

“Quotes by Martin Luther King Jr.”

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By History.com Editors

NEW YORK CITY—After years of campaigning by activists (including members of Congress and Coretta Scott King), President Ronald Reagan signed a bill in 1983 creating a U.S. federal holiday in honor of Martin Luther King Jr.

Observed on the third Monday of January, Martin Luther King Day was first celebrated in 1986.

Helpful books

While his “I Have a Dream” speech is the most well-known piece of his writing, Martin Luther King Jr. was the author of multiple books. Following are some of the titled.

- *Stride Toward Freedom: The Montgomery Story*
- *Why We Can’t Wait*
- *Strength to Love*
- *Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community?*
- The posthumously published *Trumpet of Conscience* with a foreword by Coretta Scott King.

Famous quotes

Here are some of the most famous Martin Luther King Jr. quotes.

- “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.”
- “Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.”
- “The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.”
- “Freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed.”

- "The time is always right to do what is right."
- "True peace is not merely the absence of tension; it is the presence of justice."
- "Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter."
- "Free at last, Free at last, Thank God Almighty we are free at last."
- "Faith is taking the first step even when you don't see the whole staircase."
- "In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends."
- "I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word in reality. This is why right, temporarily defeated, is stronger than evil triumphant."
- "I have decided to stick with love. Hate is too great a burden to bear."
- "Be a bush if you can't be a tree. If you can't be a highway, just be a trail. If you can't be a sun, be a star. For it isn't by size that you win or fail. Be the best of whatever you are."
- "Life's most persistent and urgent question is, 'What are you doing for others?' "