A portrait of Martin Luther King, Jr. in a dark suit, white shirt, and striped tie, set against a background of blue and orange clouds. The portrait is the central focus of the page.

**Martin Luther King, Jr.
Advisory Council
2015 Report**

Courtesy of Georgia Archives, Georgia Capitol Museum Collection



When Americans observe Martin Luther King Jr. Day each January, the nation's eyes turn toward Georgia. This gives us an opportunity to showcase our state's critical role in the civil rights movement, but it also obligates us to do everything we can to preserve the memory and continue the work of our native son, Dr. King. The Martin Luther King, Jr. Advisory Council plays a leading role in the effort to celebrate one of the greatest Georgians of all time for generations to come.

Georgia Gov. Nathan Deal



Reflections Upon the First Four Years of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Advisory Council

Serving as Chairman of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Advisory Council is both humbling and rewarding. Beginning with the birth of an idea that eventually became a law signed into effect by Gov. Nathan Deal, it has been four rather short years since this council was formed. I have been blessed to have the rapport with my colleagues that have permitted me to serve in this position since the Council's formation.

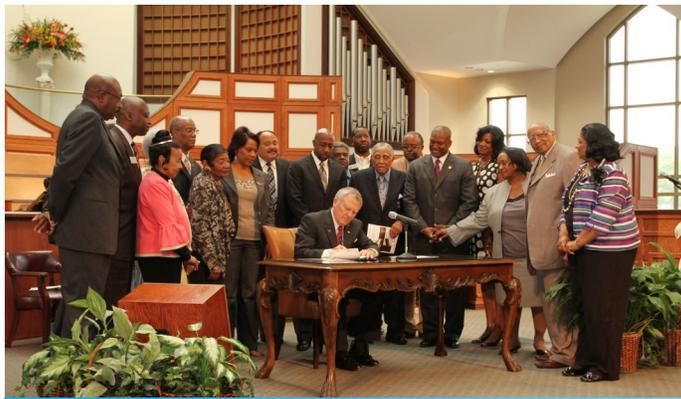
Council members serve four year terms and are appointed either by the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, or Speaker of the House. The nine initial Martin Advisory Council members had terms which expired at points during the 2015 calendar year. As Chairman of this Council, I would be remiss if I did not express my appreciation for this group of individuals who graciously served their state by assisting in the efforts to get this Council established. We know that each generation is built upon the backs of those who precede them. For that reason, it is with great excitement that I know that future Council's have a firm foundation on which to stand.

During the Council's four short years of existence, we have been able to hear from and document the memories of Georgian's who were on the front lines of the Civil Rights movement. It is hard to put into words the perspective brought by Rep. John Lewis and Dr. Joseph Lowery when a conversation with Georgia's Civil Rights Legends was held at the Capitol. The feeling when bells were rung atop Stone Mountain to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the "I Have A Dream" speech in Washington, D.C. was unforgettable. And the insight into the life of Dr. King that was provided through the words of Mrs. Christine King Farris was without equal.

However, the Council is not just focused on programming that helps us remember the Civil Rights movement and struggles associated with the movement. There is much more. As a Council, we continue to seek opportunities to work alongside Martin Luther King, Jr. Advisory Councils from around the state to preserve the legacy throughout the state of Georgia. Additionally, we seek to recognize the efforts of individual communities—like the Stockbridge Historic Preservation Committee— who refuse to allow our nation's history to be forgotten.

While there has been much good work, there is still much to do. I look forward to seeing the work of this Council move forward in the days to come. There remains unfinished business for the Council to play a role in, as well as countless opportunities for the Council to engage all corners of this great state to further the principles, ideals and teachings of the late Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

- Sen. Emanuel Jones, Chairman



“It will be the duty of this council to promote the principles of non-violence, peace, social justice and the awareness and appreciation of the civil rights movement and the life and work of Martin Luther King, Jr.”

Georgia Gov. Nathan Deal at the signing ceremony for Senate Bill 141, which created the Council in 2011.



Honorable Rita Jackson Samuels
Atlanta, Georgia
Appointed November 18, 2011
By Governor of Georgia



Honorable Lauren Elizabeth Gaia
Decatur, Georgia
Appointed November 18, 2011
By Governor of Georgia



Honorable William “Bill” Austin
Riceboro, Georgia
Appointed November 18, 2011
By Governor of Georgia



Honorable Dilyana I. Kovacheva
Norcross, Georgia
Appointed January 13, 2012
By Governor of Georgia



Honorable Christine Miller-Betts
Grovetown, Georgia
Appointed November 18, 2011
By Governor of Georgia



Honorable Toney Collins
Conyers, Georgia
Appointed July 1, 2011
By Speaker of the Georgia House of Representatives



Honorable Thomas Lee Smith
Stockbridge, Georgia
Appointed November 18, 2011
By Governor of Georgia



The Martin Luther King, Jr. Advisory Council

From left to right: Dr. Thomas Lee Smith, Senator Emanuel Jones, Mrs. Christine Miller-Betts, Mayor William Austin, former DCA Commissioner Mike Beaty, Mr. Toney Collins, Mrs. Rita Jackson-Samuels. Not pictured: Ms. Dilyana Kovacheva & Ms. Lauren Gaia, youth representatives.

Martin Luther King, Jr. Tribute

Georgia State Capitol

January 16, 2015

Select excerpts from the Keynote Address by Mrs. Christine King Farris, sister of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. at Georgia's 30th Annual Tribute at the State Capitol.

On fulfilling dreams:

“Great dreams can become true and America is the place where you can make it happen. It does require hard work, dedication, and vision, but those qualities are available to everyone who's willing to make the commitment.”

On Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. at a young age:

“I can tell you that even as a child, Martin showed leadership skills,. And as I think back on it, as a teenager, he was already revealing that he had a creative approach to problem solving and a seriousness about social problems that you didn't find in many young people, young men, of his age.”

On Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s influences:

“He later would write that Christ furnished the spirit and motivation, while Ghandi furnished the methods of the Civil Rights Movement.”

On people writing about her brother:

“I would encourage everyone who is interested in Martin Luther King, Jr and wants to know what he was like, first to go to the source and read his books. Then read books by people who knew him well and worked with him. Watch documentaries about him.”

On Martin Luther King, Jr's stance on non-violence:

“As the movement progressed, my brother came to understand that nonviolence had important applications on a personal level, as well as in social struggle. As he wrote in an article shortly before he was assassinated—taken from us—I quote, “I'm committed to non-violence. Absolutely. Because I have found it to be a philosophy of life that regulates not only my dealings in the struggle for racial justice, but also my dealings with people, with my own self.”



Martin Luther King, Jr. Tribute

Georgia State Capitol - January 16, 2015

The State of Georgia celebrated its 30th Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Tribute in the North Wing of the Georgia State Capitol on Friday, January 16, 2015.

The program began with rousing numbers performed by the Atlanta Boy Choir & Alumni under the direction of Maestro Fletcher Wolfe. During the program, the Choir performed numbers that included “My Lord What A Morning,” “We Are The World,” and “The Battle Hymn of the Republic. The National Anthem was performed by Mark and Jonathan Meadows, brothers who attend Community Christian School. Colors were presented by the Georgia State Patrol who were accompanied by a bagpiper.

Rev. Dr. Charles Goodman, Senior Pastor of Augusta’s Tabernacle Baptist Church, offered the Invocation in which he stated that now, “reality falls upon us to continue to make the dream true, the dream a living reality, that we live out every day of our lives.” Remarks were provided by Commissioner of the Department of Community Affairs, Camila Knowles, who Introduced Georgia’s Governor. Deal pointed out that, “Although now we are almost a half century removed from the time of his tragic death, [Martin Luther King, Jr.’s] example, his legacy, and his excellent and eloquent words still endure.”

The Keynote Address was provided by Mrs. Christine King Farris, the sister of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Excerpts from her address are shown on the preceding page.

The Honorable Dee Dawkins-Haigler (Chair, Georgia Legislative Black Caucus) provided remarks on behalf of the Caucus. The program concluded with awards being presented. The first went to Mrs. Christine King Farris in recognition of her dedication to the Civil Rights Movement. The River Valley Martin Luther King Advisory Council became the first recipient of the Martin Luther King Jr. Community Service Award. The River Valley Advisory Council was recognized due to their efforts to “document the experiences of people in the 16-county River Valley region for the Civil Right Era and to create video archives that capture and preserve their stories.” Finally, River Valley Regional Commission was recognized for being the first Regional Commission in the state to form and to support the formation of a regional Martin Luther King, Jr. Advisory Council and for the leadership shown for its creation.

Video of the ceremony can be found at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=92sZBNIOxxk&feature=youtu.be>.

2016 Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration

Friday, January 15, 2016 • Georgia State Capitol

North Wing • 11:00 AM

Keynote Address—Ms. Xernona Clayton

History & Mission of the Advisory Council

HISTORY: The Martin Luther King, Jr. Advisory Council was created on May 9, 2011, when Georgia Governor Nathan Deal signed the legislation at historic Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta.

OUR MISSION: Created by the General Assembly, Georgia is honoring the legacy and teaching of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. with an organization that ensures his torch of justice, tempered by nonviolence, will burn bright for future generations. The mission of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Advisory Council reaches beyond Georgia and calls on people worldwide to follow in the footsteps of this great civil rights leader and champion for justice.

www.mlkouncil.org

The Martin Luther King, Jr. Advisory Council concentrates on four ways to make Dr. King's message that everyone can serve a reality today and for future generations.

Celebration & Recognition

Annual awards on MLK Day for public & private sectors, Civil Rights heroes & youth; assistance & resources for MLK Day activities

Economic Development

Streets and facilities named for Dr. King linked with DCA Opportunity Zones to revitalize neighborhoods, Volunteer Projects that strengthen communities

Education

Promoting non-violence, Civil Rights history, youth engagement and leadership; conferences and summits to inspire the next generation with Dr. King's dream for America

Connecting the World

Building a network of groups & organizations throughout the world that support Dr. King's teaching and promote social justice

Special Thanks to Inaugural Council Members

In 2011, at the inception of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Advisory Committee, nine individuals were appointed to four-year terms by the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and Speaker of the House. During 2015, the initial four-year terms for each of the inaugural members expired. Each of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Advisory Council members were appointed by either Georgia's Governor (6 members), Lt. Governor (1 member), Speaker of the House (1 member), with the final position being filled by the DCA Commissioner or his/her designee to complete the council's makeup.

Without the collaborative energy and vision exhibited by these members, the council's efforts would have been significantly hindered. The vision and dedication offered by these nine members were instrumental in furthering the efforts of the council since its inception. During its first four years, the Council oversaw annual Tribute events at the Capitol, the 50th Anniversary of the March on Washington tribute atop Stone Mountain, and a candid civil rights conversation with civil rights leaders Rev. Joseph Lowery and Rep. John Lewis, among additional accomplishments.

Each of the council members was able to be part of something new, something transformational. This newness allowed the membership to forge its own path that would allow it to further the ideals, principles, and teachings of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Special thanks are extended to Sen. Emanuel Jones, Mayor William Austin, Mr. Toney Collins, Ms. Lauren Gaia, Ms. Rita Jackson-Samuels, Ms. Dilyana Kovacheva, Ms. Christine Miller-Betts, Mr. Thomas Smith, and DCA Commissioners Mike Beatty, Gretchen Corbin and Camila Knowles.

The Mission of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Advisory Council

The Georgia General Assembly and Governor Nathan Deal have set an ambitious and important agenda for the Martin Luther King, Jr. Advisory Council. It

- ◆ Promoting racial harmony, understanding, respect and goodwill among all citizens;
- ◆ Promoting principles of non-violence, peace and social justice;
- ◆ Promoting awareness and appreciation of the civil rights movement and advocacy of the principles and legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr.;
- ◆ Advise and assist the State, local governments and private organizations on King Holiday activities and ceremonies;
- ◆ Education, cultural activities and events that reflect the life and teaching of Martin Luther King, Jr.



Governor Nathan Deal with dignitaries at the signing of the legislation creating the Martin Luther King, Jr. Advisory Council

Additional Highlights from 2015 Martin Luther King, Jr. Advisory Council Activities



The Council sponsored 8 youth to take part in the King Center's Nonviolent Youth camp. This annual camp which occurs each summer and, according to the King Center, provides youth with the opportunity to build new bridges of understanding, cooperation and goodwill between their peers of different cultures."

The Council purchased 100 boxes from Action Ministries' Regional Hunger Relief Program to help feed needy children. This service project, upon completion, recruited 60 volunteers and fed 300 children.

During 2015, Council Chair Emanuel Jones served as a member of the committee tasked with placing a statue of Dr. King at the Georgia State Capitol. Through this committee, led by Rep.

Calvin Smyre, work began on the project as a sculptor was named to complete the statue. Tragically, the sculptor, Mr. Andy Davis was killed before this vision could become a reality. Efforts continue to place a statue of Dr. King on Capitol grounds.

The Martin Luther King, Jr. Advisory Council has been supported by generous contributions from the Georgia Power Company and the Hayslett Group in Atlanta.

The Martin Luther King, Jr. Advisory Council is supported at the Georgia Department of Community Affairs by the Georgia Commission for Service and Volunteerism, headed by Executive Director Linda Thompson.

For information about the Martin Luther King, Jr. Advisory Council, visit the Council's website at www.mlkouncil.org

Stockbridge Martin Luther King, Sr. Historic Preservation Committee Honored by Martin Luther King, Jr. Advisory Council

On September 14, 2015, the Stockbridge City Council unanimously approved the naming of the Martin Luther King, Sr. Heritage trail within the City of Stockbridge. This followed the efforts of Mayor Pro Tem Alphonso Thomas to establish a committee to consider renaming a street within the City of Stockbridge in honor of Martin Luther King, Sr.

The Council approved the formation of the Martin Luther King, Sr. Historical Preservation Committee consisting of Alphonso Thomas (Chairman), Tyrone Anderson, Kenneth Banks, Vincent Beazer, Rev. E.C. Cochran, Sr., Marilyn Flynn, Oswin Jackson, Mike Moon, Mildred E. Reed, Lee Stuart, and Adam Worsham.

On October 8, 2015, following the work of this committee, the Martin Luther King, Sr. Heritage Trail was unveiled in the City of Stockbridge. Corresponding with this unveiling, a Commemorative Wall Plaque was placed within the Stockbridge City Hall. The plaque reads:

Stockbridge is the ancestral home of the Nobel Peace Prize recipient, Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. In 1899, his father, Martin Luther King, Sr. (also affectionately known as “Daddy King”), was born Michael King to James and Delia Linsey King in a sharecroppers cabin in the Stockbridge community.

In his early years, Martin Luther King, Sr. attended the Stockbridge Rosenwald School, located at Tye Street and Second Street. He was a licensed preacher at the age of 15 and preached his first sermon at Floyd Chapel Baptist Church on First Street in Stockbridge.

By 1934, Martin Luther King, Sr. changed his name (and his eldest son’s name) from Michael King to Martin Luther King. Martin Luther King, Sr. encouraged his son, Martin Luther King, Jr. to become active in the Civil Rights Movement. Martin Luther King, Jr. wrote that his father was a major influence on his entering the ministry, and his grandfather always believed he would achieve greatness.

The City of Stockbridge lays claim to an important part of the Civil Rights icon’s heritage and honors Martin Luther King, Sr.

At the October 8 ceremony, Councilman Alphonso Thomas accepted an award from Sen. Emanuel Jones, Chair of the Martin Luther King Advisory Council, for the efforts of the City of Stockbridge to recognize the community’s history as it is interwoven with the life and legacy of Martin Luther King, Sr.

