

Proclamation

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day is celebrated on the third Monday in January to commemorate Dr. King's January 15 birthday, and his legacy of commitment to equality, justice, and nonviolent resistance.

Born January 15, 1929 in Atlanta, Georgia, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. became a leading figure in the Civil Rights Movement, championing desegregation, voting rights, and racial equality.

On August 28, 1963, Dr. King delivered the iconic "I Have a Dream" speech at the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom before a crowd of approximately 250,000 people. Memorable passages from that speech include,

"I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up, [and] live out the true meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal," and

"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 by the content of their character."

On December 10, 1964, in Oslo, Norway, Dr. King accepted the Nobel Peace Prize, becoming the youngest recipient of that award.

Tragically, Dr. King was assassinated on April 4, 1968 in Memphis, Tennessee where he had gone to prepare for a march on behalf of Memphis's striking sanitation workers.

On July 11, 1977, President Jimmy Carter posthumously awarded Dr. King the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

In 1981, California Governor Jerry Brown signed a bill making California one of the first states to establish Martin Luther King, Jr. Day as a state holiday.

Federal recognition followed in 1986, and in the year 2000, the holiday was officially observed in all 50 states, to honor Dr. King's vision, and highlight the ongoing commitment needed to achieve his dream.

And, on June 24, 2014 — the 50th anniversary of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 — Martin Luther King, Jr. and his wife, Coretta Scott King were posthumously awarded the Congressional Gold Medal - the highest civilian honor bestowed by the US Congress – "in recognition of their contributions to the Nation on behalf of the civil rights movement."

In a speech he delivered in 1957, Dr. King said, "Life's most persistent and urgent question is: What are you doing for others?" To answer that question, and honor Dr. King's global commitment to building a "beloved community," where injustice ends, violence is replaced by compassion, and love prevails," Martin Luther King, Jr. Day is now observed with a Day of Service. This Monday, January 19, Americans across the nation will volunteer at Day of Service events.

Of course, volunteer efforts don't need to be confined just to this holiday. For, as Dr. King famously stated, "The time is always right to do what is right."

Now therefore, I, Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft, Mayor of the City of Alameda, hereby proclaim January 19, 2026

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

in the City of Alameda and encourage all Alamedans to honor this day through acts of service, community building, and volunteerism, including the East Bay Regional Parks District's volunteer projects at several Martin Luther King Jr. Shoreline locations in Oakland. (Visit ebrpd.samaritan.com for more information, and to register)

And you can learn more about Dr. King's life and legacy from books at the Main Library's display celebrating Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.

Thank you.