

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Martin Luther King Jr.'s Memory And Legacy Remembered On St. Croix

VIC News / **Published On January 17, 2017 10:09 AM /**

Ernice Gilbert **January 17, 2017**



The yearly celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s memory and legacy on St. Croix arrived at its 25-year milestone on Monday, as Virgin Islanders young and old, and from all walks of life took to the streets of Frederiksted beginning at the Claude O. Markoe Elementary School and ending at Buddhoe Park, marching in peace.

This year's turnout was evidently strong, and the march saw sorority and fraternities, public and private schools, the JROTC and regular citizens joining the annual walk in honor of Dr. King and the significant sacrifice he paid for freedom, including the ultimate one.

The ceremony at the Buddhoe Park included multiple live performances from Music in Motion, Kevin Williams, Jr., Pastor Jermaine Mully, Thalema Williams and more. Remarks were delivered by citizens and government officials, and the keynote speaker of yesterday's affair was Jacqueline Greenidge-Payne, St. Croix district training officer for the Emergency Medical Service, a division of the Department of Health.

Dr. King's speech was delivered by sixth-grader Alani Arnold, who attends the St. Patrick's Catholic School.

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Dr. King's holiday celebration began in 1970 in the territory, some 14 years before it became a federal holiday, according to Ira Hobson, member of the Virgin Islands Central Labor Council Civil Rights Committee. Mr. Hobson was honored yesterday for his dedication to the annual celebration's success.

Born Michael King Jr. on January 15, 1929, Dr. King was an American Baptist minister and activist who was a leader in the Civil Rights Movement. He is best known for his role in the advancement of civil rights using nonviolent civil disobedience based on his Christian beliefs.

Dr. King became a civil rights activist early in his career. He led the 1955 Montgomery bus boycott and helped found the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) in 1957, serving as its first president. With the SCLC, King led an unsuccessful 1962 struggle against segregation in Albany, Georgia, and helped organize the 1963 nonviolent protests in Birmingham, Alabama. Dr. King also helped to organize the 1963 March on Washington, where he delivered his famous "I Have a Dream" speech.

He was assassinated on April 4, 1968.