

I am elated to stand before you today in honor of my brother, Martin. Not my biological brother, but another Black man, a community leader, a scholar and undoubtedly one of the most renowned members of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., my fraternity brother, Brother Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. We share a bond in values with our fraternity's mission, which is- **"First of all, Servants of all – We shall transcend all"**. We share a history and bond. Our brotherhood, Alpha Phi Alpha, the first intercollegiate Greek-letter fraternity established for African-Americans, was founded at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York on December 4, 1906 by seven college men who recognized the need for a strong bond of Brotherhood among African descendants in this country.

This legacy and his spirit lives through me, so together we are shaping a better future for humanity.

I proclaim that the establishment of MLK Day and this MLK Assembly have created an opportunity for each of you to participate in Brother Martin's Dream and our shared mission.

It took 15 years to create the federal [Martin Luther King, Jr.](#), holiday. Congressman [John Conyers](#), Democrat from [Michigan](#), first introduced legislation for a commemorative holiday four days after King was [assassinated](#) in 1968. After the bill became stalled, petitions endorsing the holiday containing six million names were submitted to Congress.

Conyers and Rep. [Shirley Chisholm](#), Democrat of [New York](#), resubmitted King holiday legislation each subsequent legislative session. In 1973 Illinois became the first state to adopt MLK Day as a state holiday. Public pressure for the holiday mounted during the 1982 and 1983 civil rights marches in Washington.

Congress passed the holiday legislation in 1983, which was then signed into law by President [Ronald Reagan](#). A compromise moving the holiday from Jan. 15, King's birthday, which was considered too close to Christmas and New Year's, to the third Monday in January helped overcome opposition to the law.

A number of states resisted celebrating the holiday. Some opponents said King did not deserve his own holiday—contending that the entire civil rights movement rather than one individual, however instrumental, should be honored. Several southern states include celebrations for various Confederate generals on that day. [Arizona](#) voters approved the holiday in 1992 after a tourist boycott. In 1999, [New Hampshire](#) changed the name of Civil Rights Day to Martin Luther King, Jr., Day.

In 2020, Utah became the last state to recognize MLK Day by name, renaming its Human Rights Day state holiday.

In that same year, South Carolina became the last state to make MLK Day a paid holiday for all state employees. Until now, employees could choose between celebrating it or one of three Confederate-related holidays.

This is a brief timeline of the history of the making of MLK Day into a National Holiday. .

As we continue in our assembly today, keep in mind that the challenges we've had to overcome to make this day one where we celebrate Brother Martin, the Movement and the advancement of our nation is a collective win and a symbol of the bond we're striving towards to reach Brother Martin's Dream. I look forward to marching onward and upward with each of you. Please enjoy the rest of the Assembly.