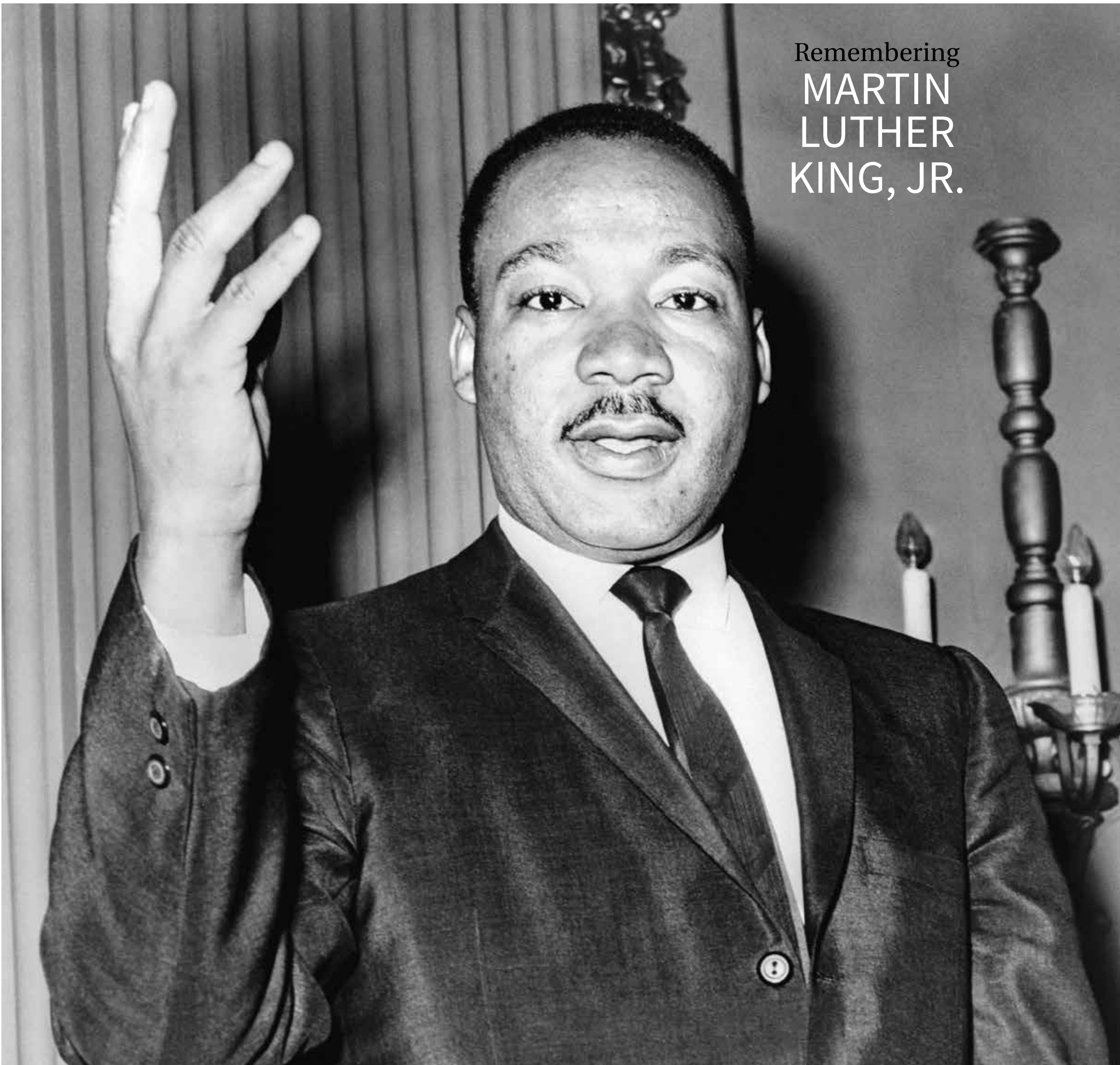


Remembering
MARTIN
LUTHER
KING, JR.



Host a Parade or March

Martin Luther King Jr. put together peaceful protests and organized marches. Today, you can celebrate the difference he made by hosting a parade or event in your neighborhood.

With a little planning and community support, you may be surprised by how easily you can coordinate an event.

The first step of any event is to contact the proper authorities. Check with your municipality for permits or regulations regarding events. You will likely need to hire security, may need to sell space to vendors, and should recruit participants and sponsors.

GETTING STARTED

Once you understand the parade protocol in your city, you should begin gauging the interest of your community. Advertise in community calendars, like the ones in your local paper, spend time on social media or post flyers in high-traffic areas around town searching for members to build a committee. With your team in place, decide on which type of event you will throw. A parade can require more moving parts as vehicles are commonly involved. However, a march can be an easier endeavor where a group gath-



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ers to promote King's peaceful message.

SPREAD THE MESSAGE

After you have the time, date, location and details of the event in stone, it's time to be loud about it. Ask local businesses to hang flyers or promote the date by sharing

the message with their clientele. Newspapers, radio and local newscasts are another efficient way to reach a large audience about an event happening in the neighborhood. Be sure to promote it with King's message and encourage participants to decorate signs, decorations or banners for

floats with their favorite quotes or significant achievements he accomplished.

HIRE SPEAKERS

Consider hiring professional speakers within the civil rights community to visit your event and give speeches. Their educated words can inspire citi-

zens in the neighborhood to act and be proactive when celebrating the movement for which King had such a passion and commitment.

You can find experts by doing research on social media and contacting them through a messaging app or their professional networking site.

King's Major Accomplishments

Martin Luther King Jr.'s leadership of the American civil rights movement lasted for 13 years, beginning in 1955, according to The King Center.

Under his guidance, the organization credits this period as the most significant progress made by African Americans toward equality in America. King would be the leader of a nonviolent movement into the 1960s until his untimely death.

His legend lives on through his inspiring messages, and numerous statues memorializing his honor throughout parks, streets and many other public facilities. To fully understand his significance to America, look at some of his most important achievements according to The King Center.

1955: MONTGOMERY BUS BOYCOTT

King served as spokesman for one of the largest pushes for the integration of public transportation in Montgomery, Alabama. The effort spanned 381 days of participation by citizens of the black community who were forced to walk miles to and from work. The movement eventually led to the United States Supreme Court to rule against racial segregation in transportation, as it was deemed unconstitutional.

1963: LETTER FROM A BIRMINGHAM JAIL

In 1963, King led a coalition of civil rights advocates in a peaceful campaign in what was largely considered the most segregated city in America, Birmingham, Alabama. Here, the reality of brutality against young blacks

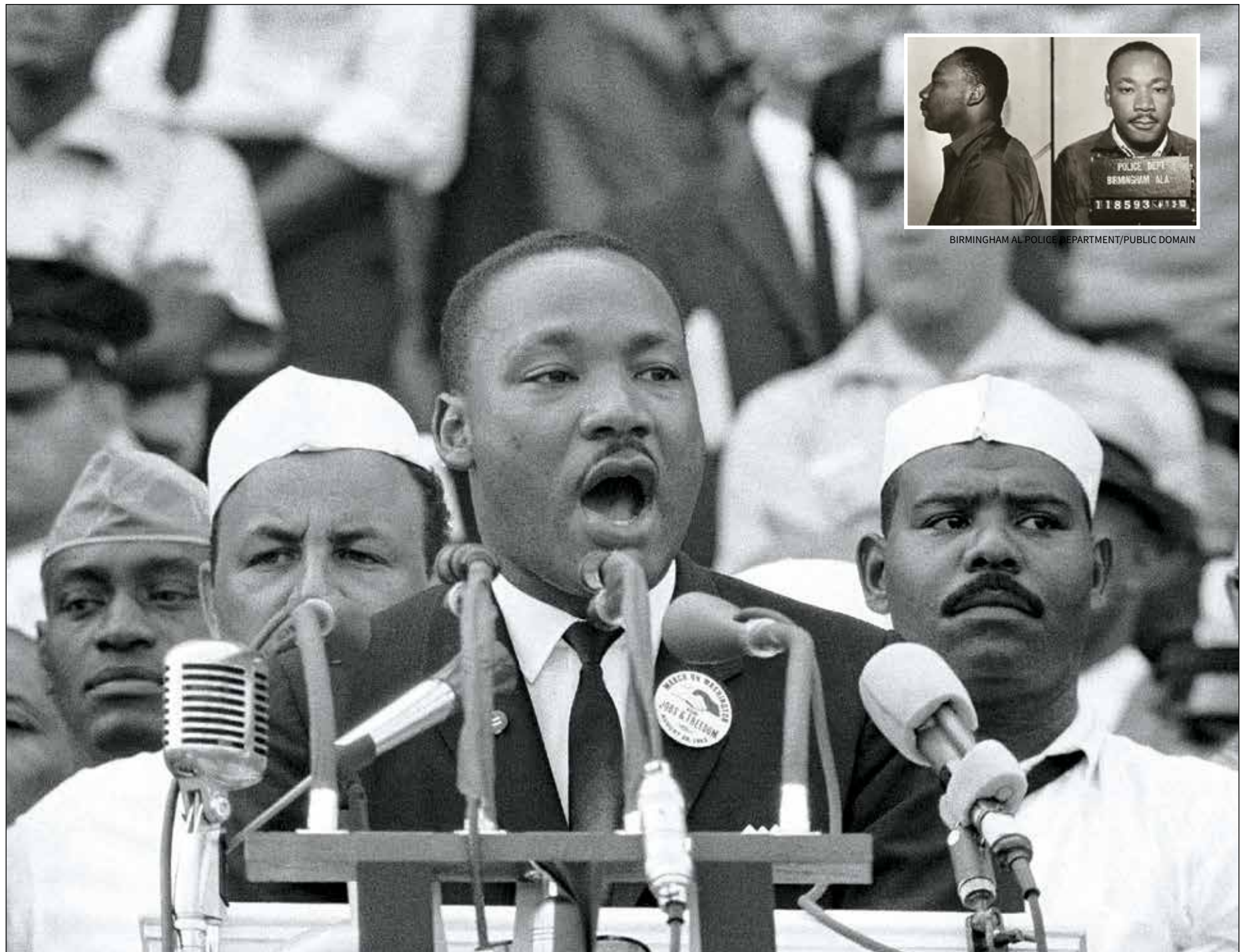
was highly documented through television newscasts and articles. This led to a national outrage which resulted in an unprecedented push for civil rights legislation. During this campaign, King penned the "Letter from a Birmingham Jail," which is required reading in class-

rooms worldwide.

1963: I HAVE A DREAM

Perhaps the speech King is most known for was given during the March for Jobs and Freedom or, the March on Washington. Over a quarter-million attendees came to support the movement and

were witness to the historic "I Have a Dream" speech that led the nation to take an active stance towards equal rights. This is the moment many consider to be what cemented his role as a social leader and led him to later being named Time magazine's "Man of the Year."



BIRMINGHAM AL POLICE DEPARTMENT/PUBLIC DOMAIN

PUBLIC DOMAIN

Leaders Inspired by King

One of the most prestigious ways to honor the late Martin Luther King Jr. is to continue the civil rights movement in his honor. He played a major role in shaping America as we know it today. Along the way, he inspired numerous activists to carry on his legacy by changing the world.

Here are a few prominent advocates who were inspired by King to act and pursue equal rights for the country's citizens.

PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA

While Obama was an adolescent during the time of Martin Luther King Jr.'s untimely death, his message and story inspired the young man to advocate for equal rights. He was credited as saying, "that's my story," regarding the book "Parting the Waters: America in the King Years, 1954-63," which is both a biography about King and history of the civil rights movement.

King's influence can be seen during Obama's tenure as president with positive policies affecting people of color, same-sex marriages and universal health care. The first



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African American president continued his legacy by promoting equal rights for all Americans.

ACTIVIST FRANKYE ADAMS-JOHNSON

Daughter of a struggling sharecropper, she suffered through segregation during

childhood and was unable to attend school daily. During an interview with the organization civil rights movement veterans, she declared that she was 17 years old when she noticed college students in a town nearby were protesting their treatment and decided to get involved. She would later



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organize a walkout in her school in support of the students protesting nearby and eventually marched with King to push for a better America.

REV. DR. WILLIAM BARBER

Barber is an anti-poverty activist who hopes to encour-

age Congress to pass a package of laws to guarantee an income, affordable housing and funds for poor communities. Barber hopes to continue this campaign in honor of King, who was assassinated, ultimately resulting in the slowing of the advancement of civil rights.

Important Lessons

While Martin Luther King Jr. strove to secure equal rights for minorities in America, he taught lessons along the way that are beneficial for everyone's well-being.

King showed us that being boisterous about our dreams and demands for equal rights is effective in drawing attention from those in charge of change.

His messages were blunt, effective and inspiring. A master of words, King showed courage in the face of inequality and encouraged others to stand up for injustice, even if it is unpopular to do so. When you're facing adversity during your life, remember the lessons and confidence King showed and strive for resolving issues peacefully but in a firm and serious manner.

Here are some important qualities that King showed during his struggle to bring equal rights to a country divided.

CONFIDENCE

King was a proponent in believing in yourself before attempting to convince others to listen. Through well-crafted speeches and advocacy, he showed people that doubting themselves would weaken the message being explained. The confi-



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dence he displayed allowed him to be taken seriously by those who demanded civil rights and officials who oversaw changing the laws in place.

EQUALITY

Pursuing equal rights for all Americans was King's biggest

mission. He realized that each person's story was intertwined, and we are all in this together. By sharing stories that intertwine with each other, we can realize that every action we make has a consequence that typically affects another person. Take King's principles with you in

to conversations about equality, justice and liberty. His messages are just as resounding today as they were during his heyday.

HONESTY

Honesty over popular opinion was a King hallmark. While he often found himself

in controversial situations, his words captivated audiences and propelled the civil rights movement. King's conviction to change the destiny of America by speaking honestly would ultimately play a role in his assassination on April 4, 1968, in Memphis, Tenn.

Empower the Community

On Martin Luther King Jr. Day, you can honor his legacy throughout your community by volunteering your time or hosting a charity event to benefit the less fortunate.

It's an opportunity to ask for changes that boost the economy or livelihood in your neighborhood.

King was an important advocate during the civil rights movement and pushed to ensure citizens were treated fairly. If you notice injustice in your community, speak up through adversity and draw attention to a cause you believe in. He gave the ultimate sacrifice by standing up for citizens who were treated unjustly, and you can do the same.

WHAT IS MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY?

According to the Corporation for National and Community Service, Martin Luther King Jr. Day was signed into legislation in 1983 and signified King's birthday as a federal holiday. The day is intended to empower individuals, strengthen communities, bridge barriers and create solutions to problems in society.

If you notice injustice in your community, speak up through adversity and draw attention to a cause you believe in.

A popular moniker the holiday has gained is treating it as a day on, not a day off. That means you should celebrate the day by taking action to enhance the community rather than treating it as a vacation day. King worked tirelessly to fight for equal rights, and his message should continue to inspire people to act and strive for a better future.

HOW TO VOLUNTEER

To honor King's life, volunteer to make the world a better place is a wholesome tradition. Here are some organizations that encourage participation on this honorable holiday.

Environmental Protection Agency: Since 2012, the EPA has asked volunteers to clean up neighborhoods and increase green conditions in community parks and open spaces.

MLK 365: Global Citizens 365 is one of the largest MLK Day event organizers. They work with nonprofits, food banks and schools to open the door for volunteer opportunities.

American Civil Liberties Union: Chapters belonging to the ACLU across the country host rallies and parades to celebrate King's life. You can show your support by attending or volunteering at these incredible events.



Montgomery Bus Boycott

In 1955, Martin Luther King, Jr., was recruited to serve as spokesman for the Montgomery Bus Boycott. This campaign was built within the African-American population of Montgomery, Ala., to force integration across the city's bus line system.

According to The King Center, after 381 days of nearly universal participation by citizens of the black community, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that racial segregation in transportation was unconstitutional.

The boycott was actually catalyzed by the arrest of Rosa Parks on Dec. 1, 1955, and lasted 13 months, although its roots began years before the infamous arrest. The Women's Political Council (WPC), a group of black professionals founded in 1946, had already turned their attention to Jim Crow practices on the Montgomery city buses and helped set the stage for the monumental changes.

WHO COORDINATED THE BOYCOTT?

With the boycott lasting more than one year, the



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African-American population in Montgomery. According to The King Center, Parks was quoted as saying: "The advantage of having Dr. King as president was that he was so new to Montgomery and to civil rights work that he hadn't been there long enough to make any strong friends or enemies."

EARLY MOMENTUM

On Dec. 5, 1955, 90 percent of Montgomery's black citizens stayed off the buses. That evening, at a mass meeting, the organization voted to continue the boycott. King spoke to several thousand people at the meeting, urging them to keep the pressure on the Birmingham politicians, media and decision-makers.

The strategy worked. On June, 5, 1956, the federal district court ruled in *Browder v. Gayle* that bus segregation was unconstitutional, and in November 1956, the U.S. Supreme Court affirmed *Browder v. Gayle* and struck down laws requiring segregated seating on public buses.

According to The King Center, perhaps the bus boycott's biggest achievement was demonstrating the potential for nonviolent mass protest to successfully challenge racial segregation. It served as an example for other southern campaigns to come, and is still studied today in universities across the world for its effectiveness and approach.



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approach was long-term and strategic. It was organized and led by the Montgomery Improvement Association

(MIA), which quickly positioned its young president, Martin Luther King, Jr., as the voice of the effort.

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King, Jr., a quick-rising civil rights leader, was able to draw international attention to the problems facing the

Two Holidays in One

Government officials decided that Martin Luther King, Jr., completed such great, empowering acts of service that his federal holiday deserved to be celebrated twice.

In 1994, Congress passed the King Holiday and Service Act, designating the Martin Luther King Jr. Federal Holiday as a national day of service.

Taking place each year on the third Monday in January, MLK Day is the only federal holiday observed as a national day of service. It's been classified as a "day on, not a day off" by its organizers — making it a day of action across the United States.

The "double holiday" urges Americans to work together to identify and capitalize on opportunities to improve their neighborhoods, enhance relationships and make progress toward solving social issues.

ABOUT THE HOLIDAY

As many Americans know, the King commemoration is a special holiday. It's one of only three federally authorized celebrations of individuals (the others are Washington's Birthday and Columbus Day).

The general MLK Day was set in 1983, when President



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Ronald Reagan signed a bill putting it into federal law. But the celebration of King's legacy and civil rights efforts didn't stop there. The Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service was established when President Bill Clinton signed the King Holiday and Service Act of 1994.

King Service Day is promoted by the Corporation for

National and Community Service, a federal agency that also runs AmeriCorps and similar service-minded initiatives.

WAYS TO PARTICIPATE

Hundreds of thousands of Americans each year engage in projects such as tutoring and mentoring children, painting schools and senior

centers, delivering meals and building homes, according to the American Association of State Colleges and Universities.

To educate Americans on the service side of the holiday, many American Democracy Project colleges and universities organize and sponsor MLK Day educational and volunteer activities in their

areas. What better way to celebrate a civil rights legend than by volunteering your time, talents or finances?

Not sure what your city has planned for 2020 MLK celebrations and service initiatives? Check out the King Service Day website (mlkday.gov), enter your ZIP code and find projects looking for volunteers.