had my bike. I rode up . . . [and] he reached over and touched my head and smiled. I got a spanking for breaking the window, but it was a small price

— Fred Brownington, attorney, Lakeview



Studies In Integration

BY PEGGY BROWN
STAFF WRITER

when they tried to block movers from transferring furniture between schools.

Yet Malverne suffered no major incidents of violence during the period — a blessing some people believe resulted from the persistent message of nonviolence King was preaching across the country. Bejarano thinks King's visit to Lakeview was a turning point in the battle. "I remember being awed by him," the former school board president says. "He was so quiet and so passive, while the rest of us sometimes got a little too excited. He did have a positive effect on the whole district."

Although the white boycott ran out of steam as students trickled back into the schools, unrest continued. In 1967, the school board settled on a compromise: Instead of shuffling students among the three elementary schools, they would simply close down Woodfield and integrate the black students into the two remaining schools. Opponents of desegregation were largely mollified. Woodfield was converted into administrative offices. Life in the school system began to return to normal.

Now, for many residents of Malverne and other Long Island districts that also suffered desegregation battles, those events seem far away, catalogued under the comforting label of "history." This is not necessarily accurate. In 1990, a Newsday examination of segregation on Long Island revealed that black children were receiving educations separate and unequal. Among the findings: More than half the island's black students attended schools whose programs were inferior to those in white schools; and 57 percent of black children attended just 11 of the island's 126 school districts.

And although Malverne has its share of racial tensions, students say they largely get along — in their own worlds. "In general, blacks stay to themselves and whites stay to themselves," says Chammee Anderson, a black junior at the high school. Robert Heinrich, a white 11th-grader from Malverne, agrees. "Sure there's hostility but there's no fighting in the halls or things like that."

In other words, integration — of a sort at least — has been accomplished. But some people cannot forget how it was done: by closing the black community school and preserving the white ones. Some blacks still feel they bore the brunt of the solution. So was the desegregation battle a victory?

"That is a \$64,000 question," says Lynch, now retired and living in New York City. "In these days of inflation, you would probably have to say it's a \$64-million question. Was it a victory? Was it a victory? I don't know." □



hen Martin Luther King Jr. was leading marches and preaching of his dreams, the achievements and travails of black Americans were virtually ignored in most of America's textbooks and classrooms. That exclusion has ended in large part due to King's own efforts, as well as the changes in society that followed his death.

Now, students learn not just about King, but the civil rights movement and the achievements of black Americans. And that teaching has expanded into the concept of "multiculturalism," where they learn about the culture and contributions of Hispanics, Native Americans and other ethnic groups as well.

That change is important, school officials said, especially on Long Island where the majority of Nassau and Suffolk's 126 school districts are overwhelmingly white.

"We are a changing population," said Plainview-Old Bethpage Schools Superintendent Henry L. Grishman, whose district is 97 percent white. "We're no longer just lily-white; our school district is becoming significantly more diverse all the time. I feel strongly that school districts need to take a very aggressive stand in dealing with diversity and integrating that into the curriculum."

Jeanette Stern, chairwoman of social studies for the Wantagh public schools, where 97 percent of the students are white, said her students "don't have the contact" with children of other races "so we have to do it through historic examples, through videotapes. It's artificial."

In the Roosevelt school district, whose majority is black, students don't have to rely exclusively on videotapes because many teachers and administrators can share personal recollections of King. "Some of us actually went on some of the marches with King," said Terrecita Watkis, the district's coordinator of compensatory programs. "The children are curious about what that time was like, and we try to explain how things have changed or not changed."

In Suffolk's Patchogue-Medford, which has a majority white population, high school students discuss civil liberties while middle school students read about Gandhi and study his connection to King.

And in Half Hollow Hills, where nearly 20 percent of the students are black, Hispanic or Asian, the contributions of African-Americans are emphasized in subjects ranging from history to music, science to social studies.

"We'll look at the strata of how many African-Americans are in decision-making positions and what are the obstacles and what are the prejudices and what are the stereotypes," said Joseph E. Caroselli, assistant superintendent for secondary instruction.

While some schools make the drama of Martin Luther King Jr.'s time come alive through videotapes and filmstrips, history books and speakers, Stephen Waldman remembers how integrating it was to teach the subject

when what is now history was news.

"In the sixties, you were in the throes of the (civil rights) movement, and you had things going on television all the time," said Waldman, president of the Long Island Council for the Social Studies. "I was teaching in Massapequa. In those days, you had debates and discussions going on all the time on how to make changes, what was wrong and what was right about the system."

Now, Waldman said, approaches to teaching are "more multicultural" and school districts particularly concentrate on the subject in seventh- and eighth-grade U.S. history and 11th-grade American history courses.

And there is a particular attention during special celebrations.

"A lot of people have mixed feelings about Black History Month or Hispanic Heritage Month," said Carol Davila, a librarian at the Caroline G. Atkinson Elementary School in Freeport and a member of the district's Black Educators Association. "Some educators believe that we should not have these things, that it constitutes separation."

But she said that black history celebrations "came out of a need to be recognized, because black Americans had been left out of history, had been left out of the teaching curriculum." But, she said, "we are included now — not as much as we should be, but it's getting better."

And that inclusion is not lost on the students who learn about King and his time.

"A lot of stuff Dr. King did paid off because now we have a whole lot more chances than we would have had when he was alive and that most of the time, both colors or races get along peacefully and not violently," said 11-year-old Adrienne Johnson, a student at the Milton L. Olive Middle School in Wyandanch.

Her classmate Jenora Randolph said, "It would be kind of fun to have a mixed group because you get to know different people and know different things about them."

As for King, 11-year-old Brian Russell of Wyandanch views the civil rights leader as a man who "taught people respect for themselves. That's how people remember him."

"He was really important because he led people to freedom. Now black people have a little bit of respect. Not much, but some." □



Time to Reflect. Bryce-Petty in Wyandanch class.

VOICES



For a while, I thought King was a Communist . . . But over time, I realized that at that time, if you did anything that was not of the norm, you were considered a Communist. King was trying to bring about justice; he wanted black people to live by the same rules as whites. He had as much right to fight for his people as we did for freedom from England. That's what America is all about.

— Clara Schulz, Babylon, receptionist

His Legacy Business



Photo by Peter Steiner

State of the Art. A. Barry Rand — could be the first black chairman of a Fortune 500 company.

Success Comes to Those Who Battle Odds

BY CHRISTINE DUGAS
STAFF WRITER

A. Barry Rand is a product of the civil rights movement.

He was hired as a sales trainee at Xerox Corp. in October, 1968, at a time when major corporations were beginning to recruit more blacks into entry level positions. Rand was among the first wave of black sales reps at the copier company.

Although top management at Xerox was committed to affirmative action, Rand soon ran up against a boss who made racist remarks and openly said he had problems working with minorities.

"I almost quit," Rand says today. "But I learned a long time ago that the easiest thing to do is to walk away. Once you walk away, you have automatically eliminated any possibility of winning in the situation."

Rand stayed at Xerox and won. He outperformed most of his colleagues. And today, he is one of four executive vice presidents, the highest-ranking executives below the chairman of the \$18.3-billion company. This puts Rand in line to become the first black chairman of a Fortune 500 company.

Rand would be the first to say that he did not get where he is alone. In fact, he is part of a larger story that began in the late 1960s, when a group of black employees at Xerox, inspired by the civil rights

movement, organized local caucus groups and helped each other to move up the corporate ladder.

The efforts of these pioneers, along with the commitment of top management, has made Xerox a recognized leader in workplace diversity. Today, 14 percent of the Xerox work force is black and 11.8 percent of its managers are black — high ratios compared with most corporations'. In addition to Rand, other blacks who have risen to the executive ranks include Richard Barton, president of Xerox Canada, and Maurice Holmes, president of the company's Office Document Systems Division.

But 25 years ago, when black college students such as Rand were starting their careers, they had few role models in corporate America. It was unusual then to see a black sales representative calling on clients in predominantly white territories. And white managers often had their own biases.

In 1967, Art Crawford, a graduate of Fairfield University and a 6-foot-5-inch, all-America basketball player, almost didn't get hired at Xerox because a branch manager thought he was so imposing that he would frighten people.

Sanford Banker, then a Xerox marketing team manager, had met Crawford at a recruitment seminar and recommended him to the branch manager. Banker was appalled by the branch manager's reaction and suggested that he ask his secretary if she was frightened by Crawford. She said Crawford was

a very nice young man. He got the job.

That wasn't the only hurdle Crawford faced. He recalls the subtle forms of racism he encountered when he went out on sales calls:

"There was often shock on clients' faces when I darkened their door, if you will. When I announced myself, they often assumed I was there to fix the machine. And when I would travel on occasion with a sales rep who was white, once we entered into a dialogue with the client, I was ignored."

That didn't stop Crawford from becoming the top salesman in his branch office in New York. In time, however, Crawford and the other black employees at Xerox encountered new obstacles: No matter how well they performed, they were not being promoted as quickly as their white colleagues.

In 1971, Crawford helped to create MAME, Metro Area Minority Employees, a local self-help group. At the same time, black employees in other parts of the country were independently forming their own caucus groups. They met in the evenings and on weekends to share information, study how copiers worked, and help each other improve their presentation skills.

Although blacks were being hired in greater numbers, they continued to languish in low-level positions. In 1971 black employees in the San Francisco Bay Area filed a class-action suit against Xerox, charging discrimination. Xerox dispatched David Kearns, a white executive who later became the company's chairman, to resolve the problem.

Kearns quickly promoted four blacks in the district to managerial positions. And the following year, Xerox formed a Minority Advisory Committee to track the progress of black employees. Crawford, who was the company's first black branch manager, and Rand were among the committee members.

The committee gave black employees from around the country an opportunity to meet, share their experiences and become friends. They began to exchange information about what was happening in other caucus groups. In 1974, Kent Amos, a member of the advisory committee, casually mentioned that the caucus groups might hold a national meeting. When Xerox managers heard this they immediately became concerned. They feared it would be the first step in formation of a powerful union.

Xerox management set up a meeting with seven prominent black employees at a hotel in Toronto, hoping to forestall a national conference. Because Amos, Rand, Crawford and the other four employees had never seriously considered holding a national meeting, it was easy for them to agree to drop the idea. In return, they were able to get a number of concessions from the company, including an agreement that Xerox would pay for a group of black leaders to attend regional caucus meetings.

Several months later, company executives and the black employees met in Chicago. Management presented a plan based on the Toronto meeting. But it failed to mention important elements of the original agreement, such as the travel funding, according to an account in a Harvard Business School case study by associate professor Raymond Friedman. The hotel meeting degenerated into a shouting match and the black managers walked out.

The black employees had nowhere to go but into a nearby stairwell, where they stopped to assess the situation. "We didn't know if we were still employed at that point," Crawford says.

After a few minutes, Kearns recalls telling Doug Reed, vice president of personnel: "I guess I'll swallow my pride." Kearns joined the group in the stairwell. "And we just worked our way through it," he says. "I made the first step and so they made the second and third steps."

The group of seven black employees became known as the Road Show. They traveled around the country, helping local caucus groups set up conferences. They acted as role models and introduced black employees to white executives.

The caucus groups stood out because of the way members took responsibility for each other.

"We were in uncharted waters," says Kerney Laday, a member of the Road Show, who is vice president of field operations in the South. "We knew the possibility of failure was high and so we needed to support each other. We also knew we had to be better than our white counterparts. We didn't think we could be average."

That sometimes called for extraordinary measures.

In Washington, D.C., there was a black sales



The Racial Gap

Even when black families have the same income level as white families, they are likely to have less wealth. Here is a comparison of the holdings of middle-income households, with annual incomes of \$24,000 to \$48,000, based on a 1989 update of 1984 Census Bureau figures by University of Maryland finance professor William Bradford.

	BLACKS (% owning)	WHITES (% owning)
Net worth*	\$17,627	\$54,644
Home equity	\$32,146 (89%)	\$48,620 (74%)
Investment real estate	\$41,756 (11%)	\$28,600 (20%)
Equity in a business	\$6,578 (4%)	\$15,936 (11%)
Stocks and mutual funds	\$3,157 (9%)	\$4,004 (24%)
IRA or Keogh	\$2,228 (11%)	\$5,034 (27%)
Savings accounts, CDs	\$1,143 (70%)	\$3,302 (84%)
Money market funds, bonds	\$953 (3%)	\$6,864 (10%)
Car	\$4,275 (91%)	\$5,663 (97%)

* Median net worth is calculated by subtracting liabilities, such as outstanding loans, from personal assets.

SOURCE: National Research Council

Newsday / Joe Cahriello

rep who was not doing well," Rand recalls. "At the time there may have been seven or eight black sales reps who all got together and went into the person's territory to help that person in building skills, and getting prospects and closing orders."

Over the years, the caucus group movement at Xerox has continued to flourish. Last weekend, for example, MAME held a day-long meeting that included workshops on such topics as personal financial planning and community service.

Today, there are also caucus groups for women, and other minority groups at Xerox. That is in keeping with the company's current focus on diversity.

In recent years, the emphasis at many companies has shifted from affirmative action to managing and encouraging an increasingly diverse work force. "No one uses the 'AA' term anymore," says Richard Clarke, a black who heads a Manhattan recruiting firm that specializes in black executives. "Diversity is something one can't argue against. America is by nature diverse."

Clarke started his company in 1957, shortly after he went to apply for a job at an employment agency and was told it was already filled. White applicants waiting for the same job heard the secretary say the job was taken, and started to leave. Then, he remembers, the flustered secretary turned to them and said, "Wait, I didn't mean you. I just meant him."

That kind of discrimination occurs less frequently today, Clarke says. But it hasn't been entirely eliminated. Last year, he sent the resume of a young black college graduate to a fashion design executive who had a job opening and arranged for an interview. But when the young woman arrived, the marketing executive took one look at her and coldly said to leave her resume and she would get back to her.

Taylor Cox, an associate professor of organizational behavior at the University of Michigan, points out that while

blacks have made considerable progress gaining entry-level jobs in white-collar professions, they still find it difficult to move up the corporate ladder.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the proportion of blacks in executive, administrative and managerial occupations has improved only slightly in the past decade. Blacks accounted for 4.7 percent of such jobs in 1983, compared to 5.8 percent last year.

When it comes to the corporate board room, blacks have even less representation. Korn Ferry International, an executive search firm, estimates that minorities represent about 4 percent of all directors on the boards of Fortune 1,000 companies, based on a 1991 survey.

Earl Washington is president of the Executive Leadership Council, a group of nearly 100 senior black executives from predominantly Fortune 500 companies, which was organized about seven years ago. He says that only about 10 of its members are on boards of major corporations.

"There are now literally several hundred senior black executives out there," says Washington, a vice president at Rockwell International. "From that standpoint, have gains been made? Absolutely. Do we have a long way to go? You bet your bippy. We're waiting for the time when there are a number of African-American CEOs at Fortune 500 companies."

But for the most part, black college graduates today have benefited from the gains made by their predecessors. As Rand likes to tell students, "Whatever break that you have is really part of an unbroken chain from the civil rights lawyers, through Martin Luther King Jr., through Jesse Jackson." The young generation, in turn, must also give something back to the community, he says.

At Xerox, the Road Show was disbanded many years ago because there were enough black executives throughout the company who could act as role models and work with caucus groups. Over the years, some of the Road Show members left the company.

Today, Crawford is president of Introspect Group, a Manhattan consulting firm that specializes in advising companies on managing diversity. And Amos heads the Urban Family Institute in Washington, D.C. Since 1981, he and his wife have adopted 86 teenagers and put them through college.

But in 1990, all of the Road Show members got back together in Chicago when the black caucus groups finally held a national meeting. By then, no one in management was worried it would result in a union. Kearns, who retired from Xerox in 1991, says it was a proud moment. He says there is no doubt that the caucus movement made Xerox a better company.

As Crawford sees it, all companies must begin to tap into the talents of a more diverse work force.

"American corporations are locked in a global struggle, and we're losing," he said. "We can't afford petty 'isms' like racism and sexism. What's at stake is the future of all of us."



Newsday / Phillip Davies

Standing Tall. Art Crawford is now president of a firm that specializes in advising companies on managing diversity.

VOICES



I had ambivalent feelings about Martin Luther King. I thought that the racism was that strong that going in with your hat in your hand or going down on your knees and praying was not going to change the face or heart of white America. If it wasn't for Malcolm X — the fear of blacks out of control or riots — would King have been as effective in things that he stood for?

— Ken Anderson of Wilmington, Del., former LI civil rights activist

His Legacy  The Arts

Dance
View From Wings Shows Difference In Stage Presence

"Twenty-five years ago, there was only one African-American ballet dancer," says Arthur Mitchell. "Myself."

In those years he was a principal dancer with the New York City Ballet. Last week, when his own company, the Dance Theater of Harlem, which he founded in the wake of the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr., played the New York State Theater, he looked out from the wings and saw "fifty, sixty African-Americans" on stage. Changes are happening worldwide," he said. His company has been to Russia and most recently to South Africa, and England's Royal Ballet has instituted a minority program for dancers.

At recent scholarship auditions for the Dance Theater of Harlem, he added, "250 kids showed up. And forty of them were boys. Perceptions have changed, that minority persons can be dancers." There's still work to be done: "The entire country needs a sense of inclusion," he said. "It's very important that corporations, foundations and arts institutions address this. We need it so desperately among our young people." —Janice Berman

Popular Music
Trade 'Black Box' Is Equivalent Of The Glass Ceiling

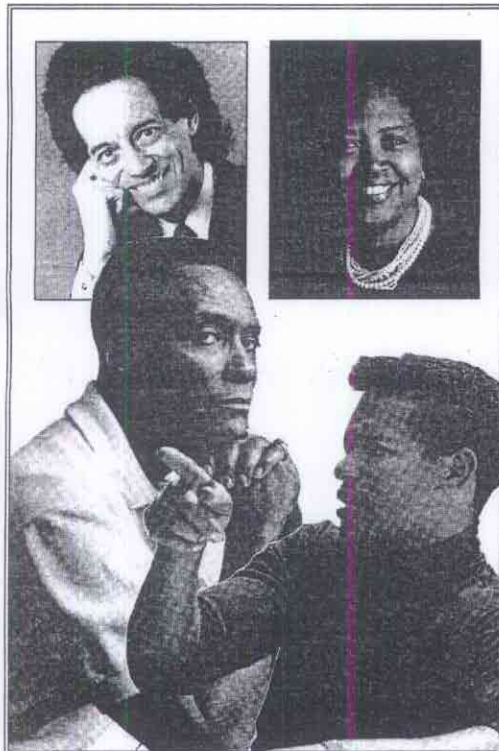
"Clearly, there's been progress and change," said Ed Eckstine, president of Mercury Records and the first black to be chief executive of a nonblack-owned record company. "In 1968, there were very few employees on a corporate level, aside from Motown and Stax, except for the errant promotion guy. But clearly, we were behind the times."

Eckstine remains concerned about what he calls "the black box" syndrome in the music business, the black equivalent of the glass ceiling. Most black executives work in the black music divisions of their corporations. "If you're a black guy, you do R&B [rhythm and blues] promotion, sales, A&R [artists and repertoire]. But if I have the desire and acumen to be a pop promotion or A&R person, that shouldn't be limited by the color of my skin."

Eckstine doesn't feel it's wrong or racist, as some do, that most record companies have these specialized divisions for black music. "It's as specialized as jazz, classical, or country music," he said. "It looks more segregated than it is, because you don't have 'jazz people,' or 'classical people' or 'country people,' but you do have black people."

Opportunities for black artists have increased simply because the size of the music industry has increased, along with the economic power of the black consumer, as well as the continuing appeal of music by black artists to people of all races. "There's a greater awareness in the white corporate music industry that black music is green," Eckstine said. —Wayne Robins

Culture Reflects Changing Times



Photos by Newday / Ari Mintz, AP / Andy Snow and Timothy Greenfield-Sanders
Faces of Hope. Leaders in the arts include, clockwise from bottom left, Arthur Mitchell, Isiah Jackson, Kinshasha Conwill and Mario Van Peebles.

Film
'Not a Black Thing Or a White Thing; It's a Green Thing'

Mario Van Peebles is at the forefront of the resurgent black film movement. The actor-director scored

big at the box office with the 1991 gangster thriller, "New Jack City." So much so that he was given a chance to direct a full-scale Western, "Posse," which opens in May. He comes by his filmmaking bent honestly: His father, Melvin Van Peebles, helped clear his path with the legendary 1971 blockbuster, "Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song."

"There's a line in 'New Jack City' which says, 'Crack's not a white thing or a black thing. It's a death thing,'"

says Mario Van Peebles. "Well, Hollywood's not a black thing or a white thing. It's a green thing..."

"That's why, after 'New Jack' made all this money, I suddenly became this real hot guy. Trouble was, all they wanted from me was 'New Jack 2' or 'New Jack 3,' you know where Wesley [Snipes] comes back from the dead... I'm serious. This is what they were talking about."

"And I didn't want to do that. Because that's one of the mistakes black filmmakers made in the seventies. Too many guys got caught up in the sequel business and we didn't have any real control... And no matter what you may read about with this new black film renaissance, that's the way it still is. We're still hired hands with something to prove. My dad's the only black director who owns his own negative..."

"So I figure that while we're in the house, it's better to go out and push the envelope while [the studios] are open to it. That's why I'm doing a western. And since it's a genre we've been excluded from, I'll probably do more." —Gene Seymour

Art
Painting a Picture Of the Evolving Black Artist

Kinshasha Conwill is director of the Studio Museum in Harlem, which this year is celebrating its 25th anniversary. It was no specific event, but the times themselves that instigated the founding of this museum, which concentrates on the art of blacks, she says.

"The idea of the museum was to create a working space where artists and the community could come together. So having living artists was a critical part. The museum had an artist-in-residence program, and Julie Dash, who did "Daughters of the Dust," did her first film courses at the museum."

"Things have changed in numerous ways, and some of them have been positive. In the sixties, the perception was a group of angry people who were going to have their own institution. By the late seventies and eighties, it was clear black people were going to be part of the larger economic picture. In the sixties, many artists dealt with political issues, in the seventies they felt we can deal with whatever we want to deal with; the world is our palette."

"We've returned to a narrowing of the definition of what visual artists can create, that there's one right way to create art if you're a black artist, and it's political. And I think there's been a backlash against cultural diversity, there is resentment, a closing down of some cultural opportunities. So that in 1993 not only is there a narrowing perception of what African-American artists can do, but a real financial threat to the institutions that support broad expression."

"If by the year 2,000 we have two things in place, then this period will have been worth all of this turmoil: If there is truly an appreciation of the African-American art throughout the field, but also strong African-American institutions." —Amei Wallace

Theater

Despite Critical, Commercial Gains, Struggle Continues

The story of blacks in theater during the past 25 years is really two stories, one of achievement by individuals such as Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright August Wilson and one of mounting difficulties for black theater institutions, said Douglas Turner Ward, co-founder and artistic director of the Negro Ensemble Company. The company began its first season within weeks of King's death and is now fighting for survival.

"While many blacks succeed in the larger arena, the very health of our institutional presence is threatened, is in the midst of a crisis. The very thing that emerged out of Martin Luther King's struggles of that time was the rise of institutions."

Though the company enjoyed both commercial and critical successes during the 1970s and 1980s — "A Soldier's Play" by Charles Fuller won the 1982 Pulitzer Prize — the company has not had a permanent home in more than two years. At the end of this month, the company will begin previews for its first production since 1991.

Regardless of its difficulties, Ward says, "We can say that there is undeniable evidence of our institutions' contributions. That legacy is also a positive thing.

"Like in everything else, the past twenty-five years have been a mixed blessing. There have been changes for the better and reverses at the same time." — Esther Iverem

Classical Music

Striking a Note Of Gradual But Certain Progress

"When you look at the problems we still have, you think, 'Oh God, we have so far to go!'" said Isaiah Jackson, 48, music director of the Dayton, Ohio, Symphony. "But over the course of my lifetime, you realize how far we have come."

Jackson, who has led the New York and Los Angeles Philharmonies, the Cleveland Orchestra and the Boston Pops, was reflecting on a 40-year period that began in 1949, when Dean Dixon had to go to Europe to find work, and even then was told to wear white gloves "so people could see his hands."

"When Henry Lewis conducted at La Scala [in Milan], it made Time magazine, it was so unusual," Jackson recalled. "Now there are more [black] conductors than you can count on one hand employed by the symphony orchestras of America."

"That is still not a lot, when you consider there are more than 120 orchestras in the country. But now Jackson considers that the problems facing black conductors are more closely entwined with the problems facing Western classical music in general. "We still have a long way to go," he said. "But that has to do with the decline of Western civilization, if you want to put it in those terms." — Peter Goodman

A Rustling of Wings

One spring afternoon 32 years ago, Martin Luther King Jr. was found sitting on a porch in clear view and gunshot range of the enemies of his cause.

"How old are you, Martin?" his host and elder comrade, the Rev. Dr. Ralph Abernathy, inquired.

"Thirty-four," King replied. "Hoping for thirty-five."

Antoine de Saint Exupery found out in combat that war is the acceptance of death. By then M.L. King already had found out that so is non-violent war.



Newman / Bob Newman

One of his marches would bring him to Philadelphia, Miss., in 1966. Three civil rights volunteers had been murdered in Philadelphia the summer before, and the sheriff and the deputies who had killed them were now the only guards who stood between King's pilgrims and a crowd of townspeople nearly all truculent and nearly all white, because black Philadelphia could not risk the mass welcome hidden in their hearts.

King had come to bear his witness by walking up the steps of the town hall and kneeling in prayer before its door. A fellow traveler watched him make his way upward, sought for the light of inspiration upon his countenance, and saw only the face of the target. But the rustlings of the wings of death's angel had become familiar to his interior ear well before; as he heard them on that day in Philadelphia, he had heard them in Jackson, Birmingham and Albany, Ga., and would hear them again in Cicero, Ill.

But he had heard them first in Montgomery and loud and clear enough to imbibe the premonition that it was where he would keep his appointment with an early grave. His mission never brought him back unburdened by uneases, especially intimate and pressing all the more, in the circumstances of this return.

templation than to shoutings from the pew.

Martin Luther King Jr. could not in those days have felt much reason to aspire to wider stages than the black National Baptist Convention and perhaps, with his father's decease, a return to Atlanta, the Ebenezer Baptist Church, and an honored reign as a second Pope of Auburn Avenue.

He owed a grander fate to the geographical accident of the Montgomery bus boycott and to the misidentification that conscripted him for history. The boycott's initial moving force had not been a pastor but E.D. Nixon, a Pullman porter who had burned for years as Montgomery's lonely brand of radical black militance. The boycott had barely begun when a group of clergymen asked to consult with Nixon, who focused upon them eyes fierce with suspicions.



Murray Kempton

His untrusting eye settled upon King.

"He was new in town, and he was the youngest," Nixon said later, "and his was the deiciest church. I had to put him so far out front that he couldn't rat out on us no matter how much he wanted to."

"And so I nominated him for chairman of the Montgomery Improvement Association. All I had wanted to do was head off a fink and I got the greatest strike leader I will ever see. Till the day I die I'll thank God for guiding me by misleading me."

We would see King earliest in those churches where he rallied and uplifted the weary. He would enter with a face masked by the complications of crisis and then he would lift his head and summon up the genes of his country preacher ancestry and make the old young again, his modernism forgotten, his familial tradition restored in full-throated glory; and he would be free to dispense the greatest of his gifts, which was to bring the message of hope and live to simple people.

I do not think he was ever quite comfortable away from those thronged and echoing churches. There was always something shadowed and wary about his eyes when he was anywhere else. When last we talked, he had just returned from Selma, Ala., to which Malcolm X had made a rare excursion and provided their only extended encounter.

King said that what had most surprised and delighted him in Mr. Malcolm was how "cheerful and open" he had turned out to be. There was in this compliment a slight suggestion of envy, as though he who had embraced the world could look upon it all with a mocking laugh. And it does seem odd until you think about it. Each was on the path that has no destination but tragedy. But Martin Luther King Jr. knew his doom and journeyed toward it with the closed face of resignation. Doom took Malcolm X a bit by surprise. Mr. Malcolm was the luckier of these two, however less large and usefully heroic his destiny may have been.

The May, 1961, Freedom Ride had stopped to bleed in Montgomery after the first passengers to journey through Alabama in an integrated interstate bus had debarked there to be savagely set upon by a mob free to rabble with all the cops away. Two days later, this wounded band of the young, reinforced by recruits descending from the South around them, rose up and made ready to press on into Mississippi.

They begged King to come with them and he begged them not to go. He had never been and would never be the sort of commander who sent others to places from which his own good sense held him back. Now he had no answer for them except the half-audacious, half-ashamed one that closed the question:

"I think I should choose the time and place of my golgotha."

He could not, of course, choose, being bound as he long since was, by events and by his nature, to the road to his secular calvary.

Montgomery had been the first station on the trip for him, although he had no reason to recognize it when he arrived. He had been called to Dexter Avenue Baptist Church with the Boston University PhD degree that must have particularly appealed to congregants for whom to worship at Dexter defined one's place in Montgomery's older families and one's temperament as more inclined to philosophical con-

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I have a dream

that one day on the red hills of Georgia, the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave-owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood . . . 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.

**March on Washington,
Aug. 28, 1963**



Larger Than Life. Dexter Brant, then 4, contemplates King exhibit at a 1988 museum program in Hempstead, N.Y. Newsday/K. Wilson Stabile