

Named in Honor of Martin Luther King

Streets across America pay tribute

Throughout the country, nearly every city, both large and small, contain at least one street dedicated to the memory of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., one of the nation's most respected and powerful civil rights leaders.

Although the legacy of Dr. King, who was tragically killed at 39-years-old on April 4, 1968, is remembered through a variety of venues across America, according to Derek Alderman, an East Carolina University geographer, in 2010 there were at least 893 Martin Luther King Jr. streets in the United States, and the number keeps on growing.

Although most named after numbers, landscapes, trees or the commerce or industry historically present within the area, street names in honor of a surname of an important individual has taken on a popular trend.

While seemingly an easy and quick way to recognize an individual, the effect of the naming can be quite powerful, often affecting the way residents identify with the surrounding area.

In Portland, Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard, which was originally named Union Avenue, runs through the Northeast part of the city and is home to the city's notable statue of Dr. King, which sits in front of the Oregon Convention Center.

Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard is also where The Portland Observer offices are located within the city.

Below, we have compiled descriptions of several other streets, roads and boulevards, which have been named after MLK throughout the country:

Atlanta, Ga.

Martin Luther King Jr. Drive in Atlanta, Dr. King's hometown, is a landmark for tourists visiting the city. The street not only includes his alma mater Morehouse College, but it also runs by the Atlanta University Center.

Baltimore, Md.

In Baltimore, which has more than 63.5 percent African American residents, Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard begins at an exit on Interstate 395 and continues to Chase Street at Park Avenue. Originally named Harbor City Boulevard, the street was renamed in honor of King shortly after it opened.

Jackson, Miss.

Whitfield Mills Street, located in a predominantly African-American neighborhood, was changed to Martin Luther King Street in the 1980s, and intersects with Medgar Evers Boulevard at a Jackson landmark called Freedom Corner, which is

Northeast Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard in Portland (right) pays tribute to the civil rights leader.



host to one of the largest Martin Luther King Jr. Day parades within the country.

San Francisco

Throughout the Bay area, San Francisco's Martin Luther King Drive is one of two roads that spans virtually the entire length of the famous Golden Gate Park, along with John F. Kennedy Drive.

Savannah, Ga.

On Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard in Savannah, the street is home to the regionally known Ralph Mark Gilbert Civil Rights Museum.

New York City

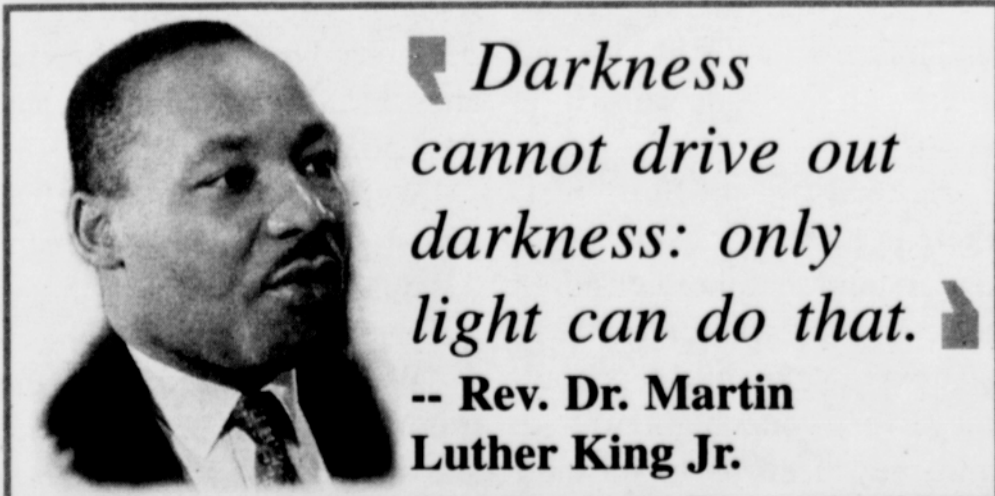
In New York City, the entire 125th Street, which runs through the historically famous Harlem, is designated Doctor Martin L. King Jr. Boulevard. The street also hosts the Apollo Theater, which is a famous center for African-American music.

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Darkness cannot drive out darkness: only light can do that.

-- Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.