

No 'me' in King

Annual MLK celebration encourages humbleness

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On Monday, Jan. 17, dozens of people gathered in Cleary Family Auditorium to honor Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

The theme for the 2011 celebration was "Conquering Self-Centeredness," in honor of a sermon King delivered on Aug. 11, 1957 at Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Ala.

Founding President and CEO of HumanWorks Affiliates Inc., Nathaniel Williams, was the keynote speaker. HumanWorks provides social services to children and adults and offers management and staffing support to social service agencies.

"We cannot continue to live our lives by concentrating on how we have been hurt, abused and misused, which may have aided in becoming selfish and self-centered," Williams said.

"We must remember to lead our lives how we have been inspired; we must let inspiration be our motivator to make ourselves better and work toward our best self. We need fellowship, tenacity and wisdom to not be our own worst enemy; we must rather love ourselves and be a friend to our community and ourselves."

Williams highlighted what he believes are the "5 Rs" of absolute success: resilience, responsibility, renewal, respect and recognition. He believes that we must recognize that you cannot do well for others what you have not done for yourself.



Martin Luther King Jr. said, "An individual has not begun to live until he can rise above the narrow horizons of his particular individualistic concerns to the broader concerns of all humanity."

Williams believes resilience is a prerequisite for success.

"It is also the ability to anticipate and respond to that tap on the shoulder that asks you to get back in your place when you attempt to go beyond yourself. A resilient person recognizes that there will be challenges along the path but appreciates these setbacks with a commitment to proceeding differently with a better understanding of what is required to be truly successful," Williams said.

Williams recounted a story about his childhood when he was sad and everyone seemed too busy for him. A Sister of the church gave him a bike. He realized that the Sister was powerful and he made many friends that day because of the new bike; he also realized that he could either live his life in pity or rise up.

Martin Luther King Jr. mentioned a similar topic in his Montgomery, Ala. speech:

"And there is another way to rise above self-centeredness and that is by having the proper inner attitude toward your position or toward your status in life or whatever it is. You conquer self-centeredness by coming to the point of seeing that you are where you are today because somebody helped you get there.

"And so many people, you see, live in a self-centered, egocentric life because they have the attitude that they are responsible for everything and for their position in life."

Williams reminded the audience that we are only sitting comfortably because someone had to be in the auditorium setting up, and after we left, they would have to come back and put the chairs where they belong.

In his 1957 speech, King tells us that, "no matter where you stand, no matter how much popularity you have, no matter how much education you have, no matter how much money you have, you have it because somebody in the universe helped you to get it. And when you see that, you can't be arrogant."

After the keynote speech, Spiritus Christi Church Minister Myra Brown offered a message of hope.

"We've accomplished some aspects of Martin Luther King Jr.'s dream, but there are some aspects which we have yet to finish," Brown said.

She went on to mention that together we can do things we cannot do alone and rise up against racism and prejudices.

Dalton Hudson and Zakiya Moss were awarded the BlueCross BlueShield Undergraduate Diversity Scholarship at the event.

Hudson is a junior and is a member of Asian Student Union, Black Student Union, and Sustained Dialogue and is the vice president of Fisher Pride.

Moss is a member of Students With a Vision and the Student Nurse Association and is the co-vice president of Black Student Union.

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