

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Commission

§ 30-192, Code of Virginia



October 10, 2002

Legislative History

Established in 1992, pursuant to Chapter 741, 1992 Acts of Assembly, the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Commission is mandated to further the work and promote the legacy of Dr. King.

Commission Members

Senator Henry L. Marsh, III, *Chairman*
Delegate L. Preston Bryant, Jr., *Vice Chairman*
Delegate Flora D. Crittenden
Delegate Robert Hurt
Senator Benjamin J. Lambert, III
Delegate Daniel W. Marshall, III
Delegate Kenneth R. Melvin
Senator D. Nick Rerras
Senator Frank M. Ruff, Jr.
Delegate Winsome Earle Sears
Ms. Victoria Adams
The Honorable William C. Cleveland
The Reverend Raymond J. Johnson
Mr. Jack Miller
Mr. Wesley H. Motley, Jr.
Mr. Robert C. Vaughan
The Reverend Willie Woodson

Objectives

- Identify, plan, develop, and implement appropriate programs and events that further the philosophy and memory of Dr. King.
- Monitor the educational goals, programs, and objectives of public and private schools to encourage the recognition and inclusion of the achievements and contributions of ethnic and minority groups.
- Inventory and review, biennially, activities and events sponsored by localities in the Commonwealth and those instituted or offered by public and private schools and institutions of higher education designed to honor Dr. King's memory.
- Facilitate the analysis of public policy relative to Dr. King's principles and philosophy, including his work pertaining to social and economic justice, ethics, and racial equality, and promote the appreciation of diverse cultures among the citizenry.
- Collaborate with The King Center and other established state and local entities and community organizations in activities and events that commemorate the birth and death, and in

initiatives designed to perpetuate the work and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

- Establish a memorial to honor Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., in which (i) records, oral histories, and memorabilia documenting his relationship with and impact on the Commonwealth may be acquired and preserved; (ii) information concerning his life, work, teachings, writings, and philosophy may be collected, preserved, and accessed for educational and cultural purposes; and (iii) scholarly inquiry and writing, undergraduate and graduate study, and policy analysis may be conducted.
- Encourage and support collaborative activities among state, local, and national organizations that (i) emphasize the non-commercialization of the state and federal King Holiday, (ii) present his life and achievements in historical context, (iii) articulate the relationship between his philosophy, contributions, and current public policies, and (iv) demonstrate his principles consistently through significant participation of persons of diverse racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds in public and private endeavors and enterprises.
- Monitor and evaluate state, local, and national public policy relative to the principles and philosophy of Dr. King, and make appropriate recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly to maintain progress towards social and economic justice and equal opportunity for all citizens.
- Perform such other functions and activities as may be necessary to facilitate or implement the Commission's objectives.

Center Programs and Activities

King Living History and Public Policy Center

- Acquisition and preservation of records, oral histories, and memorabilia documenting his relationship with and impact on the Commonwealth;
- Collection and preservation of Dr. King's life, work, teachings, writings, and philosophy made accessible for educational and cultural purposes; and
- Conduct of scholarly inquiry and writing, undergraduate and graduate study, and policy analysis.

Partner Institutions

- Norfolk State University
- Old Dominion University
- University of Virginia
- Virginia Commonwealth University
- Virginia Polytechnic Institute

Virginia Commonwealth University has been designated as the home site of and coordinator for the implementation for the King Center.

Regional Institutions

- Eastern Virginia Medical School
- Hampton University
- James Madison University
- Virginia State University

The collective assets of these institutions in areas relevant to the legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr. equal or exceed those of any other state. The merger of these strengths and certain unique characteristics of each institution under a single structure provides the capabilities needed for a national public policy center. This configuration also provides the substructure to coalesce and maximize Virginia's efforts in scholarly research and fund development, make programs and resources of the Center accessible to all Virginians, and facilitate the effective and efficient performance of the Center's activities.

Implementation of Center

The implementation of and funding for the Center will proceed in four phases:

Phase I. Personnel and Support Services

To begin operating, a limited staff must be hired to include a director and a fund-raiser/grant writer. Further, technical support must be acquired with the help of one of the partner institutions with high tech capabilities, e.g., Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University and Old Dominion University.

Phase II. Creation of the Virtual Center

To avoid funding constraints and the limitations of a four-wall site, the Center will be created through 21st Century technology as a virtual center. This paradigm is ideal for the consortium configuration of the Center and will facilitate statewide access and links to the partner institutions and regional participants.

Phase III. Programs and Services

The King legacy is a broad and powerful one, relevant to education, social policy, politics, economics, and culture. The Center's immediate goal will commence its activities and future endeavors that will make a permanent contribution to embedding King's relevance in the fabric of Virginia life.

- **Public Education**—An important component of the Center will be to promote public education,

dialogue, an understanding and appreciation of the totality of Dr. King, and the examination of a range of matters relevant to King's principles and legacy. The Virtual Center is intended to assist in this component. The Center will be available as a resource to public and private schools, e.g., in teaching the SOLs and other curricula. The Center may also conduct various research and other projects focused on K-12 education and minority students. This focus may be related to the SOL program and other significant K-12 activities, such as the federal No Child Left Behind Act. Vehicles for helping educationally at-risk students may emerge through these research and education projects, producing a better understanding of their educational needs and resulting in strategies to promote academic achievement. The K-12 education focus will evolve as the issues emerge.

- **Higher Education**—Future initiatives of the Center will include affiliations with undergraduate and graduate degree programs at all participating institutions. It is envisioned that the existing technological infrastructure and capacity of the institutions will enable the delivery of online degree programs. Academic resources and staff of the Center will be available to provide assistance and support for such programs. The Virtual Center will also be an integral feature of this component.
- **Fellowship Program**—One annual doctoral or faculty fellowship per partner institution is planned to support scholarship. These five fellows will be charged with examining issues relevant to the principles of Martin Luther King, Jr. These fellows will be recruited carefully to ensure, as much as possible, that they will produce scholarly publications that will endure. At least once each year, a meeting or other forum will be convened in which the fellows can share their work with other scholars and with the public.
- **Public Policy Analyses**—As it matures and obtains adequate external funding, the Center will produce policy analyses of issues specific to Virginia and contemporary issues relative to King principles to further the development of sound, feasible, and fair policies for all Virginians. These analyses may involve the assessment of education and health care for the poor and minorities, economic development, the nexus between public policies and quality of life, and many other issues with the intent to provide viable and important decision-making information.

- **Acquisition and Preservation**—The Center also functions as a clearinghouse and living history museum in which electronic media and records, oral histories, and memorabilia documenting Dr. King's relationship with and impact on the Commonwealth will be acquired and preserved. Information concerning his life, work, teachings, writings, and philosophy will be collected and retained, as well as documents, records, and memorabilia related to the Civil Rights Movement. The Center will establish a working relationship with and a web site link to the King Center, the King Papers Project at Stanford University, and Boston University to enable research and scholarship.
- **Comprehensive Database**—The database will be designed and implemented to provide information on minority populations in Virginia. This database will include, but not be limited to, information and data concerning demographics, educational attainment, labor and economic development statistics, housing and criminal justice data, a profile of minority businesses, social and cultural issues, health status and chronic conditions and diseases prevalent among minority groups represented in Virginia. Currently, no database of this type exists in which accurate and reliable information on minority populations in Virginia is accessible to researchers, the business and corporate community, and policy makers in a centralized location. The availability of such data would facilitate and enhance planning and the targeting of resources. Significant works on the history, culture, achievements, and contributions of minorities to society will be acquired to provide access for research, educational and cultural purposes.

Phase IV. Funding and Sustainability

Efforts to obtain external funding will be contemporaneously initiated with implementation of Phase I and will continue throughout the Center's history. This task will require an effective working relationship between the partner institutions and the members of the Commission. Fund development efforts will include, but not be limited to, the following:

- **Leveraging Funds**
- **Solicitation of Private Sector Support**
- **Solicitation of Foundation Support**
- **Development of Revenue Streams**
- **Federal Support**
- **Sustainability**

National Observance of the 50th Anniversary of *Brown v. Board of Education*, 2004 (federal legislation)

The Commission will participate in activities and events planned to observe the 50th Anniversary of the *Brown* decision.

Statewide Conference, 50th Anniversary of *Brown v. Board of Education*, 2004

The King Center's first significant initiative will be centered around the 50th anniversary of the Supreme Court's landmark decision on segregation—*Brown v. Board of Education*—in 2004. This initiative will focus on a statewide conference that will provide the Center with considerable visibility and a significant vehicle for fund raising and revenue generation.

This conference is envisioned as a collaborative effort between the partner institutions, regional participants, and the King Commission. The coordination of various Virginia activities related to *Brown* within and without the institutions and the Commonwealth will be an integral part of the conference. This debut activity will provide the opportunity to recognize the legacy of Dr. King, explore the achievements of the Civil Rights Movement and the challenges that still confront us, and give the Center a dramatic and important entree into the public policy arena. This conference can also provide the impetus for forums around the State and focus discussions on the legal and cultural impact of *Brown*, the social and political issues in 1954, and the lessons of *Brown* relative to these and other issues at the beginning of the 21st Century.

2003 King Holiday Commemoration Year-Round Activities

The theme for the 2003 national King Holiday is **Remember=Celebrate=Act!** Emphasis will be on community service. The Commission will lead the Commonwealth in honoring Dr. King's memory through statewide intergenerational community service programs, projects, and activities. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman will represent Virginia at the annual awards banquet and other commemorative programs at the King Center in Atlanta. Other initiatives will focus on mentoring, public forums on contemporary issues relative to Kingian principles, floor speeches that highlight the wisdom and philosophy of Dr. King, academic scholarships, and recognition of the achievements of the Commonwealth's minority citizens. Beginning with Black History Month in February 2003, the Commission will publicize the recognized ethnic heritage days of racial and ethnic minority populations in the Commonwealth.

The Commission will also participate and support Community Learning Week activities, sponsored by Living the Dream, Inc., including the READ-IN, READ ALOUD, Legislative Reception, youth forums, major addresses, and the statewide conference.