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# MLK Teach-In to Explore Social Justice and Women's Power

Jan. 4, 2017

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.— Women's power and social justice will be the theme of Illinois Wesleyan University's annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Teach-In on Jan. 16 from 1 to 4 p.m.

Keynote speaker at 1 p.m. is author, activist and independent scholar Barbara Smith, who has played a groundbreaking role in opening a national cultural and political dialogue on the intersections of race, class, sexuality and gender. Smith was among the first to define an African American women's literary tradition and to advance Black women's studies and Black feminism in the United States.

Her most recent book, [\*Ain't Gonna Let Nobody Turn Me Around: Forty Years of Movement Building with Barbara Smith\*](#) (SUNY Press, 2014), combines historical documents with new interviews with fellow activists. The book won both the Lambda Literary Award and the Publishing Triangle Award in 2015. Smith has edited three major collections about Black women, and is also the co-author with Elly Bulkin and Minnie Bruce Pratt of *Yours in Struggle: Three Feminist Perspectives on Anti-Semitism and Racism* (1984). She is also the general editor of *The Reader's Companion to U.S. Women's History* (1998) with Wilma Mankiller, Gwendolyn Mink, Marysa Navarro and Gloria Steinem.

Smith lives in Albany, New York, where she served two terms as a member of the Albany Common Council from 2006 to 2013. She is the special community projects coordinator for the City of Albany, and serves as a regular panelist on WAMC Northeast Public Radio's Round Table. Her presentation at Illinois Wesleyan is entitled "Which Way Forward? Freedom Organizing in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century."

The 2 p.m. session features Illinois Wesleyan Visiting Professor of Sociology Nicole Brown, a 1999 IWU alumna. Her presentation is entitled "When All the Lies are White: A Speculative History and Imagined Future of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Visit to a Predominantly White Liberal Arts Institution."

At 3 p.m., a panel of community activists will speak. Jennifer Carrillo, director of Mission Impact at YWCA McLean County; Camille Taylor, a member of Not in Out Town; and Archana Shekara, president of McLean County Indian Association are the panelists, and their session will include table discussions.

All presentations will be held in the Hansen Student Center and are free and open to the public. The Teach-In is sponsored by Illinois Wesleyan's [Action Research Center](#) and the [Office of Diversity and Inclusion](#).



Keynote speaker Barbara Smith