

SERVICES TODAY TO HONOR DR. KING

Schools to Close Here and
in Several Other Cities

By HOMER BIGART

Commemorative services will be held in the city and throughout the nation today on the 41st anniversary of the birth of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. the assassinated civil rights leader.

Although efforts to make Jan 15 a legal national holiday failed in Congress all public schools and virtually all parochial schools in the city will be closed. Elsewhere in the nation the pattern of school closings will be spotty.

Public schools will close in Philadelphia, Baltimore, Kansas City, Newark, New Haven, and Berkeley, Calif. Washington schools will be open for a half day.

There was confusion in Chicago. There, black militants were urging teachers and students to boycott classes while officials of Operation Breadbasket, a project of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference that Dr. King headed, called on students to stay in school and study the life and work of Dr. King.

The police were called to the Piscataway Township High School in New Jersey when students became unruly after being told they could not have a ceremony yesterday honoring Dr. King. No incidents were reported, but because of classroom tension the students were dismissed at 12:30 P.M. The school will be closed today, as planned.

Class Boycott Planned

In Elmira, N.Y., about 40 members of the Afro-American Society at Elmira Free Academy, a public high school, said they would skip classes today and attend a day-long observance at the Monumental Baptist Church. School officials said no punitive measures would be taken because "it will be a meaningful experience for them."

At Roselle, N. J., 100 students and two teachers walked out of classes at Abraham Clark High School to protest the refusal by the school board to allow a mural of Dr. King to be hung in the school.

The school board, in a 4-to-3 decision Tuesday night, refused to let the 15-by-9 foot painting be hung until the faces of various students and faculty advisers were removed from it or made "unrecognizable." The board did not explain why it wanted the 13 recognizable faces deleted or altered.

The painting was done by Florian Jenkins, an East Orange artist, for \$800. The money was raised by the Martin Luther King Committee, a student group.

The board has two Negroes, one voted for the measure; the other opposed it.

Except in the black neighborhoods, most stores and businesses in New York City will remain open today. Hope R. Stevens, president of the Uptown Chamber of Commerce, whose membership includes most Harlem stores, said the association was urging all Harlem businesses to close until 1 P.M.

"The group is recommending that all employees receive full pay for the day and that they leave work at the usual time," Mr. Stevens said. He added that stores that had promised employees the whole day off were being asked to honor their commitment and remain closed for the whole day.

Mayor Lindsay will attend a memorial service at 11 A.M. in the Canaan Baptist Church of Christ, 132 West 116th Street, and then march to a commemorative noonday rally at the mall in Central Park. At 1 P.M. he will attend a memorial meeting at Manhattan Center, 34th Street and Eighth Avenue, where speakers will include the Mayor, the Rev. Dr. Ralph David Abernathy, Dr. King's successor as president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and Representative Shirley Chisholm of Brooklyn.

Governor Rockefeller has proclaimed Martin Luther King Memorial Day. Mayor Lindsay made a similar proclamation for the city and said city employees could take the day off if they wished, but that the time would be charged to their annual leave. All city, state and Federal offices will remain open.

Troubled by War

About 300 people attended a memorial service yesterday in Calvary Episcopal Church, Lexington Avenue and 21st Street. There, Mrs. Dorothy Cotton, an official of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and for many years a close associate of Dr. King, recalled that the civil rights leader was deeply troubled in the weeks before his assassination April 4, 1968.

"He was a very troubled man," she said, explaining that Dr. King worried about the war in Vietnam and about some "popular politicians" who had "misinterpreted his position" on the war.

Many schools had memorial programs. Students recited Dr. King's "I Have a Dream" speech listened to taped excerpts from other speeches by the Nobel Prize winner and watched slides of scenes of his life.

The City University of New York's 175,000 students will have the day off. The university has proclaimed Jan. 15 Human Rights Day, a permanent school holiday.