

Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Martin Luther King Jr. Day (officially **Birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr.** and sometimes referred to as **MLK Day**) is a federal holiday in the United States marking the birthday of Martin Luther King Jr. It is observed on the third Monday of January each year. Born in 1929, King's birthday is January 15 (which in 1929 fell on a Tuesday). The holiday is similar to holidays set under the Uniform Monday Holiday Act. The earliest Monday for this holiday is January 15 and the latest is January 21.

King was an American Baptist minister and activist who became the most visible spokesperson and leader in the American civil rights movement from 1955 until his assassination in 1968. King advanced civil rights through nonviolence and civil disobedience, inspired by his Christian beliefs and the nonviolent activism of Mahatma Gandhi. He was the son of early civil rights activist and minister Martin Luther King Sr. The campaign for a federal holiday in King's honor began soon after his assassination in 1968. Finally in 1983, senate passed the bill and President Ronald Reagan signed the bill to make the day an official holiday. Martin Luther King Jr. Day was first observed three years later. At first, some states resisted observing the holiday as such, giving it alternative names or combining it with other holidays. It was officially observed in all 50 states for the first time in 2000.

The City of Toronto government in Ontario officially recognizes Martin Luther King Jr. Day, although not as a paid holiday: all government services and businesses remain open. The Ottawa municipal government in Ontario officially began observing this national holiday on January 26, 2005. This day is usually celebrated with marches, parades and speeches by civil rights and political leaders.

Martin Luther King Jr. was married to Coretta Scott King. **Coretta Scott King** (née **Scott**; April 27, 1927 – January 30, 2006) was an American author, activist, and civil rights leader. An advocate for African-American equality, she was a leader for the civil rights movement in the 1960s. King was also a singer who often incorporated music into her civil rights work. King met her husband while attending graduate school in Boston. They both became increasingly active in the American civil rights movement. King played a prominent role in the years after her husband's assassination in 1968 when she took on the leadership of the struggle for racial equality herself and became active in the Women's Movement. King founded the King Center, and sought to make his birthday a national holiday.

King and his wife had four children who have represented their great legacy in different ways. **Yolanda Denise King** (November 17, 1955 – May 15, 2007) was an African American activist. She was also known for her artistic, entertainment endeavors and public speaking. Her childhood experience was greatly influenced by her father's highly public and influential activism. She passed away on May 15th 2007 due to a chronic heart condition. **Martin Luther King III** (born October 23, 1957) is an American human rights advocate. He served as the 4th President of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference from 1997 to 2004. **Dexter Scott King** (born January 30, 1961) is an American civil rights activist and serves as chairperson of the King Center for Nonviolent Social Change in Atlanta, Georgia. **Bernice Albertine**



King (born March 28, 1963) is an American lawyer, minister and is the second woman to be ordained at Ebenezer Baptist Church.

Please join the EDI committee in celebrating the legacy of Martin Luther King Jr.