



City of New Bedford
Jonathan F. Mitchell, Mayor

City of New Bedford
Office of the Mayor
Contact: Elizabeth Treadup Pio
(508) 979-1410
etreadup@newbedford-ma.gov

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P R E S S R E L E A S E

New Bedford's Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Remembrance Celebration *"A Dream Deferred"* Sunday, January 17, 2016

New Bedford, Massachusetts- Mayor Jon Mitchell is pleased to join with the Greater New Bedford Area Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Committee in welcoming the public to attend the "Annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Remembrance Celebration." The celebration will be held **on Sunday, January 17, 2016 from 4:00-5:30 P.M.** at the Pilgrim United Church of Christ at 635 Purchase Street in New Bedford.

"Each year at this time the New Bedford community comes together to celebrate Dr. King's message of peace and unity. It's a message that the world needs to heed now more than ever. We as a community are strongest when we transcend our differences and find common ground and that is what I hope we can come together and reflect upon this holiday," said New Bedford Mayor Jon Mitchell.

Dr. King was an integral part of the Civil Rights Movement which laid the foundation for the theory and practice of inclusion and diversity in American society and around the world. Though he was assassinated in 1968, Dr. King's dream lives on, touching the hearts and minds of people throughout the world.

The theme for New Bedford's 2016 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Remembrance Celebration is "A Dream Deferred," and was selected by the committee as a reminder of the importance of the millennial generation remaining involved in civic engagement and civil rights. Dr. King's teachings continue to be relevant in modern day American society.

The keynote speaker this year is Massachusetts State Representative of the 9th Suffolk District, Byron Rushing. Rep. Rushing has served in the Massachusetts Legislature since 1983. Byron was an original sponsor of the gay rights bill and the chief sponsor of the law to end discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in public schools. He was one of the leaders in the constitutional convention to maintain same sex marriage in Massachusetts. From 1972 to 1985, he was President of the Museum of Afro-American History. Under his direction, the

Museum of Afro-American History purchased and began the restoration of the African Meeting House, the oldest extant black church building in the United States. In 1979, Byron oversaw the lobbying effort in Congress to establish the Boston African American National Historical Site, a component of the National Park Service. During the 1960s he was active in the civil rights movement--working for CORE (Congress of Racial Equality) in Syracuse, NY--and as a community organizer for the Northern Student Movement in Boston. He directed a group of organizers, Roxbury Associates, who helped to found the Lower Roxbury Community Corporation, one of the first CDCs in the nation, and who began some of the earliest organizing in a black community against the war in Vietnam.

Other program highlights include musical selections by the Deliverance Gospel Choir, New Bedford native Kelci Johnson, and the Sgt. William H. Carney Academy Chorus, and the announcement of the 2016 Essay Contest Winners.

All are encouraged to attend the program. For more information contact Marci Pina-Christian or the Department of Community Services at (508) 979-1464.

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