

Birthday Observed At PSU

Portland State University will join the larger community in celebrating the accomplishments of Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. Tuesday, Jan. 16, with a two-hour presentation taking place from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. in Parkway Commons North in Smith Center (1825 SW Broadway).

The celebration, which is free and open to the public, will include performances by the PSU Faculty Staff Chorus, testimonials by Randy Nathan of UISHE (United Indian Students in Higher Education) and by Ruben Sierra, Director of Chicano/Latino studies at PSU, and a brief lecture by Rev. Isaiah Jones Jr., OSU campus minister.

"We're taking this time to join the nation in acknowledging the accomplishments of Rev. Martin Luther King," says Phil Harder, ecumenical minister at PSU's Campus Ministry. "We hope to educate people about the significance of Dr. King and his work. And we hope to remind people of his themes of unity, peace and justice for all."

Harder is particularly pleased at the participation of Isaiah Jones Jr., OSU campus minister.



King leads thousands of civil rights demonstrators on the last leg of their 1965 march in Alabama from Selma to Montgomery.

at a rally?

Reluctantly, he rearranged his schedule, and on March 18 he spoke at Mason Temple. Fifteen thousand people packed the huge old building to hear him speak.

King loved addressing large crowds, and that day he was at the top

of his oratorical form. Elated by the cheers, impressed by the sense of commitment in Memphis, he impulsively agreed to head a demonstration for the strikers. "I will lead you on a march through the center of

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ASSASSINATION

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At 10:30 a.m., they landed in Memphis. It was King's third trip to the city in less than three weeks, but it was not a place he particularly wanted to be. He had come to support the city's striking sanitation workers, but every moment in Memphis was one less he had for his principal order of business that spring of 1968: the Poor People's Campaign.

For months, King and the SCLC had been planning a massive demonstration to dramatize the plight of poverty-stricken Americans. It was an ambitious undertaking.

King envisioned a great march in Washington, D.C., and the construction in the capital of a "poor people's city" of shacks and shanties that would remain standing until Congress approved sweeping antipoverty

legislation. But all sorts of problems threatened to derail the campaign, and to keep it on track King wanted to give it all his time and effort.

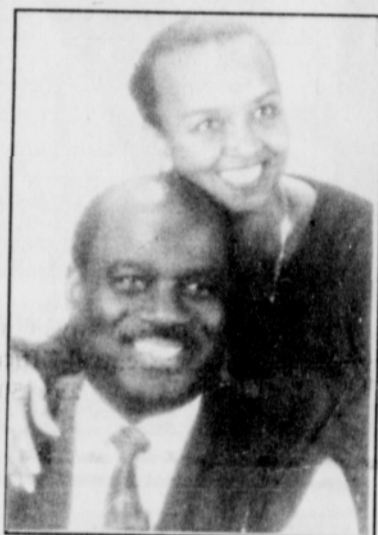
Still, the 39-year-old minister could not say no to his friends in Memphis. Overwhelmingly black, the garbage collectors of Memphis were badly paid, overworked, and had no job security, no insurance, no pensions.

When it rained, the black workers were sent home without pay, whereas their white supervisors were permitted to wait out the storm and draw their wages.

In February 1968, the garbage collectors went on strike, demanding higher pay and better working conditions and benefits. The local government refused them point-blank, and as the strike dragged on it became a paramount issue for the black community. In March, some black ministers appealed to King. Would he speak

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"Morals cannot be legislated, but behavior can be regulated. The law cannot make an employer love me, but it can keep him from refusing to hire me because of the color of my skin."

--Martin Luther King Jr.

The March on Washington, August 28, 1963. (Library of Congress)

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"Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."

--Martin Luther King Jr.