

Arlington Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday Observance Committee Presents

35TH MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. OBSERVANCE CEREMONY



**20
23**



HISTORY OF MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. BIRTHDAY OBSERVANCE COMMITTEE

1989-2022

With the Arlington Interfaith Association as the driving spirit, representatives from four local groups spearheaded Arlington's first town-wide observance of the Martin Luther King, Jr. birthday holiday in 1989. This event has been repeated each January.

The original organizing committee included three members of the Arlington Interfaith Association as well as Nan Henderson, president of the African American Society of Arlington; Pearl Morrison, president of the Arlington Civil Rights Committee; and Howard Cohen, chairperson of the Arlington Fair Housing Advisory Committee.

A compelling reason for the observance, according to the Rev. Charles Grady, was the almost daily reading "of ugly incidents of racial intolerance and violence, and ... a tendency to strip away hard-won civil rights from minority groups." An annual event honoring Dr. King's memory was one way of responding. The first program featured citations for outstanding work in fostering racial understanding on the local level.

Each year the proceeds are distributed to public organizations and nonprofits that promote the goals of equality, justice and nonviolence for which Dr. King gave his life.

Donations are tax deductible as allowed by law.

Please make checks payable to: Martin Luther King Birthday Observance Committee, PO Box 320, Arlington, MA 02476.

Or go online at <https://gofund.me/f57d4e40>



PROGRAM

Robbins Memorial Town Hall Auditorium

Arlington, MA

January 16, 2023

6:30 PM

WELCOME

Crystal Haynes Copithorne

Chair, MLK Jr. Birthday Observance Committee

INVOCATION

Rabbi Avi Bukiet, Center for Jewish Life Arlington-Belmont

FREE WILL OFFERING

Pearl P. Morrison, MLK Committee

OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT

Lee Phenner, Writer & Community Volunteer

MUSICAL PERFORMANCE

"The Old Boatman" by Florence Price

Ottoson Chamber Orchestra and Arlington High School Honors Orchestra

KEYNOTE SPEAKER INTRODUCTION

Jillian Harvey, Arlington DEI Division Director,

President Mystic Valley Branch of the NAACP

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Tanisha Sullivan, President NAACP Boston

ANTHEM OF FREEDOM

Ottoson Chamber Orchestra and Arlington High School Honors Orchestra & Audience

BENEDICTION

Rev. Cynthia Good, Calvary Church



KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Tanisha Sullivan,
President, NAACP Boston



Tanisha's family has deep roots in Massachusetts. Her father was born and raised in Boston and spent his career working in the Boston Public Schools, retiring in 2014 as the school leader at the John D. O'Bryant School of Mathematics and Science. Tanisha's mother was born in Boston and moved to Mansfield at a young age. She spent several years working in media before opening her own small businesses – a home daycare system- and helping connect and amplify Black-owned businesses across New England as publisher of the Black Pages of New England in print and online.

Tanisha was born in Boston and raised in Brockton. After attending Thayer Academy in Braintree, she graduated from the University of Virginia with a degree in Government. She then attended Boston College where she obtained both her J.D. and M.B.A. Tanisha has practiced law in large firms and life sciences companies in Greater Boston and New York City. From 2013 – 2015 Tanisha served as Chief Equity Officer in the Boston Public Schools.

Following her parents' example, Tanisha's life's work has been focused on service, equity, and impact. In 2017, Tanisha was elected to serve as President of the NAACP Boston in a volunteer capacity. There she led the organization in its fight for racial, economic, and social justice with a data driven and solutions-oriented framework. As a civil rights organization, voting rights is a priority for the NAACP, and Tanisha has led efforts to expand access to the ballot box and make our communities more representative.

OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT

Lee Phenner, Writer/Actor & Community Promoter



A long-time Arlington resident, Lee Phenner served on the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday Observance Committee from 2013 until 2020. She is a creative marketing executive and writer who seeks to expand awareness of white supremacy and systemic racism and to promote racial equity and social justice through her work, through community engagement, and through creative projects.

She is director of communications at one of the country's largest anti-poverty agencies, Action for Boston Community Development, where she also serves as a member of the racial equity working group. She is also a playwright and lyricist whose works include the musical, "A Pint of Understanding," and the concept and text of Circle of the First, a commissioned choral work that pays tribute to the wisdom and lifeways of the First Peoples of North and South America.

Lee holds a B.A. from Western New England College and an M.F.A. from Emerson College. An Oregon Shakespeare Festival new works writer, she is the recipient of several marketing and creative awards. She lives in Newburyport, Massachusetts with her wife Mary Dean Taylor.



HISTORY OF OBSERVANCES

Year	Speaker	Musical Presentation	Recognized
2022	Dr. Lynn Perry Wooten, President of Simmons University	Paul White, Mildred Walker, Dr. Debora Jackson Steven Ratiner, Arlington Poet Laureate	
2021	Crystal Haynes & Kirsten Greenidge	Paul White, The Brotherhood Chorus Concord Baptist Church Choir, Milton, MA	
2020	Michael Curry, Esq.	Paul White, The Brotherhood Chorus Concord Baptist Church Choir, Milton, MA	Judi Paradis
2019	Oneeka Williams, MD, MPH Founder & CEO Dr. Dee Dee Dynamo, LLC	Lori Dow Paul White & The MLK Community Chorale	Barbara Boltz
2018	Rev. Dr. Debora Jackson	Paul White & the MLK Community Chorale	Arlington School Committee
2017	Tina Martin	Dr. Leslee Christopher	Rev. Christine Elliott, Pastor, Calvary Church



HISTORY OF OBSERVANCES

Year	Speaker	Musical Presentation	Recognized
2016	Tito Jackson	Dr. Leslee Christopher Myrtle Baptist Church Inspirational Choir	METCO: Dr. Jean McGuire, Stephen Pereira, Margaret Credle Thomas; Alumni James Fortes, Natalie Jeanette Gill- Mensah, James Jackson, Cindy Lowe, Lakota Samuels, Trevor Curtis Talley
2015	Afaa Weaver	Paul White	Alberto Guzman & April Ranck Guzman
2014	Peniel Joseph, PhD	AHS Jazz Band & Madrigal Singers	Kerry Dunne
2013	Dr. Gloria White- Hammond	Paul White	Award recipients of the last 25 years
2012	Haji Shearer	Pasquale Tassone	Elaine Shea Mary Deyst Claudette Lahaie
2011	Emerson Stamps	St. Paul's AME Inspirational Teen Choir	Oakes Plimpton Cameron Perron



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Year	Speaker	Musical Presentation	Recognized
2010	Rep. Marie St. Fleur	Love Divine	Maryellen Loud
2009	Dr. Hassad H. McClellan	Sudanese Women Performers	John "Jack" Bowler Elizabeth Oppedisano
2008	Rev. Imani-Sheila Newsom- Camara, Katigi Kwabena Camara & daughter Mariama	Teen Challenge Men's Choir	Police Chief Fred Ryan Sally Rogers
2007	Sheriff Andrea J. Cabral	Silver Leaf Gospel Singers	Arlington Food Pantry
2006	Gov. Deval Patrick	Lincoln-Sudbury Gospel Choir, AHS Madrigal Singers	
2005	Rep. Byron Rushing	Twelfth Baptist Handbell Choir	Marie Raduazzo
2004	Renee M. Landers	AHS Orchestra & Pasquale Tassone	Les Masterson
2003	Sandra B. Henriquez	St.John the Baptist Choir, Woburn	Miriam Stein



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Year	Speaker	Musical Presentation	Recognized
2002	Dr. Jean McGuire	Shiloh Baptist Church Choir, Medford	Stephen Pereira
2001	Jack Cooper	MLK Children's Chorus, Frank Toppa, Director, Yvette Mitchell, Singer	Sr. Winifred Behan Parishoners, St. Paul's Lutheran Church
2000	Hon. Marjory A. German	Twelfth Baptist Church Youth Choir, Roxbury	Kate Cremens- Basbas Judi Bohn
1999	Rev. Eddie O'Neal	Myron Parker & Kenneth Brass	Natalie Gill
1998	Dr. Nanette Graham	Tufts University Gospel Choir	William E. Shea James A. Webster
1997	Dr. Donald Brown	Deborah Brown	Howard Winkler Lucille Burt Debra Rose Brillati
1996	Rev. Dr. Cheryl Townsend Gilkes	AJ Thomas	
1995	Patricia Smith	"Blessed"	Frank Bowes



HISTORY OF OBSERVANCES

Year	Speaker	Musical Presentation	Recognized
1994	Augusto Grace	Mass Ave Baptist Choir	Carlos Dominguez Jane Howard Robert Preer Jr. Susan HcHugh
1993	Nia Al-Ghuiyy	Freda Battle	Paul Jackson
1992	Mel King	Wesley Thomas, Just Us Gospel Ensemble	Louise Ivers A. Nick Minton
1991	Hon. Herman Smith	Jacqueline Richardson & Donald Patterson	Pearl Morrison Costella Laymon
1990	Hon. Marie Jackson	Mary Arapoff	Sheldon Obelsky
1989	Franklin Jennifer	Noteworthy Singers	Wilson Henderson Walter Devine