

A Week of Honoring MLK

During the college's annual MLK celebration presented by the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, the college community had opportunities to participate in three events designed to restore, educate, and empower.

Honoring MLK 2025

Step into a week of healing, reflection, and inspiration as we honor the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. at Clark College and well as the National Day of Racial Healing.

**Honoring Dr. King by
celebrating Black leadership**



Clark College's
Martin Luther King Jr
Celebration presents



artwork by: Manny Dempsey

guest speaker: Andrew Jolivet

artwork by: Hobbs Waters

Clark College will honor the teachings of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. on Wednesday, January 20, with an online event celebrating Black leadership and creativity. The event, which is free and open to the public, will be hosted live on Zoom from 12:30 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.

The event will feature guest speaker Dr. Andrew Jolivet, Professor and Chair-Elect of the Ethnic Studies Department at the University of California, San Diego. His topic will be "Black Lives, Black Leadership: From Matter to Thriving."

The event will also include the singing of the Black National Anthem by GodSisterz as well as artwork from local artists Manny Dempsey and Hobbs Waters.

For more information about this event, including link to the Zoom meeting, visit www.clark.edu/cc/mlk.

Individuals who need accommodation due to a disability in

order to fully participate in this event should contact Clark College's Disability Support Services Office at 360-992-2314 or 360-991-0901 (VP), or visit Penguin Union Building (PUB) room 013, as soon as possible.

About Dr. Andrew Jolivéte

Dr. Andrew Jolivéte (Atakapa-Ishak Nation of Louisiana [Tsikip/Opelousa/Heron Clan]) is Professor and Chair-Elect of the Ethnic Studies Department at the University of California, San Diego as well as the inaugural founding Director of Native American and Indigenous Studies at UCSD. A former professor and Department Chair of American Indian Studies at San Francisco State University, he is the author or editor of nine books in print or forthcoming including the Lammy Award nominated, *Indian Blood: HIV and Colonial Trauma in San Francisco's Two-Spirit Community*. His scholarship examines Native American, Indigenous, Creole, Black, Latinx, Queer, Mixed-Race, and Comparative Critical Ethnic Studies.

Celebrating MLK Day with untold history



A still from the documentary *Buffalo Soldiers of the Pacific Northwest*.

Clark College will honor the teachings of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. on Tuesday, January 21, by exploring a little-known aspect of the local African-American experience: the “Buffalo Soldiers,” all-black regiments who served in the U.S. military in the 19th century. The event will include both a screening of parts of a documentary film called *Buffalo Soldiers of the Pacific Northwest* and a collection of historic memorabilia related to Buffalo Soldiers. All events are free and open to the public.

The film screening will take place at noon, followed by a discussion with some of the individuals involved in creating *Buffalo Soldiers of the Pacific Northwest* as well as members of the non-profit group Buffalo Soldiers of Seattle. The history display will be on view from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. All events take place in Gaiser Student Center on the Clark College main campus. Clark College is located at 1933 Fort Vancouver

Way, Vancouver.

Driving directions and parking maps are available at www.clark.edu/maps.

Buffalo Soldiers of the Pacific Northwest examines the history of African-American regiments formed by the U.S. government in the 1860s to help secure its interests in the West. These often-forgotten soldiers served their country in many capacities—everything from constructing roads to fighting in battles. The 56-minute documentary film, which is currently in post-production, explores the history and legacy of this region's Buffalo Soldiers.

In honor of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s legacy of service to others, Clark College encourages your donation of hair and skin care products for African-American families served by YWCA Clark County.

For more information about this event, visit www.clark.edu/cc/mlk.

Individuals who need accommodation due to a disability in order to fully participate in this event should contact Clark College's Disability Support Services Office at 360-992-2314 or 360-991-0901 (VP), or visit Penguin Union Building (PUB) room 013, as soon as possible.

Honoring Dr. King



Clark College will honor the teachings of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. on Wednesday, January 17, with two events—a traveling museum exhibit and a guest speaker—focused on African-American history and art. The theme this year is “1968,” in reference to the 50th anniversary of the assassination of Dr. King, and the day’s activities will focus on how the events of 1968 shaped American history and culture. Both events are free and open to the public.

The Black History 101 Mobile Museum will be on exhibit in Gaiser Student Center on Clark’s main campus from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Founded by Khalid el-Hakim, this is an award-winning collection of over 7,000 original artifacts. The selection on display will focus on the major events and personalities of 1968, including artifacts related to the 1968 Olympics, Muhammad Ali, Arthur Ashe, the Black Panther Party, Shirley Chisholm, and numerous musical artists who were performing during that time. Supporting material from the trans-Atlantic slave trade and the Jim Crow era will provide additional historical context.

Additionally, there will be a multi-media presentation delivered by Professor Griff, one of the founding members of the hip-hop group Public Enemy, about how the events of the late 1960s helped shape that group’s art. Griff will speak from 1:00 to 2:00 p.m., also in Gaiser Student Center.

In honor of Dr. King’s legacy and his call for service, the

college is asking guests to bring a non-perishable item for the Clark College Penguin Pantry and the ShareHouse Backpack Program.

Clark College will be closed on Martin Luther King Jr. Day itself (Monday, January 15) in observance of the official holiday.

Rosa Clemente speaks at Clark

Clark College will honor the teachings of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. on Wednesday, January 18, with “Transformation: A New Era of Social Activism,” a keynote address delivered by Rosa Clemente. The event, which is free and open to the public, will be held in Gaiser Student Center on Clark’s main campus from noon to 1:30 p.m.

Clark College is located at 1933 Fort Vancouver Way, Vancouver. Driving directions and parking maps are available at www.clark.edu/maps. Individuals who need accommodation due to a disability in order to fully participate in this event should contact Clark College’s Disability Support Services Office at 360-992-2314 or 360-991-0901 (VP), or visit Penguin Union Building (PUB) room 013, as soon as possible.

For more information about this event, visit www.clark.edu/cc/mlk.

About Rosa Clemente



Rosa Clemente

Rosa Clemente is co-founder of the National Hip-Hop Political Convention and a leading scholar on Afro-Latinx identity. From Harvard to prisons, Clemente has spent her life dedicated to scholar activism. She is currently a doctoral student in the W.E.B. Dubois department of UMASS-Amherst. Throughout her scholarly career, Clemente has been a constant presence through the many political struggles facing Black and Latinx people in the 21st century. She has sat on various boards throughout her career including Black Lives Matter, the National Priorities Project, The Brecht Forum, and the National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty. Additionally, Clemente served as the Green Party's candidate for Vice President in the 2008 U.S. election.

The Poetry of Social Justice



“Poetry is about being able to speak the truth,” said Aaron Reader in his keynote address during Clark’s 2015 Martin Luther King observance. “And Dr. King not only spoke the truth, he acted on it.”

“Dr. King started the battle, but the war has not been won.”

That was one line from “Sleepwalking,” the poem spoken-word artist Aaron Reader chose to begin his presentation honoring the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., held January 21 in Gaiser Student Center. Reader had come to Clark as the keynote speaker for the college’s annual Martin Luther King Day observance.

“It’s because of Dr. King that I am able to speak to you today,” Reader told his audience. “It’s because of Dr. King that I was able to get a master’s degree. At one point, people like me didn’t even go to college.”

Reader grew up in Oakland, California. In his teens, he began using poetry as an outlet to express the ups and downs of

being a young African-American male in inner-city America. Today, in addition to his spoken-word performances and his work as a motivational speaker and workshop facilitator around issues of diversity and equity, he also serves as the director of multicultural services at Bellevue College.

In was in his capacity at the college that he was invited to participate in a seven-day bus tour of significant sites from the 1960s civil rights movement, and much of his presentation focused on that experience.

“I went to the south and I realized that I have been sheltered living here in the Pacific Northwest,” he said. “We went to a spot where we got off the bus, and the guide said, ‘We don’t let students go down that road there because that’s where the Ku Klux Klan are.’”



Aaron Reader with MLK Celebration Committee members, *left to right*, Felisciana Peralta, Rosalba Pitkin, Michelle Golder, Rosalyn Guerrero, and Dolly England.

Reader said that the experience not only gave him a deeper connection to the history of civil rights in this country, but also some uncomfortable insight into disparities that remain today. He recounted one moment when the 30 members of his tour

group—a combination of college students, employees, and alumni—arrived at the Lorraine Motel, where Dr. King was shot and killed in 1968 on the second-floor balcony.

“I’m looking up at this thing and I’m starting to lose it,” recalled Reader. “I’m getting choked up. Some of the students were starting to cry. And then one of the [white] faculty said, ‘How many of you are up for Starbucks?’”

Reader said that afterward, he had private conversations with some of his colleagues to explain how that moment had been hurtful to the students of color on the tour. He told the audience to be ready to have such conversations themselves. “As social-justice activists, as warriors, you’re going to have to be comfortable with being uncomfortable,” he said.

Afterward, during a question-and-answer period following Reader’s presentation, a white faculty member asked how she and her white colleagues at Clark could help support diverse students at the college.

“Number One is to listen,” Reader advised. “Oftentimes, I think that when we think we get it, we shut our ears off. Don’t be so quick to say, ‘I understand.’ Before you say you understand, take a moment to really listen.”

Photos: Clark College/Jenny Shadley

Video: Nick Bremer-Korb

A Crucial Conversation



Lee Mun Wah gives his keynote speech during “The Unfinished Conversation.”

A young, African-American student who feels like he doesn't fit in at college. A professor who spent years feeling isolated because of her race. A quiet young man constantly bullied for being different. A mother struggling to learn how to teach her sons how to deal with racism she never encountered in her home country. An Indian man who regularly faces ignorance about his culture. These were just some of the stories that became part of “The Unfinished Conversation,” a daylong series of events led by diversity educator Lee Mun Wah during Clark College's celebration of Martin Luther King Jr. Day, held on January 22.



Peer Mentor and Clark student Ezekiel Wells participating in "The Unfinished Conversation."

"The Unfinished Conversation" comprised an employee diversity training in the morning; a lunchtime keynote speech followed by an open dialog with students; and an evening screening of *If These Halls Could Talk*, Lee's documentary film about college students tackling race and racism. True to the day's theme, Lee—a nationally recognized poet, documentary filmmaker, and diversity trainer—spent much of his time encouraging conversation between different members of the college community. The discussion was at times both revealing and emotional—more than once, participants broke into tears as they related personal experiences of prejudice and isolation.

Lee said this sense of alienation can keep students of color from achieving their educational goals. "When I was filming *If These Halls Could Talk*, three-quarters of the students of color in the group were thinking about dropping out," he said. "And I picked those students randomly!"

Lee urged his listeners to make a regular practice of seeking out and socializing with people different from themselves. "Walk into your lunch room and see who is eating in groups, who is eating alone," he said. "Dr. King was wrong when he said that the most segregated hour of the week is 11:00 on Sunday—it's lunchtime."

Ezekiel Wells, a Clark student who works as a Peer Mentor at the college, said he appreciated that Lee invited him to tell the more than 80 Clark College employees who gathered for the morning session about what it was like to attend Clark as a young African-American male. "He was fearless," Wells said. "He was willing to dig deep and talk about things people don't want to talk about."



Professor Debi Jenkins, *right*, assists Lee Mun Wah in some role playing during his keynote speech.

Psychology and Early Childhood Education professor Debi Jenkins agreed. "I found his activities helpful in encouraging critical thought and action regarding power, privilege, and inequity with a goal of building a sense of community," she said, noting that colleagues later told her they were moved by her emotional description of the loneliness she felt during the time when she was the only African-American female tenured faculty member at Clark.

For nineteen-year-old Jacob Lein, the day proved unexpectedly affecting. He happened to be walking through Gaiser Student Center when Lee began his keynote speech and stayed to listen. But when Lee asked him to tell his story to the group, he found himself describing the pain of being bullied in high school for being tall, skinny, and affected by Attention

Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder—and then amazed when the room burst into supportive applause. The surprises weren't over for Lein: When Lee broke the audience into pairs to more intimately discuss their experiences with being different, Lein found himself sharing stories with Clark College President Bob Knight.



Lee Mun Wah encourages a student during the open dialog that followed his keynote speech. He urged the group to really listen and ask questions.

“I had no idea he was the president,” said Lein, who is in his first quarter at Clark with the goal of becoming an American Sign Language interpreter. “It was a great experience.”

President Knight said he appreciated the chance to get to know Lein. “I thought the session was very good and made me reflect back on a time in my life where I was harassed and how I dealt with it,” he said. “It also allowed me to get to know a student that I had never met before and to learn more about him and the obstacles he has faced in life and at Clark College. It made me want to know the student better. We have exchanged phone numbers and plan to get together for lunch in the very near future.”

Because the conversation still isn't finished—but, as Lee Mun Wah clearly demonstrated, it helps to keep talking.

Interested in continuing the conversation? The Teaching and Learning Center is hosting two employee trainings by the Office of Diversity and Equity in February: “Cultural Competency” (February 6, 12 pm – 1 pm, GHL 213) and “Power, Privilege and Inequality at Clark College” (February 26, 10 am – 11 am, GHL 205). Additionally, Professor Debi Jenkins discusses “Support for a Diverse Workforce through Communities of Practice” during her Faculty Speaker Series presentation, which is open to the public (February 13, 4 pm – 5 pm, GHL 213). Or visit the *Clark 24/7* calendar and search for events tagged with the keyword “diversity.”

Photos: Clark College/Jenny Shadley

More photos of the event can be found on our Flickr page.

More than a Dream



Dr. Darryl Brice said he appreciated this photo of Dr. King because it looks as if Dr. King is pointing to the viewers and asking them what they are going to do to promote justice.

“If you look at that ‘I Have a Dream’ speech that everyone references ... look at the front part,” said Dr. Darryl Brice as he gave Clark College’s Martin Luther King Jr. Day keynote speech to an audience gathered in Gaiser Student Center on January 22. “Everyone talks about the dream, but there was a nightmare part where he talked about the reality of what was going on at the time.”

Brice, an Instructor of Sociology and Diversity and Globalism Studies at Highline Community College, went on to expand on his speech’s central thesis—that the more radical elements of Dr. King’s legacy have been “co-opted or omitted” in favor of a softer, less challenging image of the civil rights leader as a dreamer. As Brice put it, “You don’t get arrested over 30 times for having a dream.”

Brice detailed aspects of Dr. King’s politics that he said are

often omitted: his opposition to the Vietnam War, his anti-poverty activism, his criticism of income and wealth disparities between African-Americans and white Americans, and his harsh criticism of well-meaning white liberals who did not recognize their own internal racism. He also pointed out that in his day, Dr. King was considered so dangerous that the FBI put him on its COINTELPRO watch list.

Brice continued by saying that “Dr. King’s dream was never attained.” He presented charts showing that great disparities remain in the wealth and incomes of African-Americans and white Americans. He urged audience members to “have the same courage” Dr. King showed to fight against injustice. When asked what college students in particular could do, he answered, “Hold us accountable—that’s what college students have always done.”



Dr. Darryl Brice, *white shirt*, with members of Clark’s MLK Planning Committee and President Bob Knight, *third from left*.

The event, presented by Clark’s MLK Planning Committee and sponsored by the Office of Equity and Diversity and the Service-Learning and Volunteer Program, was part of the college’s official celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

A native of Baltimore, Maryland, Dr. Brice attended Frostburg State University, where he received his bachelor's degree in Political Science and Justice Studies. He received his master's and doctoral degrees in Sociology from Loyola University Chicago. He has taught at Highline since 2003, and in 2008 was recognized as its Faculty Member of the Year. In 2007 the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints honored him with the Teachers Assisting in Discovery award. In 2009 he was the recipient of the NISOD (National Institute for Staff and Development) Excellence Award. In addition, Dr. Brice has appeared in *Who's Who Among America's Teachers*.

Photos: Clark College/Jenny Shadley