

HONORING FRED JONES, JR.

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 28, 2016

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mr. Fred Jones, Jr.

From a little boy, Mr. Jones wanted to serve his country. At the age of 18, after graduating from school, Mr. Jones enlisted in the United States Air Force. He served in the 2nd Airborne Command and Control Squadron in several capacities, retiring at the rank of MSgt after 21 years. Mr. Jones continued serving his country for an additional 30 years, in the Federal Government with the Internal Revenue Service.

Mr. Jones worked tirelessly in his community as a barber, donating haircuts to neighborhood kids in need.

A native of Sharkey County, Mr. Jones is an active member of Aldersgate United Methodist Church, where he served as Deacon. Mr. Jones and his wife of 59 years, Clementine Jones, are the proud parents of 4 children, 16 grandchildren and 9 great-grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Mr. Fred Jones, Jr. for his tireless dedication.

COMMEMORATING 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF REV. DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. HOLIDAY

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 28, 2016

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, this year, the nation observes for the 30th time the Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday.

Each year this day is set aside for Americans to celebrate the life and legacy of a man who brought hope and healing to America.

The Martin Luther King Holiday reminds us that nothing is impossible when we are guided by the better angels of our nature.

Dr. King's inspiring words filled a great void in our nation, and answered our collective longing to become a country that truly lived by its noblest principles.

Yet, Dr. King knew that it was not enough just to talk the talk, that he had to walk the walk for his words to be credible.

And so we commemorate on this holiday the man of action, who put his life on the line for freedom and justice every day.

We honor the courage of a man who endured harassment, threats and beatings, and even bombings.

We commemorate the man who went to jail 29 times to achieve freedom for others, and who knew he would pay the ultimate price for his leadership, but kept on marching and protesting and organizing anyway.

Dr. King once said that we all have to decide whether we "will walk in the light of creative altruism or the darkness of destructive selfishness."

"Life's most persistent and nagging question," he said, is "what are you doing for others?"

And when Dr. King talked about the end of his mortal life in one of his last sermons, on

February 4, 1968 in the pulpit of Ebenezer Baptist Church, even then he lifted up the value of service as the hallmark of a full life: "I'd like somebody to mention on that day Martin Luther King, Jr. tried to give his life serving others," he said. "I want you to say on that day, that I did try in my life . . . to love and serve humanity."

We should also remember that the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was, above all, a person who was always willing to speak truth to power. There is perhaps no better example of Dr. King's moral integrity and consistency than his criticism of the Vietnam War being waged by the Johnson Administration, an administration that was otherwise a friend and champion of civil and human rights.

THE LIFE OF THE REV. DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

Martin Luther King, Jr. was born in Atlanta, Georgia on January 15, 1929.

Martin's youth was spent in our country's Deep South, then run by Jim Crow and the Ku Klux Klan.

For young African-Americans, it was an environment even more dangerous than the one they face today.

A young Martin managed to find a dream, one that he pieced together from his readings—in the Bible, and literature, and just about any other book he could get his hands on.

And not only did those books help him educate himself, but they also allowed him to work through the destructive and traumatic experiences of blatant discrimination, and the discriminatory abuse inflicted on himself, his family, and his people.

The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. that we celebrate here today could have turned out to be just another African-American who would have had to learn to be happy with what he had, and what he was allowed.

But he learned to use his imagination and his dreams to see right through those "White Only" signs—to see the reality that all men, and women, regardless of their place of origin, their gender, or their creed, are created equal.

Through his studies, Dr. King learned that training his mind and broadening his intellect effectively shielded him from the demoralizing effects of segregation and discrimination.

Dr. Martin Luther King was a dreamer. His dreams were a tool through which he was able to lift his mind beyond the reality of his segregated society, and into a realm where it was possible that white and black, red and brown, and all others live and work alongside each other and prosper.

But Martin Luther King, Jr. was not just an idle daydreamer. He shared his visions through speeches that motivated others to join in his nonviolent effort to lift themselves from poverty and isolation by creating a new America where equal justice and institutions were facts of life.

In the Declaration of Independence in 1776, Thomas Jefferson wrote, "We hold these truths to be self evident, that all Men are Created Equal."

At that time and for centuries to come, African-Americans were historically, culturally, and legally excluded from inclusion in that declaration.

Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" Speech, delivered 50 years ago, on August 28, 1963, was a clarion call to each citizen of this great nation that we still hear today.

His request was simply and eloquently conveyed—he asked America to allow of its citizens to live out the words written in its Declaration of Independence and to have a place in this nation's Bill of Rights.

The sixties were a time of great crisis and conflict. The dreams of the people of this country were filled with troubling images that arose like lava from the nightmares of violence and the crises they had to face, both domestically and internationally.

It was the decade of the Cuban Missile Crisis, the Vietnam War, and the assassinations of President John Fitzgerald Kennedy, Malcolm X, Presidential Candidate Robert Kennedy, and the man we honor here today.

Dr. Martin Luther King's dream helped us turn the corner on civil rights.

It started with a peaceful march for suffrage that started in Selma, Alabama on March 7, 1965—a march that ended with violence at the hands of law enforcement officers as the marchers crossed the Edmund Pettus Bridge.

But the dream did not die there.

Dr. King led the Montgomery Bus Boycott, often with Rosa Parks. The boycott lasted for 381 days, as an end result, the United States Supreme Court outlawed racial segregation on all public transportation.

Dr. King used several nonviolent tactics to protest against Jim Crow Laws in the South and he organized and led demonstrations for desegregation, labor and voting rights.

On April 4, 1967, at Riverside Church in New York City, he spoke out against the Vietnam War, when he saw the devastation that his nation was causing abroad and the effect that it had on the American men and women sent overseas.

He said, and I quote:

Somehow this madness must cease. We must stop now. I speak as a child of God and brother to the suffering poor of Vietnam. I speak for those whose land is being laid waste, whose homes are being destroyed, whose culture is being subverted. I speak for the poor of America who are paying the double price of smashed hopes at home, and death and corruption in Vietnam. I speak as a citizen of the world, for the world as it stands aghast at the path we have taken. I speak as one who loves America, to the leaders of our own nation: The great initiative in this war is ours; the initiative to stop it must be ours.

When the life of Dr. Martin Luther King was stolen from us, he was a very young 39 years old.

People remember that Dr. King died in Memphis, but few can remember why he was there.

On that fateful day in 1968 Dr. King came to Memphis to support a strike by the city's sanitation workers.

The garbage men there had recently formed a chapter of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees to demand better wages and working conditions.

But the city refused to recognize their union, and when the 1,300 employees walked off their jobs the police broke up the rally with mace and billy clubs.

It was then that union leaders invited Dr. King to Memphis.

Despite the danger he might face entering such a volatile situation, it was an invitation he could not refuse.

Not because he longed for danger, but because the labor movement was intertwined

with the civil rights movement for which he had given up so many years of his life.

The death of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., will never overshadow his life. That is his legacy as a dreamer and a man of action.

It is a legacy of hope, tempered with peace. It is a legacy not quite yet fulfilled.

I hope that Dr. King's vision of equality under the law is never lost to us, who in the present, toil in times of unevenness in our equality.

For without that vision—without that dream—we can never continue to improve on the human condition.

For those who have already forgotten, or whose vision is already clouded with the fog of complacency, I would like to recite the immortal words of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.:

"I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former shareholders will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.

I have a dream that one day even the State of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin, but for the content of their character.

I have a dream today.

I have a dream that one day down in Alabama with its vicious racists, with its Governor having his lips dripping with words of interposition and nullification—one day right there in Alabama, little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers.

I have a dream today.

I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough place will be made plain and the crooked places will be made straight, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together."

Dr. King's dream did not stop at racial equality, his ultimate dream was one of human equality and dignity.

There is no doubt that Dr. King supported freedom and justice for every individual in America.

He was in midst of planning the 1968 Poor People's Campaign for Jobs and Justice when he struck down by the dark deed of an assassin on April 4, 1968.

It is for us, the living, to continue that fight today and forever, in the great spirit that inspired the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.