



Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday

Martin Luther King Jr. against all odds inspired and continues to inspire Americans in all walks of life. He was a man of conviction. He was persistent in his pursuit of equality, despite the opposition of many. Following the principles of Gandhi Mr. King embodied a life of “peaceful noncompliance”. Throughout the years Mr. King and his family have been subjected to violence, his home was bombed, attempts were made on his life, and he was arrested on numerous occasions. This month we recognize his commitment to equality, peace, and celebrate his legacy.



Accomplishments (Not an all inclusive list)

- Elected president of his seminary, and class valedictorian (composed of almost all white students).
- Traveled over 6 Million miles for equality.
- Spoke over 2,500 times.
- Wrote 5 books.
- Led marches with as many as 250,000 participants.
- Youngest man to receive the Nobel Prize at 35 years old.
- Led a boycott that resulted in the supreme court declaring segregation on busses unconstitutional.
- Bachelors degree in Sociology, and also Divinity, PhD in Systematic Theology.
- Organized a march from Selma to Montgomery, while initially considered a failure and dubbed “Bloody Sunday” it ultimately resulted in the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965

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ODEI NUGGET

Unconscious Bias: A preference for, or a prejudice against something or someone which we are unaware of and happens outside of our control.

- Triggered automatically by our brain.
- Influenced by our background, cultural environment and personal experiences.
- Not only experienced between different demographics, but also internally within groups.



September 15, 2023 ODEI hosted a Unity Day located at the Bluff Road Armory. Unity Day is an annual celebration with the intent of sharing experiences and collective learning. It provides an opportunity for others to experience diverse perspectives, food, culture, and values. This past years celebration included guest speakers, performances, food sampling, exhibits, and raffles. A big thanks goes out to all the participants, volunteers, and to those that attended.

For those that wish to volunteer or participate in future events please reach out to:
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Unity Day Recap



CULTURAL
AWARENESS

OBSERVANCE



MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY

Each year, on the third Monday in January, the Department of Defense joins the nation in honoring the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

King is remembered as America's preeminent advocate of nonviolence and a leader of the Civil Rights Movement. While others were fighting for equality by "any means necessary," he used the power of words and acts of nonviolent resistance. King's achievements are well documented.

However, few people know of the history and connection he had with the island of Bimini in the Bahamas. King chose Bimini because it was where his friend, politician and civil rights reformer Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. had a home. Artist Tommy Saunders worked as a personal assistant for King during his visits.

Meanwhile, Tommy's older brother Ansil, a boat builder and champion bonefisher, became King's guide and friend. He would take King to secluded parts of the island where he could be alone with his thoughts. Like King, Ansil Saunders is a deeply religious man, and the two quickly bonded over their faith.

During one visit to Bimini, King wrote notes for his Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech, which he gave in Oslo in 1964.

In 1968, King returned to the island. Saunders, again, found a quiet place on Bonefish Creek, where King would write his final speech, *"I've Been to the Mountaintop."*

Saunders shared in a later interview, his conversation with King. He said, *"He told me 'You know, Ansil, I don't think I'll make 40 years old.'" He went on to share, "We didn't have time to fish because he wanted to just write at that time. He came to Bimini to feel peaceful."*

On April 4, 1968, days after returning from Bimini, Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee.

The Defense Department recognizes that freedom, equality, and inclusion are true force multipliers and imperative to the national defense and the strength of our nation. Dr. King recognized the power of service. Observing MLK Day through service continues the DoD's mission of promoting change and building communities.