

BLACK HISTORY MONTH and the American Experience

Mrs. King's life committed to justice, peace

Entered world stage in 1955

Coretta Scott King was one of the most influential women leaders in our world today. Prepared by her family, education, and personality for a life committed to social justice and peace, she entered the world stage in 1955 as wife of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and as a leading participant in the American Civil Rights Movement.

Her remarkable partnership with Dr. King resulted not only in four talented children, but in a life devoted to the highest values of human dignity in service to social change.

Mrs. King has traveled throughout our nation and world speaking out on behalf of racial and economic justice, women's and children's rights, gay and lesbian dignity, religious freedom, the needs of the poor and homeless, full-employment, health care, educational opportunities, nuclear disarmament and ecological sanity.

In her distinguished and productive career, she has lent her support to democracy movements world-wide and served as a consultant to many world leaders, including Corazon Aquino, Kenneth Kaunda, and Nelson Mandela.

Born and raised in Marion, Ala. Coretta Scott graduated valedictorian from Lincoln High School. She received a B.A. in music and education from Antioch College in Yellow Springs, Ohio, and then went on to study concert singing at Boston's New England Conservatory of Music, where she



Coretta Scott King was one of the most influential women leaders in the world when she died Jan. 30 at the age of 78.

earned a degree in voice and violin.

While in Boston she met Martin Luther King Jr. who was then studying for his doctorate in systematic theology at Boston University. They were married on June 18, 1953, and in September 1954 took up residence in Montgomery, Ala., with Coretta Scott King assuming the many functions of pastor's wife at Dexter Avenue Baptist Church.

During Dr. King's career, Mrs. King devoted most of her time to raising their four children: Yolanda Denise (1955), Martin Luther, III (1957), Dexter Scott (1961), and Bernice Albertine (1963). From the earliest days, however, she balanced mothering and movement work, speaking before church, civic, col-



Family grace with Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., Coretta, Martin III and Yolanda.



Coretta Scott King at a recital with pianist Russell Goode. Mrs. King was trained as a classical singer at Boston's Northwest Conservatory of Music.

lege, fraternal and peace groups.

She conceived and performed a series of favorably-reviewed Freedom Concerts which combined prose and poetry narration with musical selections and functioned as fundraisers for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, the direct action organization of which Dr. King served as first president.

In 1957, she and Dr. King journeyed to Ghana to mark that country's independence. In 1958, they spent a belated honeymoon in Mexico, where they observed first-hand the immense gulf between extreme wealth and extreme poverty. In 1959, Dr. and Mrs. King spent nearly a month in India on a pilgrimage to disciples and sites associated

with Mahatma Gandhi.

In 1964, she accompanied him to Oslo, Norway, where he received the Nobel Peace Prize. Even prior to her husband's public stand against the Vietnam War in 1967, Mrs. King functioned as liaison to peace and justice organizations, and as mediator to public officials on behalf of the unheard.

Since her husband's assassination in 1968, Mrs. King has devoted much of her energy and attention to developing programs and building the Atlanta-based Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change as a living memorial to her husband's life and dream. Situated in the Freedom Hall complex encircling Dr. King's

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