

# Sharing Martin Luther King's Aspirations

## Robert Kennedy played major role

In the 1960's, there were many civil rights leaders who believed in equality for all people, of all colors, of all races.

The most famous of these is Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. But there was another leader that we do not hear as much about. His name is Robert "Bobby" Kennedy. He played a major role in the fight for civil rights and contributed his life to that fight.

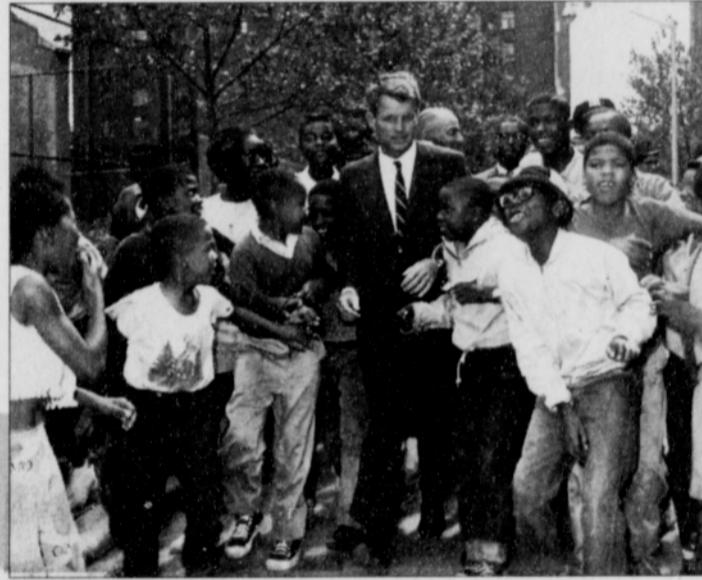
Robert Kennedy, remained committed to civil rights enforcement to such a degree that he commented, in 1962, that it seemed to envelop almost every area of his public and private life—from prosecuting corrupt southern electoral officials to answering late night calls from Coretta Scott King concerning the imprisonment of her husband for demonstrations in Alabama.

During his tenure as Attorney General, he undertook the most energetic and persistent desegregation of the administration that Capitol Hill had ever experienced. He demanded that every area of government begin recruiting realistic levels of black and other ethnic workers going so far as to criticize Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson for his failure to desegregate his own office staff.

Although it has become commonplace to assert the phrase "The Kennedy Admin-



*On April 4, 1968, Martin Luther King was assassinated in Memphis, Tenn. In Indianapolis, Robert Kennedy made the announcement of King's death in an extemporaneous speech to a group made up mostly of African Americans at a scheduled campaign rally on the steps of the Justice Center.*



*Robert Kennedy in 1968 during his War on Poverty Campaign.*

istration" or even "President Kennedy" when discussing the legislative and executive support of the civil rights movement, between 1960 and 1963, a great many of the initiatives that occurred during President Kennedy's tenure were as a result of the passion and determination of an emboldened Robert Kennedy, who through his rapid education in the realities of Southern racism, underwent a thorough conversion of purpose as Attorney General.

Asked in an interview in May 1962, "What do you see as the big problem ahead for you, is it Crime or Internal Security?" Robert Kennedy replied, "Civil Rights."

The President came to share his brother's sense of urgency on the matters at hand to such an extent that it was at the Attorney General's insistence that he made his famous address to the nation.

During the attack and burning, by a vast white mob, of the First Baptist Church in Montgomery, Ala., at which Martin Luther King Jr. was in attendance with protesters, the Attorney General telephoned King to ask his assurance that they would not leave the building until the U.S. Marshals and National Guard had secured the area.

King proceeded to berate Kennedy for "allowing the situation to continue". King later publicly thanked Robert Kennedy for his commanding of the force dispatched to break up an attack that might otherwise have ended King's life.

The relationship between continued ▼ on page B6



*The relationship between Martin Luther King Jr. and Robert Kennedy was to undergo great change over the years that they would know each other—from a position of mutual suspicion to one of shared aspirations.*

### HOSTS

#### "The Dream Alive Program"



A Tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and the leaders of the civil rights movement

Wednesday, January 21, 2009  
7:00 p.m., Chapel of Christ the Teacher  
Free and open to the public

The Dream Alive Program is an incredible live commentary by Joe Rogers, former Lieutenant Governor of Colorado, dedicated to the memory and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and leaders of the civil rights movement. This nationally acclaimed program features a re-enactment of Dr. King's historic "I Have A Dream" speech and the presentation helps to increase the understanding of the enormous contributions that were made by these leaders. It is also a reminder that their wisdom and vision are timeless.

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