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Local Leaders Speak of Peace, Continuous Fight for Justice, and Unity in Celebration of Martin Luther King Jr. Day

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Washington D.C., September 23, 2012: Dr. King's quote inscription on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial on The National Mall. "I Have a Dream" was a public speech delivered by Dr. King on August 28, 1963, in which he calls for an end to racism in the U.S. By. GETTY IMAGES

Leaders of the U.S. Virgin Islands called on Virgin Islanders to reflect on the many ideals of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., the American minister and activist whose words and mission led to a march toward equality for all Americans, a mission many see as continuing. Dr. King led the Civil Rights Movement since the mid-50s until his assassination on April 4, 1968. His murder led to nation-wide riots, known as the Holy Week Uprising, which took place in roughly 100 cities.

Senate President Donna Frett-Gregory said Dr. King's teachings and leadership by example "continue to be lessons for us all. With 2020 having reminded us of the frailty of life, we must all strive to do good and seek to uplift humanity." She stated the 34th Legislature will work to lift all Virgin Islanders.

"The 34th Legislature will work to empower the powerless, seek opportunity in all things big and small, and pursue solutions for the issues that plague our community even when we think those solutions are complex and difficult to attain," said the Senate president. "The members of the 34th Legislature will strive to leave a better Virgin Islands than they met and set the foundation of growth and opportunity for generations of Virgin Islanders."

Delegate to Congress Stacey Plaskett, [recently named](#) one of nine impeachment managers in the Trump impeachment trial, spoke of the importance of having leaders whose hearts are for the people, justice and equality.

"Dr. King's words on leadership sit heavily with me as we celebrate our incoming President-elect, while pursuing justice and accountability from the outgoing one: 'Leaders of sound integrity,'" Ms. Plaskett said. "Leaders not in love with publicity, but in love with justice. Leaders not in love with money, but in love with humanity. Leaders who can subject their particular egos to the greatness of the cause....Leaders who can stand before the demagogue and damn his treacherous flatteries without winking."

The congresswoman also reminded that the march toward equality is an ongoing struggle. "We are still plagued by much of the injustice that Dr. King fought against. We have not however, stopped fighting for the justice that must precede the unity that can exist," she said.

Governor Albert Bryan, pointing to the difficult times many Virgin Islanders faced in 2020 as a result of Covid-19, called on residents to appreciate each other. "I'm asking all members of our community to do their part to honor this Day of Service and Dr. King's vision by reflecting on where our country has been going and where we want it to go. Take time to appreciate your fellow Virgin Islanders and the struggles and resilience we have and are experiencing," he said. "The unity of our country and our community is bigger than any one individual, but if each of us does our part to respect and serve our fellow man, regardless of race, creed or culture, then there is nothing we can't accomplish in this great nation of ours."

Among his many notable achievements, Dr. King King participated in and led marches for Blacks' right to vote, desegregation, labor rights, and other basic civil rights. He also led the 1955 Montgomery bus boycott and later became the first president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). As president of the SCLC, he led the unsuccessful Albany Movement in Albany, Georgia, and helped organize some of the nonviolent 1963 protests in Birmingham, Alabama. Dr. King helped organize the 1963 March on Washington, where he delivered his famous "I Have a Dream" speech on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial.

