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Considering Martin Luther King Jr.'s Legacy during a Pandemic

Ione Damasco

University of Dayton, idamasco1@udayton.edu

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Considering Martin Luther King Jr.'s Legacy during a Pandemic

By Ione Damasco

- “The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of convenience and comfort, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.”

— *Martin Luther King Jr.*

The University of Dayton community typically celebrates the life and legacy of civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. with large gatherings — marches, a community breakfast, film screenings and discussions, worship and prayer, and in-person service opportunities. But the pandemic has forced us to rethink how we can continue to educate ourselves and engage in activism around antiracist civil rights work when we cannot physically be present in solidarity with one another.

The pandemic has also magnified where racial disparities persist in our country. The CDC has stated that “inequities in the social determinants of health, such as poverty and healthcare access ... are interrelated and influence a wide range of health and quality-of-life outcomes and risks” for racial and ethnic minorities. People of color face an increased risk of getting sick and dying from COVID-19. The work that King started during the civil rights movement to undo systemic inequities is more critical than ever.

Fortunately, the University Libraries provide access to numerous print and online resources that you can check out to learn more about King’s work, as well as the work of many others who continue to resist injustice and oppression in our society. We encourage you to explore these resources and then find ways virtually to create opportunities for dialogue in your community that can

PREVIOUS POST

Library Fall Programming: Virtual and Vast

University Libraries faculty and staff offered seven asynchronous programs on a variety of topics, reaching over 5,200 students during the fall semester.

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NEXT POST

‘Vocation Can Change Throughout Life’

Student employees of University Libraries reflect on their experiences in connection to

lead to transformative action. You can start small — pick one of King’s writings or speeches; set up a Google Hangout or a Zoom session with some friends; and share your reflections with one another and brainstorm ideas for ways you can turn inspiration into action.

All are invited to learn about ways to engage in activism, and University Libraries will offer a free, asynchronous program to discover more about King’s life and legacy and reflect on connecting his message to today’s struggles for social justice.

their own individual calling and vocational development.

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PROGRAM OPPORTUNITY

- [Jan. 18 – 31: Lessons From Martin Luther King, Jr. for Today](#), an interactive, self-guided activity designed by Amanda Black, Zachary Lewis, Ryan O'Grady and Diane Osman, members of the University Libraries diversity and inclusion team. PATH-eligible for students.

RESEARCH GUIDE

- [Libraries Anti-racism Research Guide](#)

WORKS BY MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

- [“Letter from a Birmingham Jail”](#)
- [The Autobiography of Martin Luther King, Jr.](#)
- [Strength to Love](#)
- [Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community?](#)
- [“I Have Been to the Mountaintop”](#) (video clip of speech, UD login required)

WORKS BY OTHER AUTHORS:

- [Between the World and Me](#) by Ta-Nehisi Coates
- [How to Be an Antiracist](#) by Ibram X. Kendi
- [The Inner Work of Racial Justice: Healing Ourselves and Transforming Our Communities through](#)

and Transforming Our Communities through Mindfulness by Rhonda V. Magee

- *Me and White Supremacy: Combat Racism, Change the World, and Become A Good Ancestor* by Layla F. Saad
- *A More Beautiful and Terrible History: The Uses and Misuses of Civil Rights History* by Jeanne Theoharis

— Ione Damasco is a professor in the University Libraries, where she is the director of information acquisition and organization. She is the subject selector for the women's and gender studies program, the race and ethnic studies program, and library science. She has published and presented nationally on a variety of topics related to diversity, equity and inclusion, including "*From Being to Doing: Anti-racism as Action at Work*," a preconference keynote before the 2020 conference of the Academic Library Association of Ohio.

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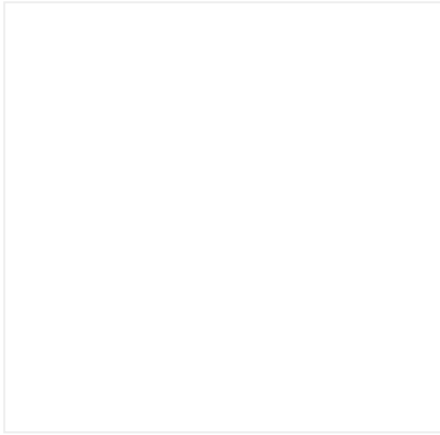
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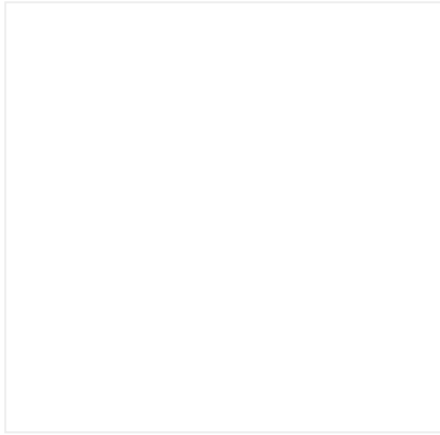
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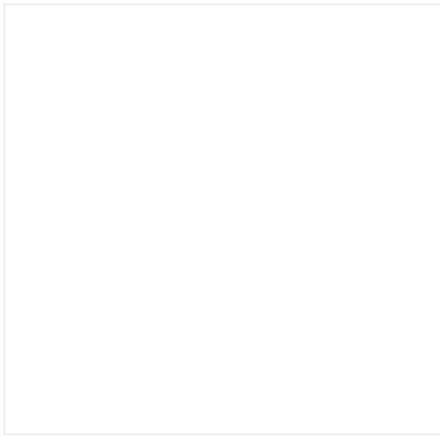
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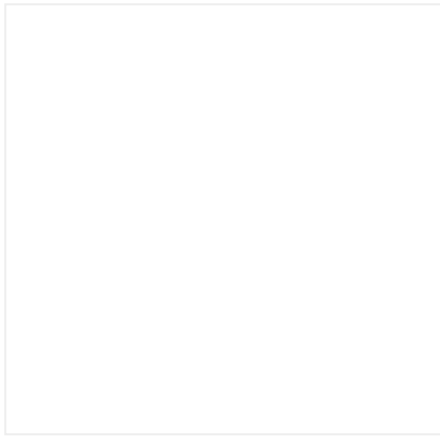
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45469
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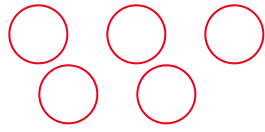
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