

Lighting The Road To The Future

New Orleans

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News Weekly

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Data Zone

Page 7

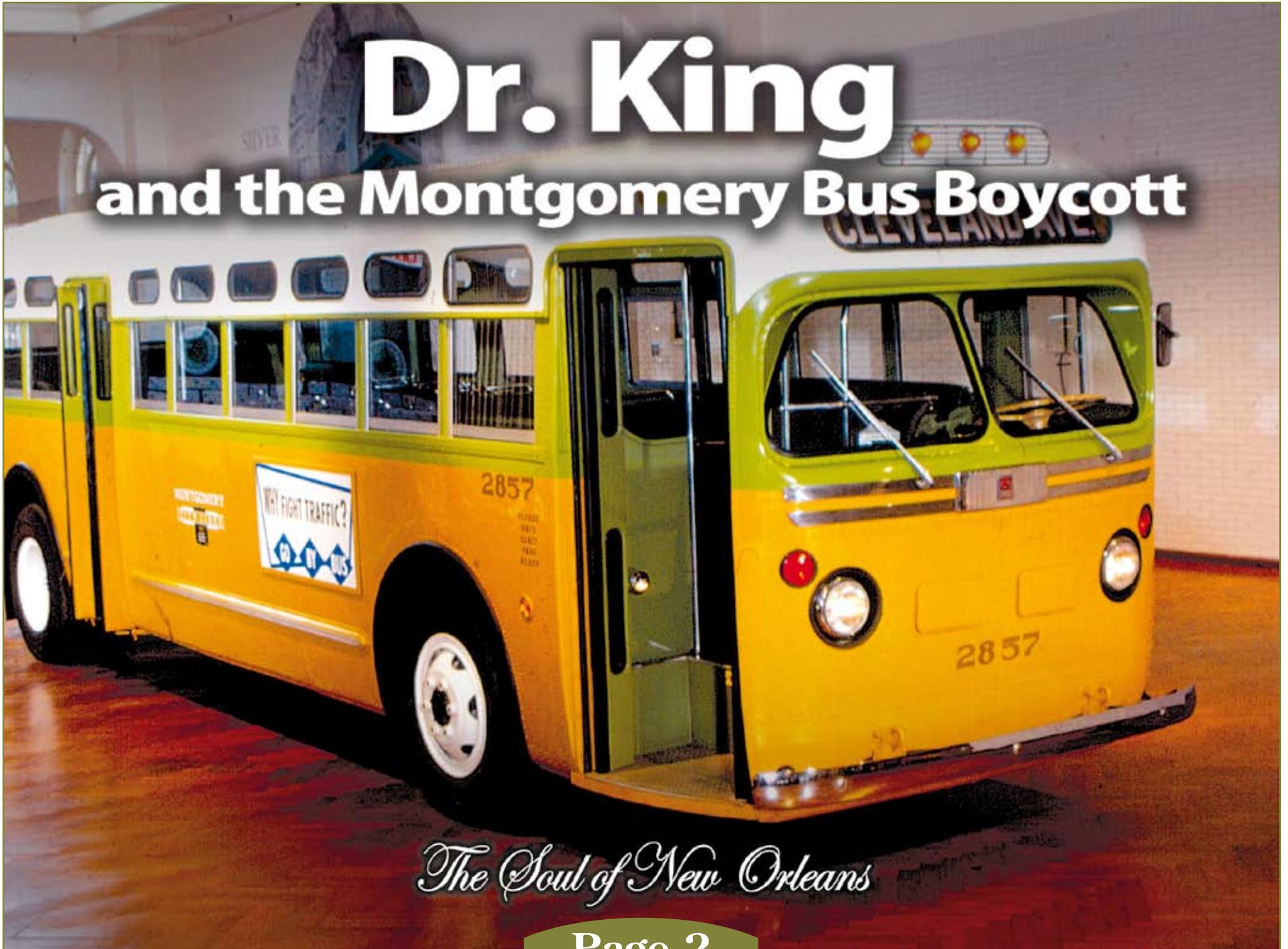
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January 15 - January 21, 2011 45th Year Volume 32 www.ladatanews.com

Dr. King

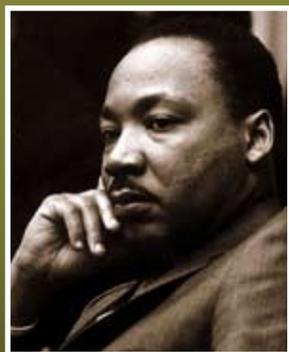
and the Montgomery Bus Boycott



The Soul of New Orleans

Page 2

City MLK
Event
Calendar



Happy Birthday
Dr. King

Page 10

Dr. King and the 1955-1956 Montgomery Bus Boycott

A year-long boycott begins a life of peaceful protest and service

By Charlene Crowell

Although America's Declaration of Independence and Constitution are premised on the principles of democracy, the historical treatment of America's citizens of color is replete with racial dichotomies. Even today, the Vestiges of Slavery, Civil War, Reconstruction, Segregationist Jim Crow Laws to the more recent federal laws for voting rights, fair housing, and community reinvestment - have yet to assure succeeding generations of African-Americans all of the freedoms afforded a citizen of the United States.

Cover Story, Continued on next page.



On The Cover, Rosa Parks' Bus
On December 1, 1955, Rosa Parks boarded a Montgomery City bus on her way home from work. As the bus filled and a white man entered in need of a seat, Miss Parks quietly refused. News of this incident spread quickly and led to a city-wide bus boycott led by a young Martin Luther King, Jr. This courageous action of one woman on a bus helped spark the modern American civil rights movement.



Civil rights demonstrator being attacked by police dogs, May 3, 1963, Birmingham, Ala.
Bill Hudson/AP

INSIDE DATA

Cover Story	2	Commentary	8
State & Local News . . .	5	Health News	9
Data Zone	6		

DATA NEWS WEEKLY

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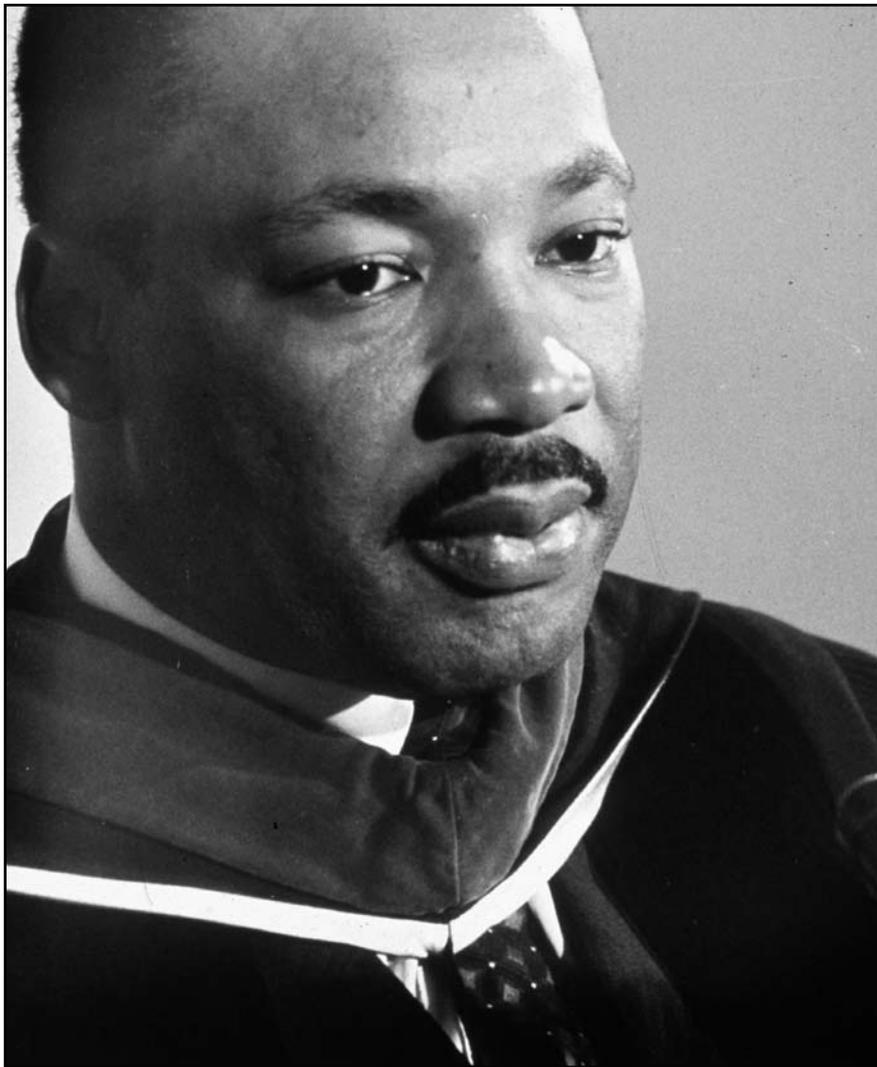
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Please call (504) 309-9913 for subscription information. Dated material two weeks in advance. Not responsible for publishing or return of unsolicited manuscripts or photos.

Cover Story, Continued from previous page.



Dr King Photo Caption circa 1965: American civil rights leader and Baptist Minister, Martin Luther King (1929 - 1968). A leader of the Montgomery Bus Boycott, he became America's foremost campaigner for civil rights and addressed the vast crowd at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington DC during the march for jobs and freedom. He was shot dead on the balcony of his hotel in Memphis, Tennessee, where he was supporting striking sanitation workers. (Photo by MPI/Getty Images)

As our nation again marks an Annual Tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. now is a timely moment to recall how a youthful but principled leader emerged at a time when this nation was directly challenged to honor its promises of citizenship. Neither age nor long-standing community roots were required to effect meaningful and lasting change. Today's youth need to know and adults need to be reminded that it was at the young age of 25 that Dr. King began what would become his first successful and peaceful protest: the year-long Montgomery Bus Boycott.

In the fall of 1954, Dr. King began his service as Pastor to Dexter Avenue Baptist Church. Shortly after his arrival in Montgomery, he met a ministerial colleague who would become his life-long deputy – Rev. Dr. Ralph Abernathy.

Explaining the notable differences in Montgomery's Black Churches, Rev. Abernathy advised King, "At my

church, you may talk about Jesus. You may preach about Jesus from the pulpit. But at Dexter, they would prefer that you not mention his name."

Despite this advice, Dr. King pursued innovative ideas for his pastorate. At his first sermon at Dexter Avenue, he presented two dozen written recommendations that would reorganize the church's committees and bank accounts. The list also included a requirement for every member of Dexter to be a registered voter. In 1954, less than five percent of Alabama Negroes were registered to vote.

With his recommendations accepted, the church moved forward with the formal installation services that took place on October 31, 1954.

A few months later on March 2, 1955, Claudette Colvin, a Student at Montgomery's Booker T. Washington High School was arrested by city police for refusing to give up a bus seat to a White passenger. Later that year another Black female, Mary Louise



The young Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King discusses the Montgomery Bus Boycott on the evening news.

Smith, was also arrested for the same offense. In neither of these instances was the Montgomery NAACP prompted to action or protest. The local chapter seemed to feel that the backgrounds of the student and Ms. Smith would not withstand scrutiny of White prosecutors.

In those days in Alabama, the first 10 seats on Montgomery buses were always reserved for Whites. If the White section filled up, the Colored section was made smaller.

But, on Thursday evening, December 1, 1955, Rosa Parks, a local Seamstress and Secretary of the Montgomery NAACP decided to ride home on the Cleveland Avenue Bus from her job at a downtown Montgomery department store. When the White section filled up, the bus driver asked four Blacks to move. Three other Black passengers complied with the order. Rosa Parks refused, and the driver called the police.

Twelve years earlier, Mrs. Parks was evicted by the same driver on another bus.

Recalling the events of that day, Mrs. Parks said, "I didn't consider myself breaking any Segregation Laws. I just felt resigned to give what I could to protest against the way I was being treated." The one phone call she was allowed from jail led to the response of another local NAACP Official, E. D. Nixon. A Pullman Porter by trade, Nixon aided the release of Mrs. Parks on a \$100.00 bond. Her trial was set for December 5th.

The following day, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. received a phone call from Nixon. As he recounted the events of the previous evening, Nixon told Dr.

King, "We have taken this thing too long already. We got to boycott the buses, make it clear to the White folks that we ain't taking this type of treatment any longer." Dr. King agreed and offered Dexter Avenue Baptist Church as a meeting place for community leaders. By consensus, they would decide the best course of action. Almost 50 ministers and civic leaders attended the meeting. They agreed that the bus boycott would begin on the following Monday, December 5th, the same day as Mrs. Parks' trial. Some 52,000 flyers were printed and distributed to announce the boycott.

The now-famous Montgomery Boycott actually borrowed some of its strategy from an earlier, but little-known, effort. In 1953, Rev. T. J. Jemison, then Secretary of the National Baptist Convention, organized a bus boycott in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. After local Louisiana Officials banned the use of cut-rate and unlicensed taxi service, Jemison organized a car pool to provide alternative transportation. That effort lasted only two weeks.

On December 5th, 1955, Dr. King, the newly-appointed President of the Montgomery Improvement Association (MIA), delivered his first speech on the bus boycott. An overflow crowd of thousands at Holt Street Baptist spilled out of the church and into the streets. Outdoor loudspeakers were set up to enable all in attendance to hear the first address of, the young and emerging leader.

With little time to prepare his remarks, Dr. King's spell-binding oratory and Baptist cadence captured the spirit of an angry Montgomery Black Community. "There comes a time my

Continued on page 4.

Cover Story, Continued from page 3.

friends, when people get tired of being thrown across the abyss of humiliation, where they experience the bleakness of nagging despair. There comes a time when people get

tired of being pushed out of the glittering sunlight of life's July, and left standing amidst the piercing chill of an Alpine November."

"I want it to be known", King continued, "that we're going to work with grim and bold determination – to gain justice on the buses in this city. And, we are not wrong. We are not wrong in what we are doing. If we are wrong – the Supreme Court of this nation is wrong. If we are wrong – God Almighty is wrong! And, we are determined here in Montgomery to work and fight until justice rolls down like water and righteousness like a mighty stream!"

A series of negotiating sessions began in early December as well. The protesters had three specific goals:

- Treat Negroes with greater courtesy;
- Hire Negro drivers for Negro routes; and
- Desegregate bus seating.

In response, White negotiators insisted on racially segregated seating and active negotiations soon stalled.

With the Christmas shopping season fast approaching, Dr. King proposed that instead of traditional gift shopping, Montgomery Negroes should rally to the original meaning of the season and refuse to shop at all. Monies set aside for gifts was proposed to be divided three ways among savings account, charity donations, and gifts to the MIA.

By January 1956, Montgomery's Bus Company advised city commissioners that the loss of revenues had led to the likelihood of bankruptcy. In reaction, the Mayor and White Citizens Council called for White residents to stop using their private cars and ride city buses instead. When fare revenues did not improve, a fare hike was approved.

That same month, the city's daily paper, the Montgomery Advertiser began running news reports on the bus boycott. The first article, printed January 10th suggested that a White Lutheran Minister was responsible for nearly 350 daily care rides and raising \$7,000 to support the ongoing protest. However, a follow-up report on January 19th appeared with the headline, "Rev. King is Boycott Boss".

On a tip from Carl Rowan, one of the few Black Journalists of that time, Dr. King was alerted in late January to a Sunday news article that was to announce the end the boycott. The article was to claim that Negroes would return to the buses the following business day. Dr. King advised Rowan that he knew nothing in that regard.

For more than a year, Montgomery's 30,000 Black residents walked, hitchhiked, bicycled, taxied, and used every means of transportation except the city buses. Black Taxi Companies reduced regular rates to the same 10 cents charged by the bus company. As time went on, cab fares returned to the regular 45 cents.

On February 1st, 1956, the Montgomery Improvement Association filed a lawsuit in Federal District Court. Four months later, on June 2nd, the Federal Court declared that segregated bus seating was unconstitutional. Later, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the ruling.

On December 20th, 1956, the order to integrate buses was served on Montgomery's officials.

In the year of the boycott, the transit company reportedly lost \$250,000 in revenues. Moreover, the city lost thousands of additional dollars in taxes. Montgomery retail merchants estimated their losses to be in the millions.

The boycott and its success won Dr. King as much widespread appreciation as it did resentment. In a December 1954 letter to his son, Dr. Martin Luther King, Sr. prophetically advised, "You see, young man, you are becoming very popular. As I told you, you must be very much in prayer. Persons like you are the ones the devil turns all of his forces loose to destroy."

In Recognition and Celebration of Martin Luther King Day



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Lift Every Voice and Sing Concert and Civil Rights Heroes Recognition

Ashé Cultural Arts Center invites the public to join them for the "Lift Every Voice and Sing Concert" celebrating African-American liberation music, and featuring freedom songs from the Civil Rights Movement in honor of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday. Artists include Topsy Chapman & Solid Harmony, Davell Crawford, Michaela Harrison, Clark Knighten, Sharon Martin, Deacon John Moore, Donald Ramsey, Kermit Ruffins, Bill Summers, and more.

Honored at the event will be Civil Rights heroes of the sixties who were instrumental in desegregating schools and lunch

counters 50 years ago. Those honored include: Skip Alexander, Raphael Cassimere Jr., Lolis Elie Sr., Donald Hubbard, New Zion Baptist Church, John O'Neal, Tessie Prevost-Williams, Claude Reese, Dottie Simmons, Jerome Smith, Llwellyn Soniat, Matthew Suarez, and Leona Tate. Bring the entire family, and come prepared to sing along. Refreshments will be served. The event takes place on Sunday, January 16, 2011, from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., at Ashé Cultural Arts Center, 1724 Oretha Castle Haley Blvd., New Orleans. Admission is Free to the public. Call (504) 569-9070 for more information.

African American Museum Receives Grant from the City



New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu this week presented a \$3 Million CDBG grant to the New Orleans African American Museum in Treme for improvement and expansion of the facility.



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A Tribute To My Dear Friend Chiquita 'Chiq' Simms

By Edwin Buggage
Data News Weekly Editor

Last week Data News Weekly paid tribute to a truly great human being, Chiquita 'Chiq' Simms. Although many people knew her as a public person hobnobbing with public figures and doing big things in the world of

PR, I had the privilege to know the private person. She was truly a woman who loved her family and her city. She is someone I spent many hours with working with at Data News Weekly and other business ventures in addition to becoming her good friend over the 12 years I knew her.

I was saddened on Christmas morning to hear she passed being just being 40 years young with so many years ahead of her. As I thought about her life and how she selflessly did so many things for so many people I shed tears thinking that my friend was no longer with us. That I would



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no longer be able to call her and talk about everything from entertainment industry stuff to personal issues and to laugh with her about the good times we shared in the city pre Katrina and the state of the city today five years later.

She was somebody who personified progressive and positive thinking. She unlike many did not sit on the sidelines and let things happen she was a sister who made things happen. Chiquita was inspirational in a time when so many people were displaced including herself who lost everything. But with her resilience she picked up the pieces and not only put her life back together not only just surviving but thriving in Atlanta taking her life and career to new heights. She in the time of crisis when the future of our city hung in the balance became an advocate for

those who were disenfranchised making national and international headlines.

Chiquita in my view embodied new possibilities for those of us who were displaced and disconnected reminding us that after getting knocked down you could get up off the canvas and get back to fighting to regain your life. And in the spirit of her memory we should continue to fight the fight to be better than we were yesterday. The fight to be better citizens and better people and pursue excellence and to know that all of us can through living a positive life be agents of change. She also helped people realize that they could aspire to reach higher and if we have a dream we should pursue it, whether it is a boom or a bust, it is the pursuit of our passion that give our lives purpose and this is a lesson I learned from Chiquita.

Chiq, Continued on page 11.

Shoot Ya Best Shot!

Data Around Town

Farewell Magnolia Shorty

New Orleans recording artist Magnolia Shorty's tragic and untimely death shook the Crescent City, and in an outpouring of love and support people from all over the city came out to pay their respects to this legend of New Orleans music.



Usher in The House

Recently, superstar Usher dazzled crowds with an amazing show that touched down in the Big Easy. A capacity crowd came out to enjoy this talented artist tear it down with a performance that shows why he has defined the style and sound for his generation.



Irvin Mayfield's Birthday Party

(Last week these photos were misidentified as Curtis Mayfield's Birthday Party. Our apologies for the mistake) Happy Birthday Irvin!



Photos by Leo Getz

A Tragedy and My Apology



Julianne Malveaux
NNPA Columnist

My cellphone pinged on Saturday to say I had a message. I was in the middle of lunch and chose to ignore it. When I picked it up a couple of hours later, I felt the same sickness that millions did, learning that Arizona Congresswoman Gabrielle Gifford was shot in an assassination attempt. Television news bubbled over with the news, with fact, spin, and interpretation. Would all 435 members of Congress need ramped up security? Was hate speech the basis of this shooting? I even saw Neil Boortz, the Peripatetic Atlanta Lawyer and Talk Show Host suggest that President Barack and First Lady Michelle Obama had been guilty

of some of the same hate speech that “the right” has been accused of. Please.

The talk about hate speech, however, is important and I’m going to own my part of it, and apologize. A bazillion years ago (actually in 1992) I made a wisecrack about Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas. Anyone who knows me would see it as a wisecrack, but those who don’t, saw it as hate speech. Here’s the background. Thomas said he would live to be 120 to stay on the court to frustrate liberals. I replied that the average Black man had a life expectancy of about 65, and that if his wife fed him lots of butter and eggs (if her recent call to Anita Hill is any indication she isn’t cooking much these days), ingredients for high cholesterol and heart trouble, he’d die an early death. Conservatives called it a death wish. Death by breakfast, I responded, still in jest. As if someone were standing over Thomas with an Uzi forcing him to eat that butter and eggs. The wisecrack has to be taken even less seriously if Justice Thomas’ purported commitment to physical fitness and working out is taken into consideration.

No matter, and no excuses. My comment about Thomas, my wisecrack, was in poor taste. Out of line. Out of order. I am sorry if the words I spoke at all contributed to the climate in which we live, to the

vitriol that has poisoned the atmosphere. My apology does not mitigate or reduce my contempt for Clarence Thomas and for his arrogant dismissal of liberals and for the African-American community. If I could do it all over, I’d have wished him the bacon and eggs, or simply made reference to the Black male life expectancy rate and his own hubris, but left out the comment about his early death. The fact is that none of us should joke about death. It just isn’t funny.

To be sure, “the right” has had a great time distorting my words, and they’ve disseminated them widely. And, anytime a liberal makes an inappropriate comment they take their media machine and work it overtime. These conservatives invoke free speech when pastors pray for President Obama’s death from their pulpits (if it were any other president, that pastor might have been looking the FBI in the face). These same conservatives say they aren’t racist when they use images of apes to describe the First Family. These conservatives have both fingerprints and footprints in the poisoned language that poses as free speech. Yet it is true that it takes sticks and twigs, not just logs and trees, to build a fire. Was my comment one of the twigs?

It has taken me nearly two decades and an attempted assassination to understand

the damage that my wisecrack might have caused, not to Justice Thomas, but to the public discourse. I hope it won’t take our nation two more decades to understand and embrace the notion of speech civility, even for, no, especially for, political opponents. Every day, and in every way, I tell my students, faculty, and staff that I value civility. Yet, my comment about Clarence Thomas was not only uncivil, it was ugly and unnecessary. And, it really wasn’t that funny. I regret it. I apologize for it. I wish I could take it back.

A dynamic young Congresswoman is fighting for her life, and I am among those who will fall to my knees in prayer for her each day. The assassin who shot her also took out a federal judge, a 9-year-old girl, a Congressional Aide, and others. A dozen more were wounded. Scores of lives will never be the same. Even as we pray for Congresswoman Gabrielle Gifford, we need to fight to restrict easy access to guns. And, we all need to be reminded to tone it down.

Julianne Malveaux is the 15th President of Bennett College for Women. Her most recent book, *Surviving and Thriving, 365 Facts in Black Economic History*, can be purchased at www.lastwordprod.com.

Martin Luther King Day of Service

By Patrick A. Corvington
and Aaron S. Williams

Many may view the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. solely through the lens of civil rights. For the two of us, the centerpiece of his message is the power of service and volunteering to heal racial wounds and lead America into a new era of shared responsibility and equal opportunity. Much of Dr. King’s service message can be summed up in one of his most famous sayings: “Life’s most persistent and urgent question is what are you doing for others.”

For a quarter of a century, the nation has set aside a day to honor one of the great heroes of American history. In recent years, the holiday has been designated as a Day of Service – “a day on, not a day off” – to honor Dr. King’s fundamental commitment to engaging people of all races and walks of life in service to our nation and our world.

Nowhere is Dr. King’s persistent and urgent question more fully pursued and realized than in the two agencies we lead; the Peace Corps and the Corporation for National and Community Service. Fifty years ago, Senator John F. Kennedy posed

Dr. King’s question to an audience of 5,000 students on the steps of the University of Michigan with a challenge that they serve people in need around the world.

The eager response of those willing students ignited one of the signature service movements of our times. Since 1961, more than 200,000 Americans have volunteered through the Peace Corps to fight poverty, disease, illiteracy, and a host of other challenges in 139 countries around the world. President Kennedy’s vision of an army of domestic anti-poverty volunteers was realized in 1965 with the creation of VISTA.

In 1993, millions more Americans were given the chance to serve with the creation of AmeriCorps and the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS). Each year, CNCS engages more than five million Americans in “getting things done” through its AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, and Learn and Serve programs. Our service members, who represent all races, ages and walks of life, stand shoulder to shoulder with communities across the country; feeding the hungry, helping struggling students in our schools, responding to natural disasters, and serving in many other ways.

Dr. King understood that working together in common purpose was essential to building what he called “the beloved community.” The desire of Americans to bridge divisions in order to lend a helping hand has always been bigger than politics. In 2009, in a spirit of bi-partisanship, rarely seen these days in Washington, it took Senator Orrin Hatch (R-UT) and Senator Edward M. Kennedy (D-MA), working with leaders in the House, just weeks to introduce, debate, rally the votes, and pass the Serve America Act – the most sweeping expansion of national service in a generation.

Like Dr. King, these visionary leaders understood that as a nation, we are strongest, we are more united, and we are at our best when we do for others. Our own service work has taught us that doing for others is also a powerful way to do for yourself.

We both grew up at a time when leadership opportunities for African American men, both in and out of government, were just beginning to open up. Inspired by the sacrifices of Dr. King and others, we chose the path of public service. That path has taken us from volunteering in poor villages abroad and homeless shelters here at

home to leading America’s service agencies at a time of great need for grassroots hope among communities worldwide.

Today, we are pleased to announce that the Peace Corps and CNCS are partnering to bring the rewards of service to more people and communities – especially to those who may not have had that chance before. It is our privilege to be inspired by the Americans who make a commitment to service opportunities that have led them to a better life and opened new doors of opportunity.

On this 25th anniversary of the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday, with so many problems facing our nation, we say to all Americans – if you have not already made service a part of your daily lives, get started today. And don’t just do it for one day. Make it a lifetime commitment. Dr. King changed the course of history armed only with the power of his ideals and grassroots citizen support. His life of service reminds us that the everyday acts of ordinary citizens make this country extraordinary.

Patrick A. Corvington is CEO of the Corporation for National and Community Service. Aaron S. Williams is Director of the Peace Corps.

HIV/AIDS - Taking It to the Streets

By **Phill Wilson**

Welcome to "Greater than AIDS", a year-long series of articles and editorials sponsored by the NNPA Foundation, The Black Press U.S.A. and the Black AIDS Institute about the state of AIDS in Black America.

As is the tradition among many Black folks, the New Year marks a time when we take stock of our progress and plan where we are going for the coming year. Last year saw some tremendous advances in the fight against HIV/AIDS, including long-awaited scientific breakthroughs that may soon help prevent HIV, but also some major setbacks.

As we move into 2011, here are five ways that the Black community can mobilize itself to bring us closer to ending the HIV/AIDS epidemic in our communities.

1) Develop strategies that acknowledge and address the new political realities

The mid-term elections shifted America's political landscape, including for the HIV/AIDS movement. With a divided federal government—Republicans controlling the House of Representatives and Democrats controlling the Senate and Executive branch—we need to focus on new ways to create policy change. We need to be more strategic in our policy work and, quite frankly, engage in some good, old-fashioned education and advocacy work.

First, we must identify who among our allies remains in the Congress. It's time to remind these old friends that we still need their support and that the work they have engaged in thus far has not been in vain. We also need to create new supporters. This means spending time briefing our newly elected public officials to help them understand the important role they can play. This requires creating profiles of the members of Congress representing key districts, understanding what the AIDS epidemic looks like and informing the representatives about how it affects their district, and then educating and mobilizing their constituents to communicate to these representatives the importance of HIV/AIDS issues.

2) Protect healthcare reform from those vowing to dismantle or disable it

The Healthcare Affordability Act was probably the most significant HIV-related legislation in the history of the epidemic. The removal of previously existing conditions, the lifting of the lifetime and annual bans, the potential adjustments in Medicare and Medicaid and the creation of health zones are extremely important for people living with HIV.

In 2011 healthcare reform will face numerous challenges. Chief among them: Many freshman members of the 112th Congress campaigned on a pledge to kill healthcare reform and cut the federal deficit. It is highly unlikely they will repeal healthcare reform, but they may succeed in starving it by depriving critical measures of funding and/or delaying and/or complicating their implementation. We need to be vigilant to make sure this doesn't happen. But, we can't scale up without additional resources. The current economic climate—and specifically the budget limitations facing federal, state, and local governments—will seriously undermine our ability to actually implement healthcare reform's various measures.

3) Transform the National HIV/AIDS Strategy into a living document that benefits Black Americans

This plan exemplifies the maxim "the devil is in the details". The NHAS has some clear and concise goals and objectives, so now we finally have a picture of where we are heading as a nation. Now the challenge lies in answering questions like:

- Exactly how do we get there?
- Who has the roadmap?
- What route are we taking?
- What in the plan speaks to the most vulnerable among us?
- And how does the plan address the unique HIV challenges facing Black America?

We need to analyze the National HIV/AIDS Strategy (NHAS) and translate it into a policy document that relates explicitly and specifically to Black people, then we need to develop strategies to mobilize African Americans to make sure we are involved every step of the way.

4) Prepare our community to benefit from recent scientific breakthroughs

There were at least three major scientific breakthroughs in

2010. Now, we must make sure that Black people are not denied the benefit of these advances. If a cure for AIDS were discovered today, the infrastructure does not exist to ensure Black Americans would have access to it. It is more important than ever that we raise HIV science literacy in Black communities. We need to build a Black AIDS-treatment network composed of community members, clinicians, and people living with HIV and AIDS who educate Black America on the state of HIV science and treatment, and ensure that people who need care and treatment have access to and utilize it.

5) Have conversations about HIV/AIDS with those who need them most

For the first time in the history of the AIDS epidemic, we have launched an aggressive HIV/AIDS social-marketing campaign targeting Black America. In 2010 that movement expanded to include explicit messages to gay and bisexual Black men, as well as to women, faith leaders, and people living with HIV. In 2011 we need to expand these efforts, in particular targeting gay and bisexual

men more robustly. Whether we are talking about teen pregnancy or HIV, too often in our communities the folks who need information the most are the very folks for whom we are most reluctant to design messages. We cannot end the HIV epidemic in Black America if we allow homophobia or a general discomfort with talking about sex and sexuality to prevent us from creating an honest, frank, and vigorous HIV conversation about, with and by Black gay and bisexual men.

In short, we are at a crossroad. We are not where we used to be, but when and whether we get to where we need to be may well be determined by what path each and every one of us chooses today. No matter who you are and where you are, there is a role for you to play in ending the HIV/AIDS epidemics. There are no innocent bystanders in this fight. Pick a battle and get involved.

Phill Wilson is the President and CEO of the Black AIDS Institute, the only National HIV/AIDS think tank in the United States focused exclusively on Black people. He can be reached at PhillWilson@BlackAIDS.org

NNPA AIDS
greaterthan.org

New Orleans' Master Plan Recognized with National Award for a Hard-Won Victory

The American Planning Association (APA) has selected New Orleans' Master Plan, Plan for the 21st Century: New Orleans 2030, to receive the 2011 National Planning Excellence Award for a Hard-Won Victory for its ability to engage, educate and unite a very broad, diverse and, at times, contentious New Orleans community.

The National Planning Achievement Award for a Hard-Won Victory recognizes a planning effort undertaken by a community, neighborhood, citizens group, or jurisdiction in the face of difficult, challenging, or adverse conditions.

Still recovering from the devastation of Hurricane Katrina and dealing with decades old tensions,

planners undertaking a citywide master planning process required courage and tenacity. The challenges to overcome were many – racial tensions, skepticism, development decisions made through the political rather than the planning process, and a lack of planning for affordable housing, transportation or economic development.

The planning team embraced the challenges and implemented a grassroots process of educating the entire community about planning, thus creating a culture that equipped residents with the tools to work and make decisions together. The team also built trust among elected officials, city staff and community leaders that forged cohesive points of view.

As a result, more than 5,000 people directly participated in the master plan, giving not only feedback but learning how city-wide planning initiatives and data-backed policies are critical when reclaiming 60,000 vacant lots, boosting the city's environmental resilience, and diversifying the local economy.

“Creating and adopting the master plan is a great achievement for the City of New Orleans. This plan represents a significant step towards planning for and creating a future that integrates the

post-Katrina rebuilding plans that citizens have worked so hard on since the storm,” said Marie L. York, FAICP, APA Board Director and 2011 National Planning Awards Jury Chair. “The plan sets a framework for the next 20 years to guide decision-makers and the community as they work in concert to make New Orleans a model of 21st century city life while honoring and preserving its unique identity.”

The award for the Plan for the 21st Century: New Orleans 2030 will be presented at a special luncheon at APA's National Planning Conference in Boston on April 11, 2011. The plan will also be featured in an upcoming issue of Planning magazine, APA's flagship publication.

For a list of all of the APA 2011 National Planning Excellence, Achievement, and Leadership Award recipients, visit www.planning.org/awards/2011.

City of New Orleans MLK Holiday Events Calendar

25th Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Celebration Calendar of Events

New Orleans Martin Luther King, Jr. Federal Holiday Commission announces the City's calendar of events planned to honor the 25th anniversary of the holiday.

Thursday, January 13, 2011 New Orleans Public Library Celebration
12:00pm New Orleans Public Library Main Branch
219 Loyola Ave.

Friday, January 14, 2011 United Teachers of N.O. Choral Concert
6:00pm Franklin Avenue Baptist Church
2515 Franklin Ave.

Saturday, January 15, 2011 Hands On New Orleans MLK Service Project
9:00am O.P. Walker High School
2832 General Meyer Avenue

Saturday, January 15, 2011 R.E.A.L. March
10:00am (Begins at A.L. Davis Park and ending at MLK Monument at S. Claiborne Ave.)

Saturday, January 15, 2011 Wreath Laying Ceremony – City Sponsored Event
11:00am (MLK Monument on S. Claiborne Ave. & MLK Boulevard)

Sunday, January 16, 2011 Memorial Service – City Sponsored Event
6:00pm New Home Ministries Church
1605 Carondelet St.

Monday, January 17, 2011 25th Annual MLK Memorial March – City Sponsored Event
9:30am Opening Program
City Hall
1300 Perdido St.
10:00am (March Begins at City Hall and ending at MLK Monument at S. Claiborne Ave.)

Monday, January 17, 2011 MLK Day Service Project
1:00pm Norwood Thompson Park
7200 Forshey St.

Monday, January 17, 2011 MLK Commemorative Art Exhibit
2:00pm New Orleans African American Museum
1418 Gov. Nicholls St.

For more information please contact the Mayor's Office at (504) 658-4900

Chiq, Continued from page 6.

In her I saw the strength of a single mom doing what she had to do to raise her son D.J. from a little boy that today has the tools to be a strong young man in society. I saw a woman who truly embody the overused term Diva, for she was truly an elegant, intelligent woman who was empowered and handled her business. She was a versatile woman who was as comfortable with people from the streets as the elite. Navigating her way with ease in a way I always admired and had no bones about telling her how much respect I had for her as a person and a businesswoman.

As we go through this journey in our lives I feel it is important to pour as much positivity into your cup of life and share it with the people you come in contact with. And Chiquita through her example was someone who did just that, she had a positive outlook on any situation; I believe this is something else we should take from the lesson that is her life. That we should in spite of whatever negativity come our way combat it with positivity and always look at the glass that is our lives or any situation as half full and not empty. And always believe yes we can overcome any obstacles that are placed before us.

Chiquita has left us in the prime of her life, as the sun shined down brightly with limitless possibilities for her future. Today for me it does not feel the same as I think of her still trying to make sense of why did she have to go. But my friend is home singing with the angels, looking down smiling knowing that many people loved her and will miss her. In this time after so much has happened to the people of our city, we must remember to not just tell people you love them, but with your acts of kindness show them giving them their roses while they are living. For tomorrow is not promised to any of us, so in memory of my dear friend Chiquita 'Chiq' Simms, I say let us live in the spirit of positivity and possibility. And as my eyes well with tears thinking of her and how I love her and will miss her I am glad she was my friend and from myself and the Data News we pray for her family and may she rest in peace.

For comments please email at ebmediagroup3@yahoo.com

Interfaith Understanding Promoted during MLK, Jr. Weekend

In an effort to enable interfaith discussion and understanding, the congregations of Touro Synagogue and Masjidur Raheem will come together during the Martin Luther King, Jr. weekend for the 4th Weekend of Peace.

The weekend's events include a January 15th Community Service Event jointly hosted by both congregations. Volunteers will serve a hot meal, distribute canned goods and clothing and offer primary health screenings, including dental screenings and mental health services. The NO AIDS Task Force will also be present. Entertainment for both children and adults, including participation from the New Orleans Hornets as well as music by the Hot 8 Brass Band, will also be available. On January 17th, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, congregants from both faiths will march from the steps of City Hall to the Bust of Dr. King on Claiborne Avenue under one banner, proclaiming "Many Religions, One Community". All are welcome to join.

The first "Weekend of Peace" took place in 2005, when Touro Synagogue and Masjidur Raheem began developing and nurturing a relationship to facilitate interfaith understanding. This initial effort was led by Touro Synagogue congregant and then New Orleans Saints Executive Vice-President, (now City Council President) Arnie Fielkow, with the support of Clergy Rabbi David Goldstein of Touro Synagogue and Imam Rafeeq Nu'man of Masjidur Raheem. The event was recreated in 2007 and 2008.

In mid-2010, both congregations, at the request of Fielkow, decided to rekindle and expand the relationship. Chairpersons for the 2011 "Weekend of Peace" include Synagogue congregants Lisa Herman and Larry Orlansky, along with Masjid congregants Musheer Abdul-Jabbaar and Safi-yullah Yusuf, and Clergy Imam Rafeeq Nu'man and Rabbi Alexis Berk. On November 15th, 2010, Touro hosted "Living Our Faith,"

an evening of dinner and dialogue for members of both congregations led by the Rabbi and the Imam. The dinner gave members of the Masjid and the Synagogue an opportunity to talk informally and learn more about each other and each other's religions. The clergy-led dialogue allowed participants to explore questions about faith from the perspective of members of both religions.

Members of the Masjid and the Synagogue plan to schedule further activities together during 2011, including joint worship and discussion groups.

"When two congregations come together to plan an event like this, there is solidarity in knowing that although we worship differently, we share the common goal of promoting peace. Whether you greet friends with the Hebrew word 'Shalom' or with the Arabic words 'As-Salaam Alaikum', both phrases impart peace," said Event Co-Organizer Lisa Herman, Member of Touro

Synagogue.

"The 'Weekend of Peace' has been successful over the years, and I look forward to expanding the relationship between our congregations. Knowledge is the key to peace, and as we learn more about each other's faiths, we have greater respect of faiths that are not our own," said Imam Rafeeq Nu'man.

"New Orleans has always been home to numerous religions and races. Thus it is only fitting that we host a weekend of religious friendship and tolerance during the weekend that celebrates Dr. King. This is an event that I strongly support, and I look forward to seeing it continue for years to come," said Council President Arnie Fielkow.

Community Service Event:

Date: January 15
 Time: 1pm-4pm
 Place: Jomo-Kenyatta Park, 1115 N. Claiborne Avenue (between Ursuline and Gov. Nicholls)

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day March:

Date: January 17
 Time: 9am
 Place: Meet at steps of City Hall, 1300 Perdido St, and process to the bust of Dr. King on Claiborne Avenue

Councilman Arnie Fielkow

welcomes you to the Weekend of Peace,
 a partnership between
 Touro Synagogue and Masjidur Rahim



Celebrate
 Martin Luther King, Jr.
 and
 Interfaith Understanding

Community Service Event

Date: January 15th 2011 Time: 1 p.m. - 4 p. m.
 Place: Jomo-Kenyatta Park, 1115 N. Claiborne Avenue
 (between Ursuline and Gov. Nicholls)

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day March

Date: January 17th 2011 Time: 9 a.m.
 Place: Meet at steps of City Hall, 1300 Perdido Street
 and process to the bust of Dr. King on Claiborne Avenue

"An individual has not started living until he can rise above the narrow confines of his individualistic concerns to the broader concerns of all humanity." Martin Luther King, Jr.



Ashé Cultural Arts Center PRESENTS ITS ANNUAL LIFT EVERY VOICE AND SING CONCERT

Sunday, January 16, 2011 | 5:00 - 8:00 p.m.
 1712 Oretha Castle Haley Boulevard | NOLA

Featuring African-American liberation music & freedom songs from the Civil Rights Era, in honor of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday.

HONORING CIVIL RIGHTS HEROES OF THE 60s

Skip Alexander, Raphael Cassimere Jr., Lolis Elie Sr., Donald Hubbard, New Zion Baptist Church, John O'Neal, Tessie Prevost-Williams, Claude Reese, Kalamu ya Salaam, Dottie Simmons, Jerome Smith, Llewellyn Soniat, Matteo "Fluckie" Suarez, and Leona Tate.

FEATURING ARTISTS:

Topsy Chapman & Solid Harmony, Davell Crawford, Michaela Harrison, Clark Knighten, Sharon Martin, Deacon John Moore, Donald Ramsey, Kermit Ruffins, Bill Summers and others.

FREE ADMISSION

Call (504) 569-9070 for more information.



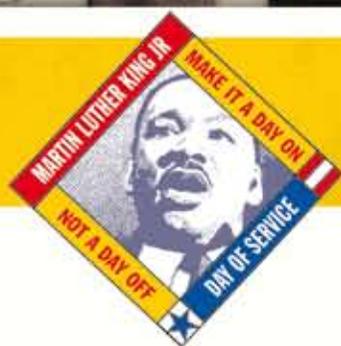
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AND URGENT QUESTION IS:**

**WHAT
ARE YOU
DOING FOR
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DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR



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MAKE IT A DAY ON, NOT A DAY OFF.**

MLKDay.gov



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