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## 16th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. National Holiday Gospel Festival Scheduled at IWU

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16th Annual Dr. Martin  
Luther King, Jr. National  
Holiday Gospel Festival  
Scheduled at IWU

December 7, 2005

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. - The 16th  
Annual Dr. Martin Luther  
King, Jr. National Holiday  
Gospel Festival will be held  
on Monday, Jan. 16 from 3-9  
p.m. in Westbrook  
Auditorium of Presser Hall  
(1210 Park St., Bloomington).



Malcolm Williams and the Voices of Great Faith Choir perform during the 2005 Gospel Festival.

The event, which will be held in honor of the birth of Martin Luther King, Jr., the civil rights leader and Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, is free and open to the public.

Founded by the non-profit organization, the United Community Gospel Singers of Bloomington and Normal, and cosponsored by Illinois Wesleyan University, the Gospel Festival was launched in 1991 by Corine G. Sims, Executive Director of the United Community Gospel Singers, as a way to continue King's legacy. This year's scheduled choirs include: The Fantastic Jones Family from Springfield; Gayles Baptist Church Choir from Aurora, Mt. Pisgah Baptist Church - Jam Production Choir from Bloomington, and Malcolm Williams and the Voices of Great Faith from Chicago.

On Feb. 14, 1961, King visited Illinois Wesleyan where he addressed an audience of more than 500 people at the annual Religious Emphasis Banquet. During this visit, he also met with students during classes and more informally during meal times.

Five years later, on Feb. 10, 1966, King made a return trip to IWU as a national leader of the Civil Rights Movement and as the recipient of the 1964 Nobel Peace Prize. He addressed approximately 3,000 people at the Fred Young Field house.

King was assassinated in Memphis, Tenn. on April 4, 1968, at the age of 39. An estimated 75,000 people attended his April 9th funeral in Atlanta, Ga. One week after his death, former President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the 1968 Civil Rights Act.

Three of King's children, Yolanda, Martin III, and Bernice, have brought their father's message of non-violent social change, social justice, and brotherhood to Illinois Wesleyan. His nephew, Vernon King, has addressed the Gospel Festival on two occasions.

For additional information, contact Sims at (309) 828-4602. Persons with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids, services or special arrangements for the festival can contact the University at (309) 556-3429.

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