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OPINION

Among Those Who Moved Us Forward

Coretta Scott King's legacy grows stronger

BY BARBARA REYNOLDS

Coretta Scott King died on Jan. 30, 2006. Yet her legacy is very much alive as a coalition builder, a strategist and a moral voice that confronted detractors but insisted upon non-violent approaches, such as dialogue, protests and economic boycotts with the end goal of peaceful reconciliation.

People are taking a fresh look at the esteemed wife of Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., seeing someone who successfully moved themselves and others forward through the heavy thicket of discrimination, such as the leading ladies in the wonderful new film, "Hidden Figures."

A second look at King's legacy should focus on but go beyond her well known decade's ordeal of successfully lobbying to make King's birthday a national holiday and building the Dr. Martin Luther King Center for Social Change in Atlanta. Tourists from around the globe visit this site, where her crypt and that of Dr. King are located near Ebenezer



Baptist Church where Dr. King preached and was funeralized.

Coretta King certainly came to mind when millions recently gathered in Washington, D.C. and in sister cities around the world to

mount an overwhelming rebuke to President Donald Trump's anti-human rights campaign and his denigration of women, minorities, immigrants and the physically challenged. Her

in 1968. A favorite slogan was: "Women, if the soul of the nation is to be saved, I believe that you must become its soul."

In 1977, President Jimmy Carter appointed Coretta Scott King a nonvoting delegate to the 32nd General Assembly of the United Nations, where she advocated for more international focus on the human rights of women. That same year in Houston, she served as Commissioner on the International Women's Year Conference where she created quite a stir over

marriage or civil union. I believe unequivocally that discrimination because of sexual orientation is wrong and unacceptable in a democracy that protects the human rights of all its citizens."

In the historic 1963 March on Washington -- which catapulted Dr. King to fame -- women were not allowed to march with the leaders or give a major address. But without a doubt King, would have played a supportive role in the women's march as did her daughter, Bernice King.

a ministry of presence.

King believed that it is citizen action that is crucial to the making of a president. She often said that Ronald Reagan did not warm to the idea of a Dr. King holiday until the movement created a groundswell for it with three million signatures, marches and years of lobbying Congress. He signed it on Nov. 20, 1983.

In recent weeks several black leaders have been publicly scourged for meeting with President Trump through his transition stage. King, however, would have been knocking on his door, as she did with all the other presidents in her heyday. And she would not have been there for photo-ops or "selfies." As a seasoned coalition building she would have prepared a well-crafted agenda, which called upon Trump to govern as president of all Americans.

In past years, King's influence was mammoth in the shaping of the political landscape. She successfully campaigned to elect scores of liberals to political office, worked with Carter in the selection of federal judges and threw her weight against those who stood in the way of voting rights.

Typical of her role is how she confronted and helped block Alabama U.S. Sen. Jeff Sessions who

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name was scrawled on homemade signs scattered throughout.

It is appropriate that we remember her appeal to women and her global human rights efforts. That was the capstone of King's 38 year mission as she shifted from civil rights to a more global inclusive human rights agenda after the assassination of her husband

her support for gay rights, an unpopular issue at the time.

In her memoir she tells how she opposed the various women's groups at the Conference who were advocating a constitutional ban on same-sex marriage. "I feel that gay and lesbian people have families and their families should have legal protection, whether by

Coretta Scott King was a spokeswoman for social justice causes, both large and small, writing a syndicated news column on issues from gun violence, to environmental racism, to apartheid in South Africa. She was rarely missing in action. "Sometimes you win, just by showing up," she said, often referring to her role as

Don't Play into Trump's Hand on Muslim Ban

I'm terrified, heartbroken and outraged

BY DINA EL-RIFAI

I'm a Muslim woman and a social justice advocate.

I'm terrified, heartbroken, and outraged by Donald Trump's "Muslim ban." As I watched



Iran, Syria, Sudan, and Somalia — are majority-Muslim. It's that religious minorities (i.e. anyone who isn't Muslim) from those countries will be prioritized for entry into the U.S.

Refugees, immigrants, and Muslims are human beings — regardless of their age, status, skills, or nation of origin. Many Americans realize this, which is why thousands have turned up at protests to speak out against the ban.

But while they mean well, non-Muslim opponents of the ban still have to be careful not to repeat dangerous stereotypes when pushing back against this extreme action.

For instance, you may have heard that Trump's order left off the Muslim-majority countries where President Trump has business deals — some of which, like Saudi Arabia and Egypt, happen to be where individuals who've carried out violent attacks hailed from.

All of that's true, of course, and there's value in pointing out Trump's unprecedented conflicts of interest.

But in reality, Muslims in these countries are the primary victims of extremist violence there. And suggesting that Trump should ban those countries too only encourages broadening the Muslim ban, not ending it.

Another common argument I've heard is that Muslim refugees and immigrants strengthen national security by acting as police informants and joining the military, and that this ban could break the bonds of trust that enable those partnerships.

It's true that Muslims are leading providers of tips to law enforcement agencies investigating "terrorism." But it's not like all Muslims are somehow connected to or aware of extremist plots. We're ordinary people, and we shouldn't have to be "useful" to law enforcement to deserve fundamental rights.

The narrative link between Islam and violence is used to justify military intervention abroad, which in turn is used to justify suspicion of Muslims at home. Muslims are seen as potential "terrorists," to the point that the word is popularly linked with Islam — despite repeated horrific acts committed by white men in the U.S. in the name of Christianity or white nationalism.

This stereotyping feeds into increased hate crimes and harassment, as well as profiling and government surveillance of Muslims.

Sadly, Donald Trump isn't the first president to make things worse for Muslims.

The Obama administration's wars were often justified through the demonization and dehumanization of Muslims. So were its expansion of the drone program, unwarranted surveillance, militarization of our borders and policing, and record-breaking numbers of deportations.

Trump's latest action is remi-

niscient of past immigration bans, and the implications of where we could go from here are terrifying. Scary precedents include the ban on immigration from Asia and the great national shame of Japanese internment.

Only by acknowledging the history of these systems and policies — systems that existed long before Trump took office — can we understand how to resist them today.

Trump's Muslim ban has already been widely applied, and we can't ignore the threat of it growing. I, and so many Muslims, recognize this undeniable possibility. We're not safe. We're targets here and abroad.

So I'd ask this of my friends and neighbors: Don't reinforce ideas that paint us as inherently violent and undermine our humanity. Reach out to us, support us, uplift our voices and humanity.

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