



Winter 12-17-2007

The Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. National Holiday Gospel Festival Celebrates 18th Year

Sherry Wallace
Illinois Wesleyan University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/news>

Recommended Citation

Wallace, Sherry, "The Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. National Holiday Gospel Festival Celebrates 18th Year" (2007). *News and Events*. 3658.
<https://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/news/3658>

This Article is protected by copyright and/or related rights. It has been brought to you by Digital Commons @ IWU with permission from the rights-holder(s). You are free to use this material in any way that is permitted by the copyright and related rights legislation that applies to your use. For other uses you need to obtain permission from the rights-holder(s) directly, unless additional rights are indicated by a Creative Commons license in the record and/ or on the work itself. This material has been accepted for inclusion by faculty at Illinois Wesleyan University. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@iwu.edu.

©Copyright is owned by the author of this document.

The Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. National Holiday Gospel Festival Celebrates 18th Year
December 17, 2007

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. - Illinois Wesleyan University will host the 18th annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. National Holiday Gospel Festival Celebration on Monday, Jan. 21, from 3-9 p.m. in Westbrook Auditorium of Presser Hall (1210 Park St., Bloomington).



Vocalists perform during the 2007 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. National Holiday Gospel Festival.

Free and open to the public, the gospel festival honors the birth of Martin Luther King, Jr., the civil rights leader and Nobel Peace Prize Laureate. Also honoring King is the [Fellowship Dinner](#) on Saturday, Jan. 19.

Founded by the United Community Gospel Singers of Bloomington and Normal, a not-for-profit organization, and cosponsored by Illinois Wesleyan, 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 numerous choirs, soloists, singers and dancers such as Malcolm Williams and the Voices of Great Faith, Gayles Memorial Mass Choir and the Fantastic Jones Family will pay tribute to Sims, who passed away on Aug. 3, 2007.

King first visited Illinois Wesleyan in February of 1961, where he addressed an audience of more than 500 people at the annual Religious Emphasis Banquet. During his visit, he also met with classes and more informally with students during meal times. He returned to the University campus five years later as a national leader of the Civil Rights Movement and as the recipient of the 1964 Nobel Peace Prize. More than 3,000 people heard him speak at the Fred Young Fieldhouse on Feb. 10, 1966.

King was assassinated in Memphis, Tenn., on April 4, 1968 at the age of 39. Approximately 75,000 people attended his funeral on April 9th 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 Rev. Bernice King, 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 Rev. James Sims at (309) 828-4602 or Carl Teichman, director of government and community relations at IWU, at (309) 556-3429.

Persons with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids, services or special arrangements for the festival may contact the University at (309) 556-3429.

Contact: Sherry Wallace. (309) 556-3181