Civil Rights: Then & Now

January 18, 2021

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
Proclamation

Whereas, few individuals have had such a profound impact on contemporary society as did Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., both through his spoken and written words, and his life's work. On this federal holiday established in his honor, we celebrate Dr. King's legacy, as people across our state and nation join in commemorating the 52nd birthday of this visionary leader whose impassioned crusade for civil rights, equality, and social justice forever changed humanity; and

Whereas, Dr. King's fervent desire to create a peaceful world—free of hatred and prejudice—reflects the philosophy he conveyed in his speeches, sermons, and writings that are as relevant today as when he first delivered them and stirred the conscience of his listeners; as America endures the devastating impact of a global pandemic and a year that saw uncountable acts of racial discrimination and violence, we find inspiration in Dr. King's message of hope and faith, and his call for the perseverance of the human spirit; and

Whereas, among the core values Dr. King professed was that of selflessness and compassion for our fellow human beings and, as the epicenter of the COVID-19 pandemic, New York State has endured much pain and suffered many losses; this crisis has been especially difficult and demanding on our doctors, nurses, and other healthcare professionals, our EMT heroes at the forefront of emergency medical services, our brave members of police and fire departments who respond weekly in times of crisis, and the essential workers who are the backbone of our communities, always there to provide needed services and resources—none of them in the spirit of Dr. King; and

Whereas, central to Dr. King's philosophy was the importance of giving to those in need and, here in the Empire State, we seek to uphold this principle through various philanthropic efforts—including statewide food drives, literacy drives, volunteer fairs, career fairs, as well as children's educational programs that include art and essay contests—encouraging New Yorkers of all ages to observe the King Holiday and to honor the life and legacy of this great man through the continuation of his good works; and

Whereas, we remember the example of a life well led by Dr. King, who was only seventeen years old when he delivered his first public speech at the Ebenezer Church, where his father was a pastor; today, in these challenging times, we are asked to commit ourselves to eliminating social injustice—poverty, racism, and militarism—which Dr. King identified as forming a cycle of violence in our society and that he sought to remedy through his philosophy of nonviolent social change; moreover, Dr. King recognized these problems as barriers to our achieving "The Beloved Community"—a phrase coined in the early 20th Century by philosopher-theologian Josiah Royce who founded the Fellowship of Reconciliation and, as a member of the Fellowship, Dr. King popularized the terms with the deepest meaning of his global vision in which all peoples and nations share in the wealth of the earth; and

Whereas, it was Dr. King's faith, character, and convictions that were the driving force for his lifelong efforts to build a more peaceful world, and the foundation of his belief that, as a society, we grow stronger when we focus on our similarities rather than our differences; in celebrating Dr. King's legacy, we can all look to the enduring lessons he taught and the values he championed throughout his life, recognizing how important it is that we impart his fundamental philosophy of non-violence and respect unto a whole new generation;

Now, Therefore, I, Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor of the State of New York, do hereby proclaim January 18, 2021 as

REVEREND DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY

in the Empire State.

Given under my hand and the Seal of the State
at the Capitol in the City of Albany this seventh day
of January in the year two thousand twenty-one.

Governor

Secretary to the Governor
Melissa DeRosa
The Urgency of Creating the Beloved Community

The King Center’s 2021 national theme

New York State’s annual commemoration of the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. will be presented as a statewide broadcast event, “New York State Celebrates Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.: Civil Rights Then and Now,” airing Monday, January 18 on PBS stations throughout New York and streaming at empirestateplaza.ny.gov/nyking.

@NYSMLK
# Table of Contents

Executive Chamber Proclamation .............................................. 2
Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. ........................................ 5
Mrs. Coretta Scott King .......................................................... 6
Message from Governor Cuomo .............................................. 7
Greetings from New York State Leaders ......................... 8-18
Program Host ........................................................................... 19
Presenters ............................................................................... 20-26
Performers ............................................................................. 27-30
Community Initiatives ............................................................... 31
Memorial Observance Support ............................................. 32-57
Acknowledgments .................................................................. 58-59
Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Born at noon on Tuesday, January 15, 1929 at the family home in Atlanta, Martin Luther King, Jr. was the first son and second child born to the Reverend Martin Luther King, Sr. and Alberta Williams King.

During the less than 13 years of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s leadership of the modern American Civil Rights Movement, from December 1955 until April 4, 1968, African-Americans achieved more genuine progress toward racial equality in America than the previous 350 years had produced. Dr. King is widely regarded as America’s pre-eminent advocate of nonviolence and one of the greatest nonviolent leaders in world history.

Drawing inspiration from both his Christian faith and the peaceful teachings of Mahatma Gandhi, Dr. King led a nonviolent movement in the late 1950s and ‘60s to achieve legal equality for African-Americans in the United States. While others were advocating for freedom by “any means necessary,” including violence, Martin Luther King, Jr. used the power of words and acts of nonviolent resistance, such as protests, grassroots organizing, and civil disobedience to achieve seemingly impossible goals. He went on to lead similar campaigns against poverty and international conflict, always maintaining fidelity to his principles that men and women everywhere, regardless of color or creed, are equal members of the human family.

Dr. King’s “I Have a Dream” speech, Nobel Peace Prize lecture and “Letter from a Birmingham Jail” are among the most revered orations and writings in the English language. His accomplishments are now taught to American children of all races, and his teachings are studied by scholars and students worldwide. He is the only non-president to have a national holiday dedicated in his honor and is the only non-president memorialized on the Great Mall in the nation’s capital. He is memorialized in hundreds of statues, parks, streets, squares, churches, and other public facilities around the world as a leader whose teachings are increasingly relevant to the progress of humankind.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s nonviolent leadership ended abruptly and tragically on April 4, 1968, when he was assassinated at the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, Tennessee. Dr. King’s body was returned to his hometown of Atlanta, Georgia, where his funeral ceremony was attended by high-level leaders of all races and political stripes. Later in 1968, Dr. King’s wife, Mrs. Coretta Scott King, officially founded The Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change, which she dedicated to being a “living memorial” aimed at continuing Dr. King’s work on important social ills around the world.
Coretta Scott King was one of the most influential women leaders in our world. Prepared by her family, education, and personality for a life committed to social justice and peace, she entered the world stage in 1955 as wife of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and as a leading participant in the American Civil Rights Movement. Her remarkable partnership with Dr. King resulted not only in four children, who became dedicated to carrying forward their parent’s work, but also in a life devoted to the highest values of human dignity in service to social change. Mrs. King traveled throughout the world speaking out on behalf of racial and economic justice, women’s and children’s rights, gay and lesbian dignity, religious freedom, the needs of the poor and homeless, full-employment, health care, educational opportunities, nuclear disarmament, and environmental justice. She lent her support to pro-democracy movements world-wide and consulted with many world leaders, including Corazon Aquino, Kenneth Kaunda, and Nelson Mandela.

Born and raised in Marion, Alabama, Coretta Scott graduated valedictorian from Lincoln High School. She received a B.A. in music and education from Antioch College in Yellow Springs, Ohio and then went on to study concert singing at Boston’s New England Conservatory of Music, where she earned a degree in voice and violin. While in Boston, she met Martin Luther King, Jr. who was then studying for his doctorate in systematic theology at Boston University. They were married on June 18, 1953, and in September 1954 took up residence in Montgomery, Alabama, with Coretta Scott King assuming the many responsibilities of a pastor’s wife at Dexter Avenue Baptist Church.

One of the most influential African-American leaders of her time, Mrs. King received honorary doctorates from over 60 colleges and universities; authored three books and a nationally-syndicated newspaper column; and served in and helped found dozens of organizations, including the Black Leadership Forum, the National Black Coalition for Voter Participation, and the Black Leadership Roundtable.

Mrs. King died in 2006. A few days after her death, thousands of Atlantans stood in line in the pouring sleet to pay their respects to her at a viewing in Ebenezer Baptist Church. She is today interred alongside her husband in a memorial crypt in the reflecting pool of The King Center’s Freedom Hall Complex, visited by hundreds of thousands of people from all over the world each year. The inscription on the crypt memorializing her life of service is from I Corinthians 13:13 – “And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.”
January 18, 2021

Dear Friends:

It is a pleasure to send greetings to everyone participating in the 2021 New York State Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Memorial Observance, this year being held in a virtual setting.

Few individuals have raised the collective conscience of our nation and entire globe as did Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., both through his words and his deeds. New Yorkers share Dr. King’s vision for a better world and, in these challenging times, all of us recognize how important it is that we work together to strengthen the character of our people, our communities, and our nation’s fundamental values of freedom and democracy.

On this national holiday, we are reminded of the hope Dr. King instilled in a generation, and continue to find inspiration in his example of faith, his service to others, and his vast intellect. Our state’s annual commemoration honors Dr. King’s lifelong efforts to create a more peaceful and just society – free of hatred and violence – and we solemnly mark the 92nd birthday of this historic civil rights leader whose impassioned crusade for equality had a profound impact on all humankind. Each year, we rededicate ourselves to the values Dr. King championed throughout his lifetime and reflect upon his message of non-violence that resonates in our hearts and minds.

Nowhere is the spirit of unity more visible than among New York’s diverse communities, and especially so during this COVID-19 pandemic when we must rely upon and care for each other. While this health crisis asks all people to be cautious and responsible through social distancing, technology thankfully allows us to continue this tradition in an online venue, reinforcing our shared commitment to Dr. King’s philosophy and teachings.

We are grateful for Dr. King and for his wisdom and courage to bring change to the world, and look with hope to an end to the global suffering and loss in the near future.

Warmest regards and best wishes.

Sincerely,

ANDREW M. CUOMO
New York State Office of the Attorney General

“Dr. King’s words and actions echo through members of the community and activists across the country who continue to strive for justice and fairness for all. His efforts have inspired so many to fight to make our nation a place of peace and equality and reminds us of the continued vigilance required to ensure we meet these aspirations.”

— Letitia James, New York Attorney General

Office of the New York State Comptroller

“In difficult times we look to leaders like Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. to guide us. His words, teachings and ideas transcend time and continue to inspire us. We are grateful at the Office of the New York State Comptroller to have this day to honor and remember Dr. King.

— Thomas P. DiNapoli, New York State Comptroller
New York State Senate

“As we mark this day and celebrate the life and vision of Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., our nation is in need of healing from the deep divisions exacerbated over the recent years. Dr. King said, ‘every step towards the goal of justice requires sacrifice, suffering and struggle; the tireless exertions and passionate concern of dedicated individuals.’ Now is the time for us to choose who we want to be as a State and nation, and for dedicated individuals to step up and advance the healing process through social and economic justice. Especially on King Day, but every day it is my hope that we all reflect on his legacy and use it to guide us forward on the path towards justice and equality for all.”

— Andrea Stewart-Cousins, Senate Majority Leader

New York State Assembly

“Annually, we dedicate the third Monday of January to celebrate the life and achievements of the great Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., a man who utilized his last breath to fight for equality and justice for all. His legacy has created a path for those who were once unseen, giving a voice to the once powerless. It is an honor to walk in his path as the Speaker of the New York State Assembly, embodying the core of what the civil rights movement represents - an opportunity to be stronger, wiser, and better than the day before.”

— Carl E. Heastie, Assembly Speaker

New York State Senate

“Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was an American hero and an icon of the civil rights movement. It is impossible to talk about the history and the story of America without speaking of the contributions that Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. made to our nation. He was a man of courage and bravery who was responsible for improving the lives of millions of Americans and whose teachings will improve the lives of millions to come. I am proud to be a part of New York State’s celebration of the life of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. this year.”

— Robert Ortt, Senate Minority Leader

New York State Assembly

“Martin Luther King Jr. Day provides an opportunity to honor the life and commitment of one of the world’s most iconic and accomplished civil rights leaders. Today, more than ever, it is important for us to learn from and work toward Dr. King’s ideals of justice, equality and respect for all. We should strive to live up to his legacy not only on this annual remembrance, but each day. We must keep Dr. King’s lessons foremost in our minds and our actions as we continue to work with one another to understand our differences and celebrate our shared commonalities.”

— Will Barclay, Assembly Minority Leader
City of Albany

“The commemoration of the memory and life of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. seems even more significant this year as we have renewed our commitment to combat hatred and injustice on a national level with real change and reform - furthering his legacy. In the words of Dr. King, ‘Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.’”

— Kathy Sheehan, Mayor of Albany

New York State Office of Addiction Services and Support

“Martin Luther King Jr. has a strong legacy of fighting for social justice and civil rights, and is admired by millions across the world for his efforts to support equality for all. Dr. King once said we can ‘never lose infinite hope.’ As we all reflect on his words today, we must continue to keep his beliefs in mind, and work tirelessly to keep hope alive for those we serve every day.”

— Arlene Gonzalez-Sanchez, Commissioner

New York State Office for the Aging

“Now more than ever, we must remember Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s call for equality, social and economic justice, and community empowerment. And as we reflect on the legacy of Dr. King, we recognize older New Yorkers for their wisdom and perspective and thank them for the enormous contributions they make every day, particularly during these unprecedented times, to strengthen our communities, our state, and our country through their advocacy, spirit of volunteerism, and civic engagement.”

— Greg Olsen, Acting Director

New York State Office of Children and Family Services

“‘Tomorrow is today. We are confronted with the fierce urgency of now. In this unfolding conundrum of life and history, there “is” such a thing as being too late. This is no time for apathy or complacency. This is a time for vigorous and positive action.’ Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s words ring as true today as they did more than 50 years ago. The events of the past year have renewed the urgency to act now to demand positive change for all. We will not rest until we achieve racial, social and economic justice so our nation truly reflects the values upon which it was founded – that all are created equal. We observe this day together in spirit if not in person as we remember Dr. King and celebrate his legacy.”

— Sheila Poole, Commissioner
New York State Department of Civil Service

“In the wake of tens of thousands of peaceful individuals taking to America’s streets to proclaim that ‘Black Lives Matter’ we are reminded of the words of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., which stated that ‘the ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.’ As we reflect on the vision and teachings of Dr. King, we must also seize upon this moment to reimagine the future and steadfastly pursue the equality of opportunity that Dr. King lived and died for. Let us remember our responsibility to our fellow members of society and answer the call to action through our words, deeds, mutual respect and understanding. The Department of Civil Service is proud to honor Dr. King’s legacy and work that continues today in communities across New York State and the nation.”

— Lola W. Brabham, Commissioner

New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision

“The Department continues to work diligently to apply the principles of equal opportunity, diversity and inclusion, in all the Department’s transactions. We are intentional in our efforts to safeguard the inalienable human and civil rights and freedoms of our staff, contractors, volunteers, visitors, and those under our care. In the words of Dr. King Jr., ‘Change does not roll in on the wheels of inevitability but comes through continuous struggle.’ At the Department, we understand Dr. King Jr.’s message, and we labor daily to affect the positive changes he sought.”

— Anthony J. Annucci, Acting Commissioner

New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services

“Justice and equality are the cornerstones of the Civil Rights movement. We have made progress since the early days when Dr. King led the charge, but it is clear that we must continue to press forward to realize his dream of true equality and justice for all. We are proud of the work that we have done to address inequalities in the criminal justice system and to improve the lives of all New Yorkers through training focused on principled policing, implicit bias and acknowledgment of past harms, among other initiatives. Still, we have much more to do. Today we stand at a critical juncture, where we must forge ahead with renewed resolve and commitment to improve trust between police and the communities they are sworn to protect and serve.”

— Michael C. Green, Executive Deputy Commissioner

The City University of New York

“Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr remains the conscience of our nation. Each year at this time, we are reminded of Dr. King’s dream of an America where people are judged solely by the ‘content of their character’ and not their skin color. Dr. King gave voice to this unrealized vision of a freer, more equitable America, but it is our collective responsibility to make it come true. This unfinished work inspires the City University of New York’s historic mission as we work every day to improve the lives of our students.”

— William C. Thompson, Jr., Chairperson, CUNY Board of Trustees
The City University of New York

“If there is one thing that this ill-fated year has shown us, it is that the systemic inequities Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. sought to change more than a half-century ago, still pervade every aspect of our society. Inequality in all its myriad forms - racial, economic, health, educational - hamper our national progress to create, in the words of the U.S. Constitution, ‘a more perfect union.’ Now, as the world seeks an end to this global pandemic in which we have lost so many, the City University of New York is committed to transforming the lives of our students through the power of education in the hopes that someday Dr. King’s vision of the nation will become a reality for all Americans.”

— Felix V. Matos Rodriguez, Ph.D, Chancellor

Dormitory Authority of the State of New York

“Dr. King said, ‘If you can’t fly then run, if you can’t run then walk, if you can’t walk then crawl, but whatever you do you have to keep moving forward.’ If your neighbor can’t crawl, extend your hand and pull, for we are all dependent on each other. In New York state, our citizens have shown time and time again the resiliency to move forward.”

— Reuben McDaniel III, President and CEO

New York State Education Department

“The New York State Board of Regents and State Education Department are committed to ensuring that all students succeed and thrive in school no matter who they are, where they live, where they go to school, or where they come from. That is why we continue to invest in the New York State My Brother’s Keeper (MBK) initiative, which is focused on closing and eliminating the opportunity gaps faced by boys and young men of color so that all young people have the chance to reach their full potential. As we honor Dr. King’s legacy today, we continue to make educational equity the cornerstone of our work. The events of the last year have brought to the forefront, more than ever before, the inequities that we face in our society and have caused us all to reflect on what we can to do to make the world a more just and equitable place for our children. Today, we reaffirm our commitment to the important work still to be done.”

— Betty A. Rosa, Interim Commissioner

Governor’s Office of Employee Relations

“We proudly honor the life, legacy and work of Dr. King through all our actions and proudly support this year’s Memorial Observance celebration themed Civil Rights: Then and Now. While providing many important benefits for the workforce, the Governor’s Office of Employee Relations (GOER) also educates the workforce and protects their rights through education on anti-discrimination policies and procedures and investigating complaints of discrimination. Rooting out injustice is essential to achieving Dr. King’s goals of social change and economic justice and we are honored to be able to do our part.”

— Michael N. Volforte, Director
New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

“Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. worked tirelessly to advance the civil rights movement. The events of 2020 reminded us that much work remains to achieve racial, social, and environmental justice for everyone. Earlier this year, in response to the murder of George Floyd and the racial reckoning that followed, I encouraged DEC staff to channel their feelings of anguish, anger, and injustice into actions to help our communities heal. Through the DEC Call to Service, staff are volunteering selflessly to help others, even during the COVID-19 pandemic. Throughout our 50-year history, DEC has partnered with volunteers to help accomplish our mission and serve the communities in which we live and work. DEC will continue to work collaboratively with organizations like the NYC Environmental Justice Alliance, WE-ACT, PUSH Buffalo, Onondaga Environmental Institute, Capital Roots, and others to both ease the burden of injustice and protect the environment for future generations.”

— Basil Seggos, Commissioner

New York State Department of Financial Services

“Dr. King’s tireless fight for justice and equality give us a blueprint for combating the crises we face during these challenging times. His struggle for racial equality, community empowerment, economic justice, and social justice are more prescient and powerful than ever. We must continue working toward his vision of justice as we rebuild a more fair and just society and economy that includes all of our citizens, not just a few. At DFS, we honor Dr. King’s legacy in our work — from expanding financial inclusion to underserved low-income communities to protecting New Yorkers from abusive and predatory practices. As Dr. King said, ‘We are now faced with the fact that tomorrow is today. We are confronted with the fierce urgency of now.’ We must not let Dr. King’s struggle for justice remain unfinished. We must finish it now.”

— Linda Lacewell, Superintendent

New York State Gaming Commission

“Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. inspired the human race to strive for harmony among all people and was a pivotal advocate for African Americans during the Civil Rights Movement in the United States. We honor Dr. King not only for his contribution to the United States as a civil rights activist, but also as an exceptional learner and teacher who used his knowledge to work towards something bigger than himself. At the NYS Gaming Commission we fully embrace our mission to help to fund New York’s schools and provide a pathway to a future full of experience, knowledge and growth. We are pleased to assist public education in New York state and ultimately lift people through education. We are honored to be a part of today’s celebration, to honor the greatness, promise and legacy of Dr. King and to play a role in building a better tomorrow for all New Yorkers.”

— Robert Williams, Executive Director
New York State Office of General Services

“Leading up to his speech at the Medical Committee for Human Rights convention in 1966, Dr. King said that ‘of all the forms of inequality, injustice in health is the most shocking and inhuman because it often results in physical death.’ The disproportionate effect COVID-19 has had on racial and ethnic minority groups underscores the truth of Dr. King’s words. On this year’s Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, we should remind ourselves of the moral responsibility we have to ensure the quality of health care is not determined by either the color of people’s skin or where they live, work, or worship. The fair and equitable distribution of vaccines to all of our communities is an issue of justice.”

— RoAnn M. Destito, Commissioner

New York State Higher Education Services Corporation

“The NYS Higher Education Services Corporation (HESC) is proud to provide financial support to enable hundreds of thousands of New York students to realize their dream of a higher education. An education can open the door to better opportunities, financial security, and level the playing field for those less privileged. As a state, country and society, we must do our part to remove the inequities between the haves and have nots to ensure that all populations have access to earn a college degree without financial constraint.”

— Dr. Guillermo Linares, President

Hudson River Valley Greenway

“The Civil Rights and the Environmental Movements are linked in their mission to provide equity and to create a better world for the benefit of future generations. The Hudson River Valley Greenway is proud to support the 2021 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Observance. The Hudson River Valley Greenway is a unique state agency created to assist with the development of a voluntary regional strategy for preserving scenic, natural, historic, cultural and recreational resources while encouraging compatible economic development and maintaining the tradition of home rule for land use decision making. The Greenway also manages the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area in partnership with the National Park Service.”

— Scott Keller, Executive Director

New York State Division of Human Rights

“Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. dedicated his life to fighting to ensure that every individual has equal opportunity. The NYS Division of Human Rights remains committed to continuing Dr. King’s legacy by protecting New Yorkers against discrimination, bias, and harassment.”

— Johnathan Smith, Interim Commissioner
New York State Office of Information Technology Services

“Dr. King once said, ‘Tomorrow is today. We are confronted with the fierce urgency of now. In this unfolding conundrum of life and history, there is such a thing as being too late. This is no time for apathy or complacency. This is a time for vigorous and positive action.’ The New York State Office of Information Technology Services (ITS) remains committed to the advancement of tomorrow’s technologies. IT Products made for everyone should be made by everyone. This concept supports the promotion of equal opportunities for all New Yorkers, and in standing up for the values that embodied Dr. King’s life and dream.”

— Angelo “Tony” Riddick, Chief Information Officer

New York State Office of the Inspector General

“Dr. King’s immortal words ring true today more than ever: ‘The time is always right to do what is right.’ The employees of the Offices of the Inspector General are committed to doing what is right on behalf of all New Yorkers every day. There is no time like the present to tackle seemingly insurmountable challenges, overcome great fears, fight for real equality and justice, and work together to achieve the dream of hope and prosperity within and beyond our community.”

— Letizia Tagliafierro, Inspector General

New York State Justice Center for the Protection of People with Special Needs

“Dr. King’s movement seeking justice for all people lives on in those fighting for equality at this pivotal time in our history. One measure of a society is how it protects those who cannot protect themselves. The Justice Center seeks to protect vulnerable New Yorkers who have historically had justice denied. No longer will they be pushed to the margins, overlooked, or ignored. Instead, we will continue to give a voice to those who have, for far too long, been silenced. We will lift up those who have been harmed and, as Dr. King taught us, settle for nothing less than fierce advocacy for those we serve.”

— Denise M. Miranda, Executive Director

New York State Department of Labor

“Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. urged, ‘Commit yourself to the noble struggle for equal rights. You will make a greater person of yourself, a greater nation of your country, and a finer world to live in,’ and may those words live on in each of us as we celebrate his legacy! He was one of the most transformational leaders in our history because he inspired so many to challenge the status quo. He fought to stop racial discrimination and inequality in our communities and in our workforce, and because of him, we continue to strive for better for all New Yorkers!”

— New York State Department of Labor Commissioner Roberta Reardon
Office of Mental Health

“Not everybody can be famous, but everybody can be great because greatness is determined by service. You only need a heart full of grace and a soul generated by love.” These words by Dr. King could serve to define the selfless and dedicated spirit of the 14,000 people who work for the New York State Office of Mental Health. Each day, they support our mission to promote the mental health of all New Yorkers, with a particular focus on providing hope and recovery for adults with serious mental illness and children with serious emotional disturbances. Each day, they demonstrate their commitment to providing compassionate care, so that people from all walks of life can access quality mental health services in their communities. It is an honor to join you in supporting Dr. King’s legacy as part of the 2021 Annual Memorial Observance.”

― Ann Marie T. Sullivan, M.D., Commissioner

Metropolitan Transportation Authority

“The Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. once said: ‘The time is always right to do what is right’. His words and wisdom remain as relevant and important today as our country continues to reckon with racial injustice and an unprecedented public health crisis. We must all strive to match Dr. King’s commitment to equality and his desire to create a better world for all. It’s up to us to honor his legacy today and every day.”

― Patrick J. Foye, Chairman and CEO

New York State Department of Motor Vehicles

“Dr. King’s words and ideals are just as relevant and inspirational today as when he first spoke them half a century ago! He provides a powerful example, not only in regard to the struggle for civil rights and the alleviation of poverty, but also in his encouragement of others to achieve greatness through service. Dr. King said, ‘Life’s most persistent and urgent question is, What are you doing for others?’ We at DMV strive each and every day to honor his legacy by staying true to his ideals of tolerance, dignity and respect.”

― Mark J.F. Schroeder, Commissioner

New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

“Martin Luther King, Jr. said, ‘Life’s most persistent and urgent question is, ‘What are you doing for others?’ This leads us to ask what is Parks doing for others? We have embarked on a transformation of our organization, parks, and historic sites system to better reflect the diversity of our great State in all aspects. In the past year, we dedicated the East River State Park in Brooklyn for the late LGBTQ civil rights activist Marsha P. Johnson and unveiled a statue honoring suffragist and abolitionist Sojourner Truth at the Walkway Over the Hudson State Historic Park in Ulster County, where Truth was born into slavery. In 2021, we are launching the statewide ‘All Are Welcome Here’ campaign to expand on our foundation of diversity, equity, and inclusion to inspire broader engagement with communities and increase access to our incredible system. As we honor Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., Parks will continue to embrace within its mission his vision for equality, social and economic justice, and community empowerment.”

― Erik Kulleseid, Commissioner
New York State Office for People With Developmental Disabilities

“Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s work during the civil rights movement was the tinder that sparked the flame of disability rights. People with developmental disabilities and their families demanded equal access, equal opportunity, and equal treatment in all facets of life. The Office for People With Developmental Disabilities remains committed to individuals and families by ensuring equity in accessing services during these challenging times. While there has been a great deal accomplished over the years for the people we support, we know there is much more work to be done. Today, OPWDD celebrates Dr. King’s legacy and commits to the continued pursuit of supporting sustainability and equity in services for people with developmental disabilities, in a way that is truly meaningful to them.”

— Theodore Kastner, MD, MS, Commissioner

New York Power Authority

“The Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s taught us how to make the critically important leap from thought to action. Now 60 years later, the disturbing events of recent months have turned into a global catalyst for social and civil rights justice. We are inspired by what we see, hear and feel and look forward to writing a new chapter of history with pages filled with wonderful stories of greater diversity, equity and inclusion. At the New York Power Authority and Canals Corporation, we are committed to progressive change. We are implementing a comprehensive, multipronged plan in our fight against injustice. Progress must be our priority and achieving that goal will be the best way to mark this turning point in our social and political consciousness.”

— Gil C. Quiniones, President and Chief Executive Officer

New York State Department of State

“This past year, our nation faced not only an unprecedented public health crisis, but an uprising of civil unrest stemming from economic and social injustices, reaction to police actions against people of color and a political divide. To help us overcome these struggles, we must remember the courage, determination and bold leadership of Dr. King who fulfilled his dream of racial and economic equality for all people through a philosophy of love and nonviolence. The New York Department of State is proud to uphold and advance Dr. King’s vision by providing diverse services and strategic investments that revitalize communities, spur economic growth and create opportunities for all New Yorkers. In our celebrations for Dr. King this year, let us reflect on our country’s complex history on race and work peacefully together toward a more fair, just society for everyone.”

— Rossana Rosado, Secretary of State
State University of New York

“Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., said, ‘The yearning for freedom eventually manifests itself...’; and it is our duty to continue his legacy to fight for social justice for all in our society no matter their race, color, or creed. There is more work to be done, and SUNY — the largest system of public higher education representing the rich diversity of this state — is ready to do this work. As we look to the future, we must follow Dr. King’s lead of achieving change through peaceful, but persistent efforts, and strive to create a world where all have equal opportunity to succeed — it is on us, in higher education, to embody the principles of equality and justice that we hope to achieve in this country.”

— Jim Malatras, Chancellor

New York State Department of Taxation and Finance

“As we face the dual challenges of a global pandemic and structural inequity in our society, we draw inspiration from the legacy of Dr. King. His relentless drive for justice, compassion and equality should be our North Star as we seek to overcome our challenges and build a better society.”

— Michael Schmidt, Commissioner

New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance

“As America grapples with an increasingly polarized society, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s timeless message of justice and dignity for all is a bold reminder that we must redouble our efforts to find a common ground with one another and to extend a helping hand to our most vulnerable populations. At the state Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance, our mission is to provide the resources and support New Yorkers can use to achieve lasting socio-economic stability. And by working to break cycles of poverty in our neighborhoods and communities, we can pay true homage to Dr. King’s vision for a more just and equitable society for all.”

— Mike Hein, Commissioner

New York State Thruway Authority

“Dr. King’s message of love, equality and peace is an inspiration to us all to make the world a better place. On this day of remembrance, the Thruway Authority takes great pride in honoring Dr. King’s legacy and the impact of his leadership on our society.”

— Matthew J. Driscoll, Executive Director

New York State Workers’ Compensation Board

“Dr. King’s mission to achieve civil rights in the 1960s wasn’t just about racial justice, but also equality for workers — something that still rings true today and is a core principle of the Board. Today, we strive to uphold Dr. King’s vision by protecting the rights of workers and demanding they’re treated with dignity and respect.”

— Clarissa M. Rodriguez, Chair
The Rev. Dr. W. Franklyn Richardson, Senior Pastor, Grace Baptist Church

W. Franklyn Richardson is the senior pastor of the historic Grace Baptist Church in Mount Vernon, Westchester County. He has been the head of this vibrant, diverse, multi-staffed ministry since April 1975. Under his leadership, the congregation has continually thrived, growing to include more than 4,000 members.

Dr. Richardson began his career in 1969, serving as pastor of Rising Mt. Zion Baptist Church in Richmond, Virginia, and then St. James Baptist Church in Varina, Virginia, before taking the helm at Grace Baptist. A graduate of Virginia Union University, Dr. Richardson received his divinity degree from Yale University Divinity School and his Doctorate of Ministry as a Wyatt Tee Walker Fellow from the United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio.

In 1989, Dr. Richardson was inducted into the Martin Luther King, Jr., Board of Preachers at Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia. His tireless efforts to defend and promote justice, fairness, and equality for all people were recognized in 2013 when Morehouse paid tribute to Dr. Richardson by inducting him into its International Hall of Honor.

A longtime community builder and organizer, Dr. Richardson has played a pivotal role in the grassroots efforts of reestablishing a cultural bridge between community and education. He is singularly responsible for leveling the ground by fighting for equitable opportunities in public education in the Mount Vernon community.

He has worked the front lines in the battle for just and affordable housing development. His efforts have resulted in two Grace Church related community development corporations that have constructed more than $100 million in affordable housing.

Dr. Richardson is married to Inez Nunnally Richardson. They have three adult children and five grandchildren.
Dr. Jim Malatras, SUNY Chancellor

Dr. Jim Malatras was named the 14th chancellor of The State University of New York on August 21, 2020. Prior to his role leading the SUNY system, Dr. Malatras served as the fifth president of SUNY Empire State College. Prior to joining SUNY Empire in May 2019, he served as president of the Rockefeller Institute of Government, where he led the institute’s modernization effort to offer policymakers evidence-based policy analysis and recommendations on timely topics.

Dr. Malatras has held several high-ranking positions in New York State government, including director of state operations to Governor Andrew M. Cuomo, where he managed the day-to-day operation of state government and served as the administration’s point person on policy development and implementation.

An education policy expert, Dr. Malatras served as the executive director of the governor’s New NY Education Reform Commission from 2012 to 2014, executive director of legislative affairs and state policy to Attorney General Cuomo, and legislative director to former Assemblyman Richard L. Brodsky. Dr. Malatras served as chief of staff for SUNY Chancellor Nancy Zimpher from July 2013 to August 2014.

Dr. Malatras received his bachelor’s degree, master’s degree, and doctorate in political science from the University at Albany.
Ken Screven, Journalist

Ken Screven in 1977 became the first Black journalist hired to do television news in New York State’s Capital Region. After a 34-year career at WRGB, he retired in 2011 as the CBS6 capital bureau chief. He won numerous awards, including the 1996 Associated Press’ Best Documentary award for “The Mystery of Screven County,” a three-part exploration of his family name and its connection to Screven County, Georgia.

Before his television career, Ken was a voice on WROW radio and WGY Radio in Albany, having started his broadcasting career at WALL Radio in Middletown, Orange County. Ken is a native of New York City, having graduated from Archbishop Molloy High School and St. John’s University in Queens. Ken received the Hero Award from the Albany Damien Center in 2020, the Community Advocate Award from In Our Own Voices in 2018, and the Leadership Award from Citizen Action in 2009. Ken maintains a strong presence on social media, speaking out for social and human justice.

Solomon Dees, Pastor, Wilborn Temple First COGIC

Pastor Solomon Dees is originally from Camden, Alabama. He moved to Albany and became a member of Wilborn Temple First COGIC in 1957. He was appointed as deacon by the late Bishop William Wilborn in 1967 and soon received the call of God to preach the Gospel.

He served as president of the trustee board for over 30 years and as the Sunday school superintendent for more than 31 years. In 1995, he was ordained as an elder by the late Bishop Ithiel Clemmons and soon was appointed by the late Dr. Emmett H. Jeffress as assistant pastor. In 2007, he was appointed pastor of Wilborn Temple First COGIC by Bishop James Gaylord. The church body has been blessed by his tremendous administrative and leadership skills.

He was employed as technical director of cardiology services at Stratton VA Medical Center in Albany for 30 years and at St. Peter’s Hospital for 15 years before his retirement in 2012. He was married to the late Mother Nora Lee Dees for 55 years and is the father of two sons and the proud “Papa” of six beautiful grandchildren. Above anything else, he is a preacher and teacher of the Word and is a pastor according to the heart of God.
Sharon Cohen, Founder and CEO, Figure Skating in Harlem
Sharon Cohen founded Figure Skating in Harlem in 1997, seven years after meeting a group of East Harlem girls who were eager to learn how to ice skate. Having grown up in the world of competitive skating, Sharon jumped at the opportunity to create the first and only organization for girls of color that combines the power of education with access to the grace and discipline of figure skating to promote girls’ holistic youth development. Growing up in Delaware and skating since the age of 8, Cohen was a United States Figure Skating double gold test medalist in figures and freestyle, and a gold level ice dancer.

She went on to graduate from Brown University with a B.A. in political science, then moved to New York City to work at CBS News, and later pursued a Master’s of Fine Arts at New York University in Film Directing and Writing. While producing several award-winning short films and documentaries, Cohen worked simultaneously to establish Figure Skating in Harlem as a nonprofit education, leadership, and sport-based organization that serves girls from under-resourced communities. In 2017, the organization took its successful model to Detroit, as the first chapter in a planned national expansion.

Named the first 2014 CNN Hero, an honor which pays tribute to “everyday people who are changing the world,” Cohen frequently speaks about the positive effects of combining education, fitness, and emotional development to empower young women.

Michael J. Garner, MBA, Chief Diversity & Inclusion Officer of the New York State Metropolitan Transportation Authority
Michael J. Garner is a champion of the diversity market, making it his personal and professional mission to create a more diverse business industry. By creating new programming, Mr. Garner and his teams have been responsible for more than $12 billion in contracts and payments made to New York State/City Minority and Women-owned Businesses.

Since arriving at the MTA in 2009, Mr. Garner has designed the country’s leading minority, women, and disadvantaged business enterprise (MWDBE) business development program based on dollars paid. As the architect of the MTA’s Small Business Mentoring Program, Mr. Garner has transformed the largest transportation system in North America with a results-driven construction mentoring program. The program continues to break barriers for minority, women, disadvantaged and service-disabled veteran-owned businesses in New York State, who otherwise would not have contract opportunities in the transportation industry. Under the direction of Mr. Garner, the MTA’s Small Business Mentoring Program has awarded 423 contracts totaling $458 million to program participants.

Since Mr. Garner’s arrival in 2009, the MTA’s MWDBE/SDVOB programs have
resulted in more than $5.5 billion being paid to New York State certified MWBEs. Overall, during Mr. Garner’s tenures at the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA), the New York City School Construction Authority (SCA), and now the MTA, Mr. Garner and his teams have been responsible for more than $12 billion being paid to NYS certified MWBEs and MTA certified DBEs.

An active member of the Canaan Baptist Church in Harlem, Mr. Garner is also a frequent speaker on effective MWDBE programs across the nation and is an advisor on MWDBE matters to various U.S. Cities and States, including New York State, the City of Chicago, Chicago Transit Authority (CTA), and the State of New Jersey.

Cheryl McKissack Daniel, President & CEO, McKissack & McKissack
President & CEO Cheryl McKissack Daniel leads the firm of McKissack & McKissack with more than 25 years of experience in all phases of the construction industry and provides executive leadership for project implementation. She serves as principal-in-charge and project executive on numerous high-profile projects, including major work in the commercial, healthcare, education, and transportation sectors. She is actively involved in project oversight and management, ensuring that diversity is implemented during each phase of a project or program.


She also served on the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee for Governor-elect Andrew Cuomo’s transition team. In Philadelphia, she served as chair of the MWBE Committee for Mayor-elect John Street’s transition team. Previous boards included the National Women’s History Museum, Fisk University, and the National Liberty Museum Board, where she was honored as a “Hero of Liberty” for her support of humanitarian initiatives and for promoting the responsibilities of a free and diverse America. Cheryl is also an active member in Women in Transportation.

Cheryl earned both a bachelor’s and a master’s degree in civil engineering from Howard University. Born in Nashville to architect William DeBerry and teacher Leatrice McKissack, Cheryl represents the fifth generation of the McKissack family’s century-old business, McKissack & McKissack, the oldest minority and woman-owned professional design and construction firm in the nation.
Claudine Ewing, Reporter/Anchor, WGRZ-TV
Buffalo

Claudia Ewing has reported on education, politics, and features, all with a mission of giving a voice to the voiceless.

Ewing’s professional career started directly after graduating with a degree in broadcast journalism with honors from Buffalo State College. She worked in radio news covering Western New York and Southern Ontario.

In 2019, Ewing won an Emmy for “Scott’s Last Story: The Gift of Life.” It was a story her now-deceased colleague wanted to complete but never had the chance. Claudine also earned a New York State Associated Press Award in 2019 for “Valentino Dixon: Wrongfully Convicted,” a story about a man who served 27 years in prison for a murder he did not commit, which also won her an award from the National Association of Black Journalists (NABJ).

Over the years, Claudine has been nominated and recognized for her work in broadcast journalism, including a special mention by the New York State Associated Press for General Excellence in Individual Reporting. In 2017, she won a national award for a story on a child she followed from a premature birth until her high school graduation, called “Preemie Goes to College.” Claudine also won an award from the NABJ for a sports story, “The Smart Football Scholar,” about the rise of Penn State graduate John Urschel.

Claudine is a member of the Buffalo Association of Black Journalists and the National Association for Black Journalists. She also serves on the Buffalo State College Alumni Association Board, TEGNA Foundation, and For Our Daughters.
Edreys Wajed, Artist and Co-owner of Eat Off Art

Edreys Wajed, a Buffalo native, boasts a long resume of creative talents and achievements from music performance, visual art, and video directing to jewelry design and entrepreneurship.

Edreys co-owns and operates a multi-media agency called Eat Off Art, specializing in curated, transformative experiences through creativity and art.

Edreys is well-accomplished and recognized for his artistic contributions, including his work on the Albright-Knox Art Gallery Public Art Initiative’s “The Freedom Wall” at the entrance to Buffalo’s Michigan Street African American Heritage Corridor. He was a nominee for the 2019 Arts Services Initiative of Western New York’s Artist of the Year award.

His solo shows have sold out, and his paintings have been acquired by both the Burchfield-Penney Arts Center and The Roswell Park Art Heals Gallery for their permanent art collections.

Martha Swan, Founder and Executive Director, John Brown Lives!

Martha Swan is the founder and executive director of John Brown Lives! (JBL!), a freedom education and human rights organization and the official NYS “Friends Group” of the John Brown Farm State Historic Site in Lake Placid. JBL! strives for the John Brown Farm to be recognized, supported, and visited as a site of conscience and place of teaching, reflection, and dialogue that serves as a springboard for principled and effective civic action.

Since 1999, JBL! has sponsored innovative educational collaborations, community dialogue, exhibitions, and cultural initiatives that upend conventional narratives, provide portals for engaging controversial and oft-avoided issues, and unite communities in conversation, celebration, and commemoration to address critical concerns of our time, from racial justice and climate justice to human trafficking and mass incarceration.

Originally from Syracuse, Martha has organized farmworkers in Arizona, Arkansas, and Florida, documented human rights abuses in Nicaragua during the Contra war, and spent a decade working with social justice organizations in New York City before moving to the Adirondacks. Out on a lunch hour walk, she came upon a state historic marker alerting passers-by that John Brown’s body lay in state in the county courthouse on its way to his final resting place in Lake Placid. Inspired by this local, Adirondack connection to our larger, national story of slavery, abolition, and freedom, and by the urgency of these times, she founded John Brown Lives!

Martha also teaches Spanish full-time at a small public school in the Adirondacks, and she lives in the beautiful Champlain Valley with her family.
Dr. Seanelle Hawkins, President, Urban League of Rochester:
Dr. Seanelle Hawkins became the first women to serve as president and CEO of the Urban League of Rochester in 2019.

She joined the Urban League from her position as executive director of Sojourner Home, a Rochester-based nonprofit empowering women, children, and their families through transitional support services as they recover from traumas associated with homelessness, domestic violence, mental health, and substance use disorders.

As leader of Urban League, she is continuing to serve the mission of building self-sufficiency through education, skill development, employment, and homeownership in Rochester on a larger scale. She is accomplishing these goals by exploring new economic development opportunities, increasing access to education and employment opportunities, and partnering with stakeholders to advance the Urban League Movement.

The Urban League of Rochester was founded in 1965 in the wake of racial unrest and riots that crippled the Rochester community. The formation of the agency, which is an affiliate of the National Urban League, was intended to address the material needs of community members who live in poverty and minority citizens in areas such as housing, employment, education, health, and economic parity.

Today, the Urban League of Rochester offers over 30 programs in youth services, services for individuals with developmental disabilities, economic development, employment services, family and children services, education, homeownership, and entrepreneurial assistance. In 2019, the League served over 4,000 individuals.
Performers

Leah Magee, SUNY Schenectady County Community College
Leah Magee is a music major at SUNY Schenectady County Community College who will be graduating with her associate’s degree in performing arts in December 2021. From there, she hopes to pursue her bachelor’s degree in music performance and film scoring.

Leah has performed for her church congregation at Macedonia Baptist Church since the age of 10 and was honored to be selected to perform in Proctor’s School of the Performing Arts’ production of “Les Misérables” in 2019.

2021 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Ensemble
The 2021 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Ensemble is a group of singers who have worked together in previous Capital Region musical events and with many gospel recording artists. This group of anointed singers are under the musical direction of the Reverend Dr. Elgin Joseph Taylor, Sr. and Maestro Marcelle Johnson.

Blending some of the Capital Region’s finest voices in peace and harmony, the ensemble is comprised of vocalists from the Macedonia Baptist Church, Metropolitan New Testament Mission Baptist Church, Greater St. John’s Church of God in Christ, Sweet Pilgrim Missionary Baptist Church, and Wilborn Temple Church of God in Christ.

For the past 10 years, Pastor Taylor has served as senior pastor of the Sweet Pilgrim Missionary Baptist Church, located in Albany’s historic Ten Broeck Triangle. An outstanding musical ambassador for more than 40 years, Pastor Taylor is known as a very active pursuer of musical excellence. He displays some of the best traditions of sacred choral music while simultaneously carving out his own standard of excellence from which the mantel can be passed to successive musicians.

Throughout his life, Maestro Marcelle Johnson has been musically gifted and has risen to become an expert in musical technology and production. He serves as the minister of music and arts at the Metropolitan New Testament Mission Baptist Church of Albany. His musical gift and spirit are synonymous, enabling him to be a highly effective minister of music. With a musical heritage, he embodies traditional Christian music’s uniqueness while remaining relevant by blending all forms of music for all generations.
Maxim Couillard, University at Albany - SUNY
Born in Quebec City, Maxim Couillard has been playing clarinet for 10 years in various ensembles, including the Empire State Youth Orchestra, University at Albany’s University Symphony Orchestra, The College of Stain Rose’s Clarinet Choir, and SUNY Schenectady County Community College’s Wind Ensemble.

When he is not performing in other groups, he creates his own chamber ensembles, composes, and makes music videos on his YouTube channel. He has also pursued filmmaking over the past decade, creating skits and short films, often integrating his love of music and film with music videos.

Maxim is currently a junior at the University at Albany, pursuing a degree in atmospheric science. Maxim aspires to be a researcher and hopes to continue his passion for music and film in the future.

Vy Higginsen’s Gospel for Teens Program, Mama Foundation for the Arts, Harlem

Inspired by world tours of “Mama, I Want to Sing” in Europe, the Caribbean, Japan, and the United States, Vy Higginsen created the Mama Foundation for the Arts to help reestablish Harlem as an artistic and cultural centerpiece of the world. The foundation has established a cultural space in Harlem where youth and adults have access to quality training and employment as performing artists, and Ahmaya Knoelle Higginsen serves as The Mama Foundation for the Arts’ director of music and arts education.

A combination of arts education, public workshops, and live events contribute to Harlem’s resurgence as an artistic and cultural destination. In 2003, Higginsen created the School of Gospel, Jazz, and R&B Arts. Three years later, she formed the award-winning Gospel for Teens program to train youth and “save the music. According to Lesley Stahl from CBS’s “60 Minutes,” “The Gospel for Teens program is not just teaching gospel, it is saving these kids.”

Mama Foundation members have performed at numerous special events. Madonna, Chaka Khan, Pharrell Williams, opera singer Jessye Norman, and gospel artist Shirley Caesar are among the many stars that have shared the stage with Vy Higginsen’s Harlem Teen Choir from the Gospel for Teens program.
The Macedonia Trio

The Macedonia Chamber Trio was formed by three members of the Macedonia Baptist Church Chamber Orchestra in Albany. The orchestra members, ages 9 to 21, are all congregants of the Macedonia Baptist Church.

Avery Roach is a young musician, cartoonist, and engineering student from Delmar, Albany County. He has been playing the cello for 16 years, is an Empire State Youth Symphony alumnus, and has been writing music for five years. He is currently studying civil engineering at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, Rensselaer County.

Peyton Roach is a gifted principal violist in the Empire State Youth Symphony. She has been playing for eight years and is also very interested in art. She is a sophomore at Bethlehem High School in Albany County.

Cristiane Richardson is a talented violist who has participated in her school and church orchestras since elementary school. A 10th-grade student at Shaker High School, she has been recognized for her musical skills by the New York State Music Association, performed with the Empire State Youth Orchestra, and had her own composition, “Romeo and Juliet,” selected for inclusion in the Saratoga Performing Arts Center’s 2020 Festival of Young Artists.

Cristiane, Avery, and Peyton were also leading members of the Macedonia Chamber Orchestra.

Marcus John & Yonkers Arts

Marcus John is an American born poet/singer/songwriter of Grenadian descent who was born and raised in Yonkers, Westchester County. In 2009, he started an open mic in Yonkers, which evolved into Soulbox Entertainment, an organization of educators, musicians, film/vocal producers, caterers, and event planners dedicated to outsourcing artists, teaching writing workshops, and servicing businesses in network expansion.

Yonkers Arts was founded in 2007 by a group of community leaders who recognized the need for an all-encompassing arts organization for a city the size of Yonkers. Under these community leaders’ guidance, Yonkers Arts promotes a collaborative network for artists and community members. Yonkers Arts is dedicated to providing empowering resources to artists and educational resources for community members.
River Johnson, University at Albany - SUNY
River Johnson, known to some as her performance name “River Rose,” is in her senior year as an undergraduate student at the University at Albany. She comes from a small neighborhood in the Bronx called Highbridge, where her musical journey began. At the young age of 9, she joined an after school program in which she received vocal training and learned music composition, music history, and how to play instruments.

She continued to hone these skills until she was 16 and furthered her music education in college with her outstanding vocal coach, Professor Fran Wittmann. River is grateful beyond words for the opportunities and knowledge the music department has given her throughout her college career and is humbled to have received this opportunity.

River hopes to one day continue her musical education and become a professional writer and singer.

Ameer Ainsworth, University at Albany - SUNY
Ameer Ainsworth, aka “Prince Inspiration,” is a music artist, poet, singer, rapper, and overall performer. He is a 2020 graduate of the University at Albany, where he majored in music.

He has been singing seriously and taking vocal lessons for more than a year and has learned much from his UAlbany voice instructor, Professor Fran Wittmann. Ameer also appreciates the many ways the Music Department at UAlbany has helped him to grow as an artist and musician.

He is very excited to be part of this MLK celebration and is grateful for the opportunity.

Meara McTague, University at Albany - SUNY
Raised in the foothills of the Helderberg Escarpment, just west of Albany, Meara McTague is a musician, songwriter, artist, and musicology student at the University at Albany.

Inspired by nature and the traditions of the past, Meara creates performances, songs, and stories to express herself and inspire others, keeping the traditions of folk music and folklore alive.
Community Initiatives

New York State Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Student Art and Essay Exhibition

The virtual gallery will be available for viewing at empirestateplaza.ny.gov/nyking from January 18 to February 28.

Every year New York State schools and their K-12 students are invited to submit artworks and essays that reflect on the life and teachings of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The categories are painting, drawing, photography, and writing. Approximately 684 student participants with 488 works of art and 173 essays submitted. This year’s exhibit will be available online. The virtual gallery can be viewed at empirestateplaza.ny.gov/nyking beginning on January 18, 2021.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Statewide Food Drive - December 11, 2020 to February 12, 2021

In keeping with Dr. King’s legacy, the 2021 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Food Drive will mark the 21st anniversary of the community service initiative. New York State Agencies and several community-based organizations helped to collect over 652,906 pounds of food and raised over $122,091 in donations to date. Donations are collected and distributed in every region of the state; from the major urban areas of New York City, Albany, and Buffalo, to the rural towns of Sherburne, and Ogdensburg. The food drive is co-sponsored by the Food Bank Association of New York State.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Statewide Book Drive- February 22 to April 23, 2021

The purpose of the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Statewide Children’s Literacy Drive is to collect new or gently used children’s books for distribution to elementary, middle, and high schools, and to after school programs across the State. The program continues to grow beyond expectations each year. Since 2004, through the continued partnership with the Albany City School District’s Literacy Programs, Project Flight (Buffalo State College), and Reach Out and Read, Greater New York, 366,869 books have been collected.
Support for the production of the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Observance is provided by the following:
“If you can’t fly then run, if you can’t run then walk, if you can’t walk then crawl, but whatever you do you have to keep moving forward.”

- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

The Dormitory Authority of the State of New York (DASNY) is proud to celebrate the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Diversity is crucial to our mission and we are committed to creating true opportunities for all.
“All labor that uplifts humanity has dignity and importance and should be undertaken with painstaking excellence.”

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

The principles of Dr. King are etched in the cornerstones of the DOL mission—we celebrate his memory by providing outstanding support to help workers and businesses grow and thrive, by connecting people to new job opportunities they love, and by education and protecting our workers and businesses.

Find out how we can help connect you to a career at labor.ny.gov/jobs
The New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (DOCCS) is committed to the vision and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and strives to ensure equal employment opportunities to all qualified employees and job candidates, consistent with the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the NYS Human Rights Law. The Department is also committed to the principles of Diversity and Inclusion in all employment actions, in compliance with the mandates of Governor Cuomo's Executive Order No. 187.

Our Department is continuously looking for qualified candidates from all backgrounds to fill a variety of positions throughout the State, including but not limited to:

- Correction Officers
- Parole Officers
- Clinical Physicians
- Correctional Regional Health Service Administrators
- Registered Professional Nurses
- Pharmacists
- Dentists and Dental Hygienists
- Plant Utilities Helpers
- Plant Utilities Assistants
- Plant Utilities Engineers 1
- Instructors of the Blind
- Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (Manual Communications)
- Manual Communicators (American Sign Language)

For more information on the diverse job opportunities DOCCS has to offer, please visit https://doccs.ny.gov/employment-opportunities and the New York State Department of Civil Service at http://www.cs.ny.gov/, where you can sign up to receive email notifications when new exams are announced. You may also contact the Department of Civil Service at 1-877-697-5627.

The New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision is an Equal Opportunity Employer.
“The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.”

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.
“The function of **EDUCATION** is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. Intelligence plus character—that is the goal of true education.”

DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

nysaves.org
The MTA’s Small Business Development Program and the Department of Diversity and Civil Rights honors Dr. King’s vision and legacy. We are committed to creating opportunities for Small Businesses, Minority, Women-Owned, Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (MWDBEs) and Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Businesses (SDVOBs).

A DECADE OF RESULTS
427 MTA CONTRACTS
AWARDED, TOTALING
$446 MILLION

Enroll in the Award-Winning
MTA Small Business Development Program

Prime Construction Opportunities up to $3 Million
Small Business Loans up to $900,000 Per Contract

Click Here To Learn More Or To Apply:
https://mta.info/sbdp
Contact George Cleary at: gacleary@mtahq.org

Patrick Foye
Chairman and CEO
Michael J. Garner, MBA
Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer
Rhonda Herman
Chair, Diversity Committee
Mario Péloquin
Chief Operating Officer

MTA Department of Diversity and Civil Rights
www.mta.info
“Human progress is neither automatic nor inevitable ... Every step toward the goal of justice requires sacrifice, suffering, and struggle; the tireless exertions and passionate concern of dedicated individuals.”

— Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
“Dr. King’s message of love, equality and peace is an inspiration to us all to make the world a better place. On this day of remembrance, the Thruway Authority takes great pride in honoring Dr. King’s legacy and the impact of his leadership on our society,”

Matthew J. Driscoll
Executive Director

2021
More than 400 New York State My Brother’s Keeper Fellows, their mentors, and state education leaders participated in a virtual MBK Village Meeting in Spring 2020.

The New York State Board of Regents and State Education Department honor Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s legacy through our My Brother’s Keeper (MBK) initiative. The New York State MBK movement expanded to 26 member communities in 2020 and continues to grow. We remain committed to ensuring that all young people have the opportunity to reach their full potential.
The New York State Olympic Regional Development Authority helps promote a **STATE OF OPPORTUNITY** and encourages **Dreams** both big and small, by improving the physical fitness and recreational education for all. Our commitment to this **LEGACY** continues with major improvements and modernization to our facilities.

*Learn more at [www.LakePlacidOlympicSites.com](http://www.LakePlacidOlympicSites.com)*
THE TIME IS ALWAYS RIGHT TO DO WHAT IS RIGHT

- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

The New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance is proud to honor the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. as we continue to empower New Yorkers and provide life-changing opportunities.

www.otda.ny.gov

Photographs courtesy of the Library of Congress.
As Dr. King counseled, the function of education is to teach one to think intensively and critically. Then and now, these skills are essential to produce the genuine equality that Dr. King sought.
"Life's most persistent and urgent question is, 'What are you doing for others?'"

-Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.
The Hugh L. Carey Battery Park City Authority (BPCA) is a Class A New York State public benefit corporation.

**WHAT WE DO**
The BPCA's mission is to plan, create, co-ordinate and maintain a balanced community of commercial, residential, retail, and park space within its designated 92-acre site on Manhattan's lower west side known as Battery Park City. Parcels of land are leased to developers who build in accordance with the Authority's guidelines, which also incorporate green provisions mandating state of the art environmental specifications to maximize energy efficiency and minimize water usage. With more than five million square feet of environmentally sustainable construction on its 92-acre site, Battery Park City is the largest 'green' neighborhood in the world.

**DOOR OPENERS: INSIGHT ON NAVIGATING BPCA**
BPCA endorses a competitive public bidding process and, as such, solicits bids from contractors for work throughout Battery Park City. Requests for Proposals (RFPs) are posted in the New York State Contract Reporter and the New York City Record as well as the BPCA's website: www.bpca.ny.gov.

Pursuant to Article 15-A of the Executive Law and regulations adopted thereunder, BPCA has established goals for the participation of certified minority and women-owned business enterprises (M/WBE’s) in the performance of services under contract with BPCA. The language of Article 15A appears in all of BPCA's leases.

These goals have been prescribed as percentages of the overall proposal/contract dollar amount. BPCA’s goals are placed on construction contracts totaling over $100,000, and procurement contracts over $25,000. MWBE-certified firms are found in the Directory of Certified MWBEs offered by Empire State Development.

BPCA is a major sponsor of The Competitive Edge Conference. Held annually, the conference provides an excellent opportunity for MWBEs to network with City, State and Private Sector firms. For more information, visit The Competitive Edge's website. (www.competitiveedgesite.org)

**HOW TO CONNECT WITH US**
Battery Park City Authority
Diversity@bpca.ny.gov
Tel. 212-417-2000
200 Liberty Street, 24th Floor
New York, NY 10281-1097
www.bpca.ny.gov
"The commemoration of the memory and life of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., seems even more significant this year as we have renewed our commitment to combat hatred and injustice on a national level with real change and reform – furthering his legacy. In the words of Dr. King, 'Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.'"
Saint Rose lets you, and big ideas, feel at home. We’re a one-of-a-kind community, where campus life is lively, friends are everywhere, and you’ll find a support network that will follow you throughout your life.

FIND YOUR FUTURE HERE.
800.637.8556 • www.strose.edu

“Economic justice [requires] a land where men will not take necessities to give luxuries to the few, and where all our gifts and resources are held not for ourselves alone but as instruments of service for the rest of humanity.”

- Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

From protecting New Yorkers’ access to healthcare to promoting financial inclusion, DFS honors Dr. King’s life and legacy.
In 2021, Dr. King’s legacy lives on, and his words still inspire. The NYS DMV continues to heed his call to achieve greatness through serving the public.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. taught us that by walking together we can reach the mountaintop. Inspired by his teachings, the New York State Department of Transportation is dedicated to working hand-in-hand with all New Yorkers to embrace our differences, overcome obstacles and find common ground so we can work together to better serve the needs of all communities. By moving forward together as OneDOT, we can confront the challenging times in which we live and achieve the “beautiful symphony of brotherhood.”
The New York State Office for the Aging honors the life and legacy of

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

“Even if I knew that tomorrow the world would go to pieces, I would still plant my apple tree.”
— Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

www.aging.ny.gov

NEW YORK STATE OF OPPORTUNITY. NYSERDA

Make an energy efficient home a reality.

NYSERDA offers programs for income-eligible New Yorkers that help save energy and money.

Visit nyserda.ny.gov or call 1-866-NYSERDA.
“Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.”

- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
“INJUSTICE ANYWHERE is a threat to JUSTICE EVERYWHERE.”

- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Dr. Martin Luther King’s dream of peace, equality and justice is shared by all. In the years since his “I Have a Dream” speech, Price Chopper/Market 32 and the Golub family have striven to advance the legacy of Dr. King, through community involvement and a commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion.

On this day we commemorate Dr. King’s life and legacy, and the courage, compassion, dignity and humility that he modeled, as we aspire to realize his dream.
Dr. King’s legacy inspires our efforts to help injured workers heal and return to their labors with dignity.

“...if you can’t fly, then run, if you can’t run, then walk, if you can’t walk, then crawl, but whatever you do, you have to keep moving forward."

— Martin Luther King Jr.
“We must use time creatively, in the knowledge that the time is always ripe to do right.”
- Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

The Department of Agriculture and Markets is proud to support New York farmers as they bring vibrancy, beauty and sustenance to our communities.

“Life’s most persistent and urgent question is ‘What are you doing for others?’”
- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

The New York State Department of State proudly pursues Dr. King’s vision by providing diverse services and strategic investments that revitalize communities, spur economic growth and create opportunities for all New Yorkers across the state. Learn more at dos.ny.gov.

DON’T LET DISCRIMINATION LOCK YOU OUT.
NEW YORK STATE LAW PROTECTS YOU AGAINST DISCRIMINATION.
To learn more, visit dhr.ny.gov or call us at 844-862-8703.

We are committed to upholding the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and continuing the “noble struggle for equal rights” until every New Yorker can live, work, and learn free from bias and discrimination.

Hudson River Valley Greenway
www.hudsonsgreenway.ny.gov

The Civil Rights and the Environmental Movements are linked in their mission to provide equity and to create a better world for the benefit of future generations.
The Hudson River Valley Greenway is proud to support the 2021 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Observance.

The Hudson River Valley Greenway is a unique state agency created to assist with the development of a voluntary regional strategy for preserving scenic, natural, historic, cultural and recreational resources while encouraging compatible economic development and maintaining the tradition of home rule for land use decision making.
The Greenway also manages the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area in partnership with the National Park Service.
As we join our fellow New Yorkers to celebrate the life and legacy of Dr. King, we remain committed to our work to improve the criminal justice system and help ensure that our communities are safe, fair and equitable for all.

We are proud to join New York’s Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Observance

“Science investigates; religion interprets. Science gives man knowledge, which is power; religion gives man wisdom, which is control. Science deals mainly with facts; religion deals mainly with values. The two are not rivals.”

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Macedonia Baptist Church
Reverend Leonard D. Comithier, Jr., Pastor
26 Wilson Avenue Albany, New York 12205
Tel: 518-489-4570 Fax: 518-489-5414
www.macedoniaofalbany.org
Sunday Worship Services 11:00 a.m. (live streamed- visit our website)
Come see and feel the Macedonia Experience

Wilborn Temple is proud to celebrate the life, dream and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. speaking from the Wilborn Temple pulpit on June 16, 1961.

Division of Criminal Justice Services

All Are Welcome Here

Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
parks.ny.gov
Sweet Pilgrim Missionary Baptist Church  
The Reverend Dr. Edwin Joseph Taylor, Sr.,  
Senior Pastor  

Remembers  
REVEREND DR. MARTIN LUTHER KIng, Jr.  

The Man, the Ministry and the Mission!  

"Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."
This program is sponsored in part by:
The New York State Office of General Services
&
The State University of New York
Additional support provided by:

Battery Park City Authority
City University of New York
College of Saint Rose
Digital First Media
Dormitory Authority of the State of New York
Hudson River Greenway
Metropolitan Transit Authority
New York Power Authority
New York State Agriculture and Markets
New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision
New York State Department of Financial Services
New York State Department of Transportation
New York State Department of Motor Vehicles
New York State Department of State
New York State Depart of Taxation and Finance
New York State Department of Transportation
New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services
New York State Division of Human Rights
New York State Education Department
New York State Gaming Commission
New York State Governor’s Office of Employee Relations
New York State Homes and Community Renewal
New York State Insurance Fund
New York State Center for the Protection of People with Special Needs
New York State Office for the Aging
New York State Office of Mental Health
New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance

New York State Olympic Regional Development Authority
New York State Parks Recreation and Historical Preservation
New York State Worker’s Compensation Board
NY’s 529 College Savings Program
Price Chopper and Market 32

Special Thanks to:

Albany Times Union
Peebles Island State Park

The New York State Office of General Services would like to express its gratitude to everyone who made this program a part of today’s celebration. Your tireless efforts in remembering, celebrating, and acting on the lessons passed on by Dr. King will help ensure that his message will continue to live on and grow stronger.

Copyright

New York State Office of General Services
2021
WE ARE CALLED TO ACTION. WE ARE CALLED TO DO BETTER.

THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK WILL ANSWER.

AND WE WILL LEAD.

WE WILL ENSURE THAT STUDENTS FROM ALL WALKS OF LIFE ARE HEARD AND REPRESENTED. WE WILL IDENTIFY CONCRETE STEPS TO TAKE IMMEDIATELY. WE WILL WORK PROACTIVELY AND STRATEGICALLY TO CLOSE RACIAL EQUITY GAPS AND DIVERSIFY OUR FACULTY, STAFF, AND UNIVERSITY POLICE. WE WILL FIND NEW WAYS TO EMPOWER LEADERS FROM A VARIETY OF BACKGROUNDS. WE WILL DEVELOP AN ANTI-RACIST CURRICULUM THAT ENSURES STUDENTS ARE LITERATE ON ISSUES OF SYSTEMIC RACISM AND UNDERSTAND HOW STRUCTURAL INEQUALITY IMPACTS ALL OUR LIVES. WE WILL DO THIS TOGETHER.