

LTU open, holds tribute to Martin Luther King

BY CASEY HANS
STAFF WRITER

The vision of Martin Luther King, Jr. was brought to the campus of Lawrence Technological University Monday morning when about 100 students and faculty gathered Monday to hear the words of community leaders and pay tribute to the slain civil rights leader.

Detroit city councilman Keith Butler called on people to reach out and help themselves, noting that, "If one American is bound, all Americans are bound." He also called for a new civil rights focus on economic issues.

"He (King) believed that we, as a people, must stand together," said Butler, keynote speaker at the Southfield-based university's fourth annual King birthday celebration.

"He also believed that we as a people must have shared values of family . . . and help for ourselves," Butler said. "In this time of dwindling resources, we must look within our own community and tap our resources," continued Butler, who has served on the Detroit council since 1989. "We

must help ourselves. We must work together."

About 30 students joined a 9 a.m. freedom march along 10 Mile Road, honoring the man who has come to be known as the father of the civil rights movement. A 10 a.m. program followed and included an introspective from Butler and comments from university officials and several members of the Lawrence Tech chapter of the National Society of Black Engi-

neers which sponsored the event.

NSBE external vice president Michael Sanders said the group started its tribute in the college's management building atrium four years ago where students showed King's famous "I Have a Dream" speech. "That's how our tribute got started," he said. "And it grew from there."

Lawrence Tech remained open for classes on Monday — something that concerns Sanders.

"I don't think we give it (King's birthday) the type of reverence it deserves," he said. "I would like to see the school closed on Monday, with maybe a Friday program."

But although the school was open, no tests were scheduled or homework due that day, and program coordinator and LTU student Angela Hayes said she is pleased the university offers that support. She said students were

allowed to attend the King tribute without any penalty.

"This is the fourth one we've done — and now it's catching on," she said. "It's quite admirable that it is a national holiday. It's been very moving that at Lawrence Tech administration supports this day, even though the school's open."

During his comments, Lawrence Tech dean of engineering Joseph Olivieri likened Martin

Luther King, Jr. to other non-violent leaders including Ghandi and Jesus Christ. "They all preach the same doctrine: a doctrine of love," he said. "It means charity . . . and charity means caring, loving and wanting to help."

Other speakers Monday included Lawrence Tech provost Robert Ellis, dean of students Elaine Dowell and NSBE Lawrence Tech chapter president Kenneth Swain.

Suburban schools bypass contest

BY RALPH R. ECHTINAW
STAFF WRITER

A Martin Luther King Day essay/debate contest that had a goal of bringing urban and suburban children together drew just two entries from the suburban high schools and 47 from Detroit high schools.

Co-sponsored by the Wolverine Bar Association, the D. Augustus Straker Bar Association and the Association of Black Judges of Michigan, the contest asked students to submit essays of no more than 300 words on the topic "Can a minority person receive equal justice in America in 1993?"

The organizers solicited entries from eight Detroit high schools and eight Oakland County high schools, including Southfield, Lathrup, Southfield, Troy, Troy-Athens, Oak Park, Ferndale, Pontiac Central and Pontiac Northern.

Essays were submitted by students from five Detroit high schools and one Oakland County school, Troy-Athens.

Betty Goss, an assistant principal at Athens, said the request for essays arrived only four weeks before the Nov. 30, 1992 deadline for submissions, which was too late to get the word out properly to students.

"We were very concerned about that and we were very panicked," Goss said.

Nevertheless, nine students were rounded up and sounded out about the essays. "Only three were really interested," Goss said. "The rest didn't feel they had enough time to do a real good job."

The result was that Oakland County's only two essays in the contest were submitted by Erin Coleman and April Singleton. (Neither was a finalist, but Coleman earned honorable mention.)

Key Stanfield-Brown, president of the Straker Bar Association, said the schools were given six weeks notice. Hopefully, she added, they'll get a few more weeks next time.

Ken Silver, a spokesman for the Southfield school district, said that a lot of the students there participated in a citywide Southfield essay contest about King. The Southfield contest has been going on for 10 years, while the other one is only in its first year.

Silver also noted that the request for essays was just one of many the school district gets all the time. "I don't think a week goes by that someone doesn't come to us with a poster contest, essay contest or art contest," he said. "(Besides), we have a curriculum we're trying to teach which has got to be the first priority."

The essay contest winners came from Cass Technical, Mumford and Renaissance high schools. There was one entry from Henry Ford High School and no entries from Martin Luther King Jr. High School.

The contest organizers plan to continue the event next year, also picking a topic relevant to the legal profession.

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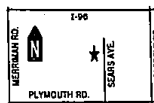
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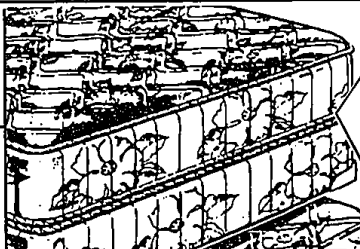
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