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# Large Turnout Greet's Return of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Parade in Frederiksted

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After a two-year, Covid-induced pause, the Central Labor Council Civil Rights Committee brought back its signature, annual event — the Martin Luther King Jr. Parade in Frederiksted, St. Croix in honor of Civil Rights leader, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Children of all ages, adults and the elderly, attended the parade on Monday as they marched through the town chanting hymnals such as We Shall Overcome, which first appeared as a protest song during a 1945–1946 labor strike against American Tobacco in Charleston, South Carolina.

Elementary schools, churches, sororities, fraternities, unions, and businesses participated. The community came out in droves to pay homage to Dr. King. The Monday morning parade began at Claude O Markoe Elementary School and ended at General Budhoe Park. The parade was

followed by a program with comments marking the enduring significance of the legendary civil rights leader.

Civil Rights Committee Chair, Antoinette Rampersad, was overjoyed to see the large turnout and expressed her gratitude for the support of the community. "I was honored to have been able to be a part of Dr. Martin Luther King marches in different areas. I had the privilege of meeting Dr. King's family right here in St. Croix," she said. "I have been chairperson of this committee for 37 years. I love it and I love the people that I am working with. We achieve more by working together. The turnout was a success. The community support was awesome, you can tell that they missed the march."

Senator Javan James Sr., guest speaker, spoke of the importance of the march. "Today is not a day to go to the beach and grill hamburgers. The government found it necessary to claim today as a holiday to show respect to a man that has blazed the trail where few have never dared to cross," he said.

Senator Novelle Francis Jr., president of the 35th Legislature encouraged the community to unite and be more like Dr. King. "Every year the commemoration of Martin Luther King Jr. presents us with a fresh opportunity to appreciate all that Dr. King did to fight racial injustice and advance the social unity and equality," he said. "Today, I encourage all of you to be like Dr. King. Know that each of us have the ability to not only support each other but also the opportunities that can bring prosperity to the Virgin Islands."

Central Labor Council and Martin Luther King Committee presented three awards to Alexandria Hinkson, committee member on the Central Labor Council Civil Rights Committee, Sen. James and Rosa Soto-Thomas, American Federation of Teachers president for the St. Croix District. They each received a plaque and a certificate.

A similar event was held in St. Thomas.