



ArchivesSpace

# **Martin Luther King Holiday Commission Collection**

## **An inventory of Martin Luther King Holiday Commission Collection at DC Public Library**

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This finding aid was produced using ArchivesSpace on June 24, 2021.

English

Describing Archives: A Content Standard

People's Archive, MLK Library

901 G Street NW

Washington, DC

[peoples.archive@dc.gov](mailto:peoples.archive@dc.gov)

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## Summary Information

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<b>Repository:</b>	People's Archive, MLK Library
<b>Creator:</b>	Tyson, Brady B., 1918-2003
<b>Title:</b>	Martin Luther King Holiday Commission Collection
<b>ID:</b>	017
<b>Date [inclusive]:</b>	1968-1990
<b>Physical Description:</b>	4 Linear feet
<b>Physical Description:</b>	8 Boxes
<b>Language of the Material:</b>	English
<b>Language of the Material:</b>	English

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## Biographical / Historical

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The campaign for a national holiday honoring the life and work of Martin Luther King, Jr. began shortly after his assassination in 1968. However, it would be nearly twenty years before a bill to establish the holiday was passed by Congress. The advocacy of the Congressional Black Caucus, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, the Martin Luther King Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change, and singer-songwriter Stevie Wonder were instrumental during the campaign. Congress created the Martin Luther King, Jr. Federal Holiday Commission on November 2, 1984 to oversee the planning and publicity for the observance of Dr. King's birthday. Coretta Scott King was the Chair of the Commission throughout its duration. The Commission was given funding for a five-year term, with the possibility of renewal. With an official proclamation from President Ronald Reagan, the first Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday was observed on January 18, 1986. The commission was abolished on September 30, 1996.

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## Scope and Contents

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This collection consists of memoranda, meeting minutes, reports, press releases, statements, newsletters, clippings, conference packets, and correspondence which document efforts to establish a Martin Luther King, Jr. national holiday. The collection also includes the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) national magazine; SCLC convention materials; items from the Martin Luther King Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change in Atlanta, Georgia; flyers; publications; and other historical items.

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## Arrangement

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Series 1: Commission Files, 1972-1990 The series contains materials about the Commission's work, including meeting minutes, annual reports, routine correspondence, report on the first holiday, memoranda, legislation, and conference materials. It also contains items from organizations that supported the King holiday such as the Martin Luther King Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change, the National Black Caucus of State Legislatures, and the National Black Leadership Roundtable. Series 2: Public Speeches, Statements and Remarks, 1968-88 This series includes the Southern Christian Leadership Conference's 1968 statement of purpose for the Poor People's Campaign, statements regarding the 1983 March on Washington for Jobs, Peace and Freedom, a printed lecture; and speeches in honor of the first Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday. Series 3: Publicity, 1963, 1986-1990 This series contains clippings, flyers, brochures, event programs, promotional materials, newsletters, and news releases to promote the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday, the twenty-fifth anniversary of the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, the King film project, and items dating from marches and other events in the 1960s. Series 4: Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), 1969-1988 This series contains meeting minutes, conference packets, brochures, newsletters, and reports of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) which was closely involved with efforts to establish the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday. The materials are primarily from the 1980s but also include a few historical documents from the early 1960s. The series also contains the SCLC magazine "SCLC" from 1986-1990. Series 5: Publications, 1967-1969; 1980-1990 This series contains publications regarding civil rights and African Americans. It also contains a D.C. government manual for boards and commissions.

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## Administrative Information

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### Publication Statement

People's Archive, MLK Library

901 G Street NW  
Washington, DC  
[peoples.archive@dc.gov](mailto:peoples.archive@dc.gov)

### Revision Description

Finding aid revised to be more evergreen. 2020-08-27

### Custodial History

Brady B. Tyson (1918-2003), professor of international relations at American University, donated papers related to his participation in the D.C. and Federal Holiday Commissions. Dr. Tyson was also a member of the board of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

### Processing Information

Standard archival processing procedures were applied to the collection when it was processed.

### Conditions Governing Use

No known restrictions.

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## Controlled Access Headings

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- Holidays
- Civil rights movement
- Organizational Records
- Ephemera
- Correspondence

## Collection Inventory

### Series 1: Commission Files, 1972-1990

#### Scope and Contents

The series contains materials about the Commission's work, including Commission meeting minutes, annual reports, routine correspondence, report on the first holiday, memoranda, legislation, and conference materials. It also contains items from organizations that supported the King holiday such as the Martin Luther King Center for Nonviolent Change, National Black Caucus, and National Black Leadership Roundtable.

Title/Description	Instances	
Annual reports, 1988-1990	Box 1	Folder 1
Conference materials, 1979-1986	Box 1	Folder 2
Correspondence, 1984-1986	Box 1	Folder 3
Fact Sheet, 1986	Box 1	Folder 4
Meeting Minutes (Atlanta), January 1986	Box 1	Folder 5
Conference Materials, 1987-1990	Box 1	folder 6
Meeting minutes, 1987-1989	Box 2	Folder 1
Meeting minutes, 1987-1989	Box 2	Folder 2
Memoranda, 1985-1986	Box 2	Folder 3
MLK Center, 1978-1990	Box 2	Folder 4
MLK National Holiday legislation, 1983	Box 3	Folder 1
MLK National Holiday legislation, 1983	Box 3	Folder 2
Report II on the First King Holiday, 1986	Box 3	Folder 3
Report II on the First King Holiday, 1986	Box 3	Folder 4
State Liaisons, 1988	Box 3	Folder 5
Work Program, 1988	Box 3	Folder 6

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### Series 2: Public Speeches, Statements and Remarks, 1968-88

## Scope and Contents

This series includes SCLC 1968 statement of purpose for the Poor People's Campaign, statements regarding the 1983 March for Jobs, Peace and Freedom, a printed lecture, and speeches in honor of the first King holiday, among others.

Title/Description	Instances	
Statements, 1968-1988	Box 4	Folder 1

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## Series 3: Publicity, 1963, 1986-1990

### Scope and Contents

This series contains clippings, flyers, brochures, event programs, promotional materials, newsletters, and news releases to promote the King holiday as well as the 50th anniversary of the March on Washington, the King film project, and items dating from marches and other events in the 1960s.

Title/Description	Instances	
Brochures and programs, 1986-1987	Box 4	Folder 2
Brochures and programs, 1986-1987	Box 4	Folder 3
Clippings, 1966-1968, 1986-1990	Box 5	Folder 1
Clippings, 1966-1968, 1986-1990	Box 5	Folder 2
Clippings, 1966-1968, 1986-1990	Box 5	Folder 3
Clippings, 1966-1968, 1986-1990	Box 5	Folder 4
Clippings, 1966-1968, 1986-1990	Box 5	Folder 5
Flyers, 1985-1990	Box 5	Folder 6
Hand Bell promotion, 1987	Box 5	Folder 7
King film project, Undated	Box 5	Folder 8
Newsletters, 1963-1990	Box 5	Folder 9
News releases, 1987	Box 5	Folder 10

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## Series 4: Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), 1969-1988

### Scope and Contents

This series contains meeting minutes, conference packets, brochures, newsletters, and reports of the SCLC which was closely involved with efforts to establish a King Holiday. The materials are primarily from the 1980s but also

include a few historical documents from SCLC, which Dr. King established in the early 1960s. The series also contains the SCLC magazine, SCLC, from 1986-1990.

Title/Description	Instances	
Annual report, 1983	Box 6	Folder 1
Brochures and programs, 1986-1988	Box 6	Folder 2
Constitution (proposed), 1988	Box 6	Folder 3
Conferences, 1981-1990	Box 6	Folder 4
Convention, 1972, 1985, 1987	Box 6	Folder 5
Financial, Undated	Box 6	Folder 6
SCLC Convention, 1987-1988	Box 6	folder 7
SCLC Convention 1989-1990, 1989-1990	Box 6	folder 8
Meeting minutes, 1969, 1984-1990	Box 6	Folder 9
SCLC magazine, 1986-1988	Box 7	Folder 1
SCLC magazine, 1980-1990	Box 8	Folder 1

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## Series 5: Publications, 1967-1969; 1980-1990

### Scope and Contents

This series contains a few historical and current publications regarding civil rights and African Americans. It also contains a D.C. government manual for boards and commissions.

Title/Description	Instances	
D.C. Boards and Commissions Manual, 1986, 1988	Box 8	Folder 2
Historical publications, 1966-1969	Box 8	Folder 3
Miscellaneous publications, 1980-1987	Box 8	Folder 4

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