

On the Cusp of an American Civil Rights Revolution: Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Final Visit and Address to San Diego in 1964

By Seth Mallios and Breana Campbell

Legendary civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s last appearance in San Diego in the late spring of 1964 came at the apex of one of the most important and volatile moments in the nation's history. Collectively, participants in the American Civil Rights movement of the early 1960s endured an onslaught of racially motivated and targeted political deceit, police brutality, and murder. Simultaneously, they inspired the rise of unprecedented social activism through non-violent civil disobedience as a means to expose racial injustice. Fewer than six weeks after King's trip to San Diego, U.S. President Lyndon B. Johnson would sign the Civil Rights Act of 1964, formally outlawing discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. This time was also one of King's most celebrated periods; during 1963-64, he gave likely the most important speech of the 20th century in August 1963,¹ was named *Time* magazine's "Man of the Year" in December 1963, and would be the youngest person ever (at the age of 35) to win the Nobel Peace Prize in December 1964. Despite mammoth personal acclaim and national advancement for his primary cause—the end of segregation—King did not come to San Diego for accolades or praise; he ventured to the city as part of a statewide tour to rally California voters against Proposition 14, which was

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on the upcoming November (1964) state ballot. Were it to pass, this proposed law would undo California's 1963 Rumford Act, which prohibited racial discrimination in housing.

San Diego was generally hostile to King's social and political causes, even though the Baptist minister was already a global icon. This conservative Southern California town was especially backward when it came to civil rights, earning the nickname, "the Mississippi of the West,"² from George Stevens, former Chairman of San Diego's Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) and San Diego National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) president, and Dr. Carrol W. Waymon, founder of the San Diego State College Black History Department (today's Africana Studies Department) and former Executive Director of San Diego's Citizen's Interracial Committee (CIC).³ In 1964, African-Americans in San Diego were routinely turned down for loans from banks, denied housing outside of three segregated neighborhoods,⁴ unable to work at companies like San Diego Gas & Electric or Woolworth's, and refused entrance to many businesses solely because of the color of their skin. They were even prohibited from trying on clothes at department stores. King's brief trip to California in 1964 was rife with conflict. As he flew west, his cottage in Florida was attacked by armed gunmen; during his talks in San Diego, protestors handed out fliers on site declaring that King was a communist;⁵ and a few weeks after he returned home, FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover told reporters that King was "the most notorious liar in the country."⁶ King faced adversity nearly everywhere he went, and San Diego was neither an exception nor a respite from near constant antagonism.

Political Background

By the late 1950s, the Democratic Party in California had largely become the state's civil rights party. In 1958, California democrats swept the legislative elections, including a victory by democrat Edmund G. "Pat" Brown in the gubernatorial race. Together, these wins gave democrats a super-majority of over two-thirds in the state legislature, making it impossible for anti-civil rights members to block legislation. Governor Brown and the state assembly immediately made civil rights their primary agenda. By the end of 1959, they succeeded in passing the Fair Employment Protection Act (FEPA), the Unruh Civil Rights Act, and the Hawkins Act.⁷ Governor Brown's momentum carried into the 1960s as he defeated big-name Republican Richard Nixon in the 1962 election.⁸ As the civil rights movement gained speed and escalated across the country, California activists successfully pushed for additional progressive reform in the state. For example, University of California, Berkeley, students participated in peaceful

demonstrations against national companies that complied with Jim Crow laws or refused to hire African-Americans. In January 1963, the Berkeley City Council passed the first fair-housing ordinance in California, although this ordinance was soon after repealed in April.⁹

On April 25, 1963, the California state assembly passed the California Fair Housing Act.¹⁰ The Rumford Act, as it was more commonly known, was introduced by William Byron Rumford, a civil rights activist and the first African-American from Northern California to serve in the state legislature. This act prohibited discrimination by realtors and property owners on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, or ancestry. Discrimination against blacks and others in the housing market contributed to the growth of large concentrations of minority groups in urban areas where they often lived in unhealthy, overcrowded, and impoverished conditions. King and others knew that housing discrimination, especially in northern and western parts of the country, was a starting point for addressing broader racist practices in America; they insisted that weakening this sort of structural bigotry would successfully undermine other forms of institutionalized racism. Their cause gained momentum as the passage of the Rumford Act in California was followed by many other states passing similar anti-discriminatory civil-rights legislation at this time.

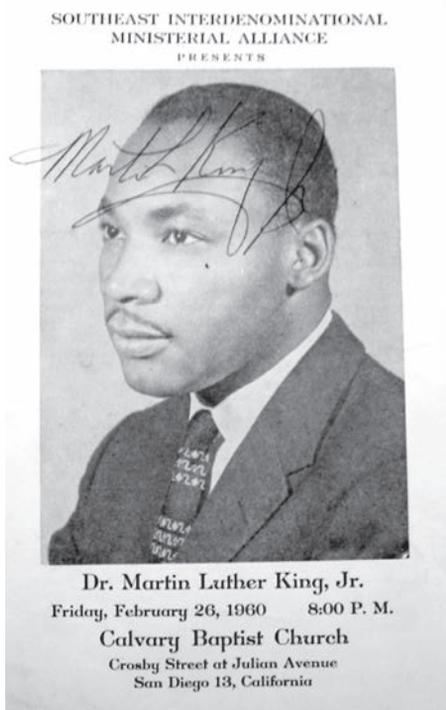
Public backlash against the Rumford Act among certain stakeholders in the state was swift. California's Chamber of Commerce and the construction and real estate industries immediately met the law with great protest. In fact, it was at the El Cortez Hotel in San Diego on January 11, 1964, that real estate agents met to determine if the California Real Estate Association (CREA) would sponsor the proposed Proposition 14, an initiative action that would overturn the Rumford Act.¹¹ It sought to add an amendment to the constitution of California prohibiting state action that would hinder any person from discriminating when selling or renting a property. Protesters, many of whom were San Diego members of the Congress for Racial Equality (CORE), gathered to show their opposition for the initiative with signs that read "The Ghetto Must Go," "Human Rights over Property Rights," and "Housing Discrimination Must End." Counter-protestors showed up to support Proposition 14, including members of the American Nazi Party, who carried signs stating, "The Rumford Act is Communist Backed; Treason is the Reason." By the meeting's end, over 1,000 directors from CREA statewide reaffirmed the racist agenda to sponsor and support the passage of Proposition 14, disguising it as an issue of state's rights.¹² Not only did it sponsor Proposition 14, CREA funneled over \$100,000 in campaign funds and extensive propaganda to ensure its victory. Proposition. 14 would be decided upon by the voters in California's 1964 election.¹³

Those rallying to uphold the Rumford Act recognized that California's fair housing law might not survive the November 1964 election. In fact, there was a prominent counter-trend of fair-housing laws being rejected nationwide by popular referendum in 1964 and 1965.¹⁴ As a result, numerous organizations collaborated to invite and sponsor a set of California appearances by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. His busy itinerary would include speaking with the public on the specific importance of defeating Proposition 14 and uniting this regional cause with the general significance of combatting all future legislation that impeded the desegregation of the nation.¹⁵ King's brief trip to California included stops in San Diego, Los Angeles, Fresno, and San Francisco with two talks scheduled at local colleges. Sponsors for these two San Diego addresses, including the San Diego State College Lectures and Concerts Board, Western Christian Leadership Conference, San Diego County Council of Churches, San Diego Ministerial Association, Associated Student Body of California Western University, and United Church Women of San Diego, hoped that King's presence would galvanize opposition to Proposition 14 and further national causes to end lawful segregation in all of its institutionalized forms.

Martin Luther King in San Diego

There are historical discrepancies regarding the number of trips King made to San Diego and his exact itineraries during these visits. Although many local contemporaneous leaders claimed that he made only one or two trips to the city, oral histories and a spotty trail of artifacts suggest that there were three separate appearances. San Diego native, San Diego State College alumnus (Class of 1965), and famed local educator Willie Jefferson Horton, Jr. stated that he first met King in 1955 when the burgeoning civil rights leader first came to San Diego to visit Bethel Baptist Church pastor Charles H. Hampton. Hampton was a personal friend of King's father, the Baptist minister Martin Luther King.¹⁶ A sixth grader at the time, Horton clearly recalled his mother telling him: "Finish your homework; let's go. This is history in the making!"¹⁷ Horton also remembered that King came to town in an effort to raise money for the Montgomery Bus Boycott, which was fueled by the December 1, 1955, arrest of Rosa Parks.¹⁸

King also visited San Diego five years later on February 26, 1960; on this trip he spoke at two local churches, Bethel Baptist Church and Calvary Baptist Church. *Voice & Viewpoint* reporter Chida Warren-Darby, insisted that this was Dr. King's first appearance in San Diego, an assertion that Horton vehemently denies.¹⁹ There is little doubt about King's 1960 visit, as multiple people, including former CORE leader and San Diego County Urban League administrator Ambrose



Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. autographed this program for Ambrose Brodus, Jr. At the time of his San Diego appearance, King was facing trial for tax evasion in Alabama. An all-white jury would acquit him on May 28, 1960. Author's collection.

Brodus, Jr., detailed extensive personal interaction with the famed civil rights leader. Brodus recalled that he met Dr. King at Calvary Baptist Church in 1960 and emphasized how the meeting changed his life, stating that, "The man believed. Dr. King practiced what he preached, and we could see that he was determined."²⁰ It is difficult to dispute his account as Brodus kept his autographed program from King's 1960 San Diego appearance.

King returned four years later to San Diego on May 29, 1964; he arrived on a PSA "super-electric" jet that landed at Lindbergh Field. King was scheduled for two official in-town speaking engagements; one at San Diego State College (SDSC), now San Diego State University (SDSU), and a second at California Western University (Cal Western), now Point Loma Nazarene University (PLNU). Nevertheless, there is debate as to the exact events

of the day. Hartwell W. Ragsdale, former president of the San Diego NAACP and prominent local businessman (owner of the Anderson Ragsdale Mortuary), recalled that he ordered a limousine to pick up King at the airport. He explained that, "Having Dr. King here had meaning to me. It was the greatest thing associated with my life."²¹ In Ragsdale's account, the hired car then drove King to the NAACP branch headquarters at 2601 Imperial Avenue in San Diego to meet with Ragsdale and other staff members. Once there, the group discussed legislative efforts to end segregation in California and the rest of the nation. Following this meeting, Ragsdale stated that King was then escorted by NAACP members to his multiple speaking engagements and, later, driven back to Lindbergh Field to continue his speaking tour of California. Ragsdale's son, Hartwell "Skipper" Ragsdale III, was nine years old during the visit and recalled that King "was very warm...very genuine [and] seemed to be very caring and sincere.... He spoke to me as though I was someone he was very familiar with."²² The younger Ragsdale was also quoted as saying that, "I remember riding around in the car with [King] and watching



Mary Eunice Oliver (left) looks on in delight as Dr. King (center) shakes hands with her son, Darrel Oliver (right). Photograph courtesy of Darrel Oliver.

attending to King during his brief visit. Oliver recalled personally escorting him from Lindbergh Field and bringing him directly from the airport to SDSC for his 2:00 p.m. speech. She also has a photograph featuring King, herself, and others at Lindbergh Field (Figures 2 and 3). Furthermore, the King Center Archive in Atlanta, Georgia, contains two correspondences confirming Oliver's time with King; the first even mentions the Lindbergh Field pictures. Mary Eunice Oliver handwrote a letter to King on June 22, 1964, which stated:

Dear Dr. King,

Due to your sacrificial witness in St. Augustine, it may be a long time before this letter will be read, yet I must write and express my gratitude for your efforts in San Diego. We felt the total program was terrific, thanks to you, and your wonderful Christian witness. God has richly blessed you with many talents, especially the peace that passes understanding, which is highlighted in everything you do, and say and are.

The pictures we took at the airport are fine. Will send you copies shortly. God bless and protect you.

Faithfully,

Mary Eunice

him. He was just an everyday regular person. Even though he was revered, he was so kind."²³ Warren-Darby's Voice and Viewpoint article included a photograph of King with Ragsdale.

Mary Eunice Oliver, a local civil rights activist and member of the Episcopal Human Relations Commission, provided different information about King's 1964 visit to San Diego. She stated that her church was honored with the responsibility of



Dr. Martin Luther King (center) shakes hands with an admirer. Photograph courtesy of Darrel Oliver.

King responded with a typed correspondence on June 29, 1964, that read:

Dear Mrs. Oliver,

This is a rather belated note thanking you and your husband for making my recent visit to San Diego such a magnificent one. I am deeply grateful to both of you for all of the courtesies extended. The fellowship was rich indeed, and I only regret that we did not have more time together.

Please extend my warm best wishes to all of the friends I had an opportunity to meet in San Diego, particularly to your lovely children. I do hope our paths will cross again in the not too distant future. May God continue to bless you and yours in all of your endeavors.

Sincerely yours,

Martin Luther King, Jr.

Overall, it is difficult to reconcile Ragsdale and Oliver's conflicting narratives as they recount seemingly mutually exclusive events. Both renditions could be seen as accurate, however, if the Ragsdales' memories refer to King's 1960 visit.²⁴

The Atlanta archive also has King's May 20, 1964, welcome letter from San Diego Board of Supervisors' Chairman, Robert C. Dent. The tone of the correspondence was surprisingly devotional given that it came from a public administrator; it stated:

Dear Doctor King:

As Chairman of the Board of Supervisors of the County of San Diego, it is my pleasure to welcome you to our County.

As you are probably aware, Southern California is one of the fastest growing areas in the United States. With a continual increase in our work and problems, those of us in local government must constantly work toward the improvement of our services to the public with fairness and equity to all people.

Without the Christian influence, our labors would be in vain. We are all cognizant of the necessity of applying Christian principles to attain success in all our endeavors. We are particularly indebted

to leaders like you who are devoting their lives to make our world a better place in which to live.

There is much work to be done but it is my belief if we all keep in mind the Christian truths upon which this Nation is founded and our responsibilities to all people as we go about our daily tasks, we can all go forward in harmony.

Sincerely,

Robert C. Dent

Almost as soon as King deplaned at Lindbergh Field in 1964, San Diego State College journalism professor Harold Keen interviewed him for local CBS affiliate, Channel 8. Video footage of this conversation, long thought to have been lost or destroyed, was recently discovered by KFMB producer David Gotfredson in the spring of 2014. The interview revealed dramatic details of the recent attack on King's cottage in St. Augustine, Florida. This southern city had been at the epicenter of racial conflict for generations, and in 1964 was about to explode into widespread violence for the nation to see on television and in newspapers. St. Augustine had an especially active Ku Klux Klan (KKK) chapter and a militant NAACP leader in Dr. Robert B. Hayling, a former U.S. Air Force officer. In the spring of 1964, Hayling encouraged northern college students in St. Augustine to join in local anti-segregation social activism instead of vacationing at the beach



These long-lost KFMB film reels contain the only existing footage of Professor Keen's interview with Dr. King and a few glimpses of King's address at the Greek Bowl. Photograph courtesy of David Gotfredson.

during their school break. King and other members of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) joined the cause and engaged in months of non-violent protest, resulting in numerous arrests and rampant physical abuse of activists by segregationists.²⁵ Keen's poignant interview with a clearly disturbed yet defiant King, missing for 50 years and presumed lost, is reproduced here in its entirety. Keen's questions are tough, common to 1960s journalism, and King's answers are remarkably raw assessments of civil rights struggle, especially in his stern critique of people who had yet to take a side in this conflict.

May 29, 1964 Interview

Professor Keen: Dr. King, your rented cottage in St. Augustine in Florida was hit by bullets early today. Does this indicate a new outbreak of violence in the civil rights struggle?

Dr. King: Well, it does indicate that there are still recalcitrant forces alive in the South that will do anything to prevent integration. We started a strong push to desegregate facilities in that the oldest city in the United States just last Wednesday and this is a result of the violent reaction to that move. The Klan is rather strong in that area and very active, and I think this is the beginning of a reign of terror, and I have apprised President Johnson of this through a telegram that I just sent stating that several acts of terror have taken place. Some of my staff members were beaten last night. They shot in their automobiles, and then went and shot in the cottage that I had just rented for our staff for the months that we would be working there. So I think it is a critical problem and one that should call, bring about action from the federal government.

Professor Keen: Dr. King, have some of the unpopular civil disobedience tactics and disorders such as the New York World's Fair stall-in²⁶ indicated that responsible Negro leadership may have lost control?

Dr. King: No, I don't think at all. I think we still have the vast majority of Negroes following the lines or the methods set forth by the established organizations and the responsible leaders. I think this will continue as long as we make progress, as long as we can win concrete victories, but I must say that if these victories do not

come through non-violence and if the vast majority of Negroes are not able to see definite gains, these other approaches may appeal to them more in future months.

Professor Keen: You believe there's a possibility of serious bloodshed then if this frustration is not overcome?

Dr. King: Well, I hate to predict violence because I found in so many instances that the constant prediction of violence is an unconscious invitation to it, but I must be realistic. If there is not a strong move to do something about the injustices the Negroes face, if there isn't something dramatic done, if the Civil Rights Bill does not pass with strength, I'm sure that it will show increase the discontent, the restlessness, the frustration, and the despair of the Negro that it will be much more difficult to keep the struggle disciplined and non-violent.

Professor Keen: Don't the strong showings of Governor Wallace in the primaries²⁷ in which he was entered show a public reaction against the civil rights movement?

Dr. King: I think this is a reaction from many people who have never been committed to civil rights. I don't think it means a setback or what some refer to as a white backlash. The fact is that many of these people have been out in the middle all along, neither pro- or anti-. Now they're forced to face the issue in a way that they've never faced it before, and they find that they have many more latent prejudices, than they realize. I think the other thing in the Wallace showing that we just see is that prejudice is not just a sectional problem. It's a national problem, and I think it may be a blessing in disguise in that it will cause people of good will to realize that much more must be done to get rid of this festering sore of segregation.

Professor Keen: How do you rate the Republican candidates in California on the issue of civil rights, Governor Rockefeller and Senator Goldwater?²⁸

Dr. King: Now Governor Rockefeller has made it clear to the national public, and he's made it clear to me in private conversations

that I've had with him that he's committed to civil rights in general and to the Civil Rights Bill in particular. He has advanced broad humanitarian concern and the Rockefeller family generally has given support to civil rights. Now Mr. Goldwater has also made his position clear. He feels that the matter of civil rights should be left to the states, and this means that you leave it to Mr. Wallace of Alabama and to Barnetts²⁹ and Johnsons of Mississippi, and I just don't think this matter can be left in the hands of such racists. So I don't think Senator Goldwater can be considered a strong man in civil rights.

Professor Keen: What influence do you think the Negro vote will have in the presidential election this year?

Dr. King: I think we'll have great influence. The Negro vote is still the balance of power in your main urban areas, your large communities and large electoral states of our country, and I think the Negro vote may well determine the next president of the United States.

Professor Keen: Is there any possibility that you yourself might enter politics following your own advice that Negroes should be more active in this field?

Dr. King: Well, I haven't considered this at this point. I do think it is necessary for Negroes to become more political minded and for more persons of integrity and depth of understanding, and I think it's necessary for them to enter politics, but at this point, I feel that my job is in the civil rights struggle and one that should stay above both political parties and not become inextricably bound to either.

Dr. King's speech at SDSC began at 2:00 p.m. on a Friday afternoon at the Greek Bowl.³⁰ The speech was well attended; over 4,000 students, faculty, and community members listened to the address. Multiple local newspapers previewed the speech, claiming that this was San Diego's opportunity to hear from the man who "will not be satisfied until segregation is dead in America" and who was touring California to "mobilize the liberal forces to push passage of the pending civil rights legislation without crippling amendments."³¹ San Diego State Associated Students President Jerry Harmon served as the event's master of ceremonies. Although King's address from the event has since been lost, interviews with attendees and newspaper accounts of the event offer snippets of what was said. The most



The following caption was run with this May 30, 1964, San Diego Union photograph: "The Rev. Martin Luther King tells San Diego State students in Greek theater that racial discrimination in California should make them as indignant as bombing of Negro churches in South. King later took campaign for civil rights legislation to audience at California Western University." The original newspaper photograph has disappeared from the San Diego Union-Tribune archives; all that remains is this low-resolution scan.

complete account of the address came from the June 2, 1964, *Daily Aztec*. Buried on page 9 of the campus newspaper with no accompanying picture, an article by student reporter Cathy Pearson talked about how King outlined a "three-point program" to make the American dream a reality for all citizens.³² According to Pearson, King's first point concerned universal peace; he told the San Diego State crowd that, "If the American dream is to become a reality, it must be concerned with the world dream... Now man's moral and ethical commitment must make the world one in terms of brotherhood and peace." King underscored that, "We must learn to live together as brothers or we will perish together as fools."³³ His next point dispelled the notion of superior and inferior races, debunking a wide variety of self-serving segregationist arguments. King explained that, "We can't use the tragic results of segregation as an argument for its continuation." His final point was a plea for the U.S. to actively eliminate the final remnants of segregation; King was especially vehement in his dismissal of certain well-propagated myths—e.g., "Only time can solve the problem" and "Legislation cannot solve the problem of civil rights"—that placated and ensured maintenance of a bigoted status-quo. He matter-of-factly observed that:

You can't legislate integration, but you can legislate de-segregation.
Morality can't be legislated, but laws can regulate behavior. Laws can't

make you love me, but they can keep you from lynching me. The law can change our habits, and then our hearts will change.

In addition to detailing this tri-partite plan of action, Dr. King also spoke directly to two pressing legislative matters: 1) the need to pass the federal civil rights act that then sat before Congress (The Civil Rights Act of 1964), and 2) the need to defeat the initiative that would nullify California civil rights statutes (Proposition 14). He urged those in attendance to vote against Proposition 14, concluding that it “would be a setback for American freedom and the entire structure of justice if the Rumford Act in California were repealed.”

King’s speech at the near-capacity Greek Bowl left a lasting impression on many who attended. Multiple alumni who were there recalled the audience being composed and silent when King started. That quiet attentiveness soon shifted to inspired excitement as the civil rights leader delivered his powerful message. Mary



This still-photograph of Dr. King speaking at the Greek Bowl was pulled from KFMB’s rediscovered video. Ralph Clem noted the almost professorial air of Dr. King as he leaned on his podium during the San Diego State address. Photograph courtesy of David Gotfredson.

Cook, who attended the speech with her communications class, recalled being “blown away” by King. She insisted, “We had been studying and listening to many great speeches, but what I remember best about his speech was his passion.”³⁴ The content of King’s address also stunned Cook; she remarked that growing up in East County, the plight of many African-

Americans living in San Diego was unbeknownst to her. It was only after listening to King that she realized how few African-Americans were in attendance at SDSC. Likewise, class of 1964 alumnus James Sibbet’s lasting memory of the event was of how dynamically King spoke, noting that “I was truly impressed.”³⁵ Viola Cox, now 97, attended the speech and recalled that, “It was very exciting... I remember the young people jumping up and down saying, ‘What a speaker!’ ‘What a speaker!’”³⁶

Ralph Clem (San Diego State College Class of 1965), now a retired U.S. Air Force general and professor emeritus of International Relations at Florida International University, also witnessed the event. He reminisced that, “It was



In another still from Chammel 8's footage, Dr. King is pictured signing an autograph for a SDSC student. Photograph courtesy of David Gotfredson.

clear that [King] was a great orator," but emphasized that this address was "more of a lecture than it was a speech...I don't remember it as rousing. I remember it as very impressive."³⁷ Clem explained that, "He talked a lot about the institutional basis of the civil rights movement, about the need for legal reforms, the needs for members of minority groups...to have access to the full range of rights that any citizen should expect in this country and how that might be pursued." It was as if Dr.

Martin Luther King, Jr., holder of a Ph.D. in systematic theology and policy expert, was speaking to the crowd instead of the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., the devout and inspirational leader of the Civil Rights movement. People who attended both San Diego speeches in 1964 noted by comparison that King's Cal Western address later that day was less intellectual and more emotional.

Ethnic diversity at SDSC at the time of King's visit was minimal. According to the San Diego State College yearbook, *Del Sudoeste*, from 1964, fewer than a dozen graduating seniors were African-American, despite the fact that black students had been attending the institution for over half a century.³⁸ Willie Horton saw firsthand the hostile environment many African-Americans faced across the country as they sought a higher-education degree. Reminiscing on his experience as an SDSC student, Horton said that certain faculty would purposefully give African-American students failing marks in courses to force them out of the college regardless of the quality of the work. Horton, who attended both of King's 1964 speeches in San Diego, was especially motivated by the addresses. He recalled that King had an unrivaled ability to "move people to action," calling him "an effective motivator for students and others in the crowd." Although King's San Diego State speech may not have immediately pushed administrators and faculty to create an equal-opportunity campus, Horton believed that his appearance at SDSC enlightened many students to the plight of African-Americans locally and across the nation. Likewise, Clem noted that the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) had been granted student-group status on campus only two days before King's visit in 1964, and that student awareness of the civil rights movement was "really starting to pick up speed at that time."³⁹

Immediately following the conclusion of his speech at the Greek Bowl, King signed a small number of autographs and was quickly led away to a waiting

vehicle.⁴⁰ His activities after the delivery of his speech at SDSC and prior to his appearance at Cal Western are not well documented. Reports suggest that King and his entourage, which included close associate and fellow SCLC leader Dr. Ralph Abernathy, were taken on a tour of San Diego. This included a short sail on Mission Bay and a scenic drive through San Diego with stops at Fort Rosecrans National Cemetery and Mount Soledad.⁴¹

King's speaking engagement at Cal Western began at 8:00 p.m. in the Golden Gymnasium. Between 3,500 to 5,000 students, faculty, religious groups, and city dignitaries attended the event, which opened with an official welcome to the university by members of the six sponsoring groups responsible for his visit. King's speech was entitled "*Remaining Awake through a Great Revolution.*" Like the address earlier in the day at San Diego State, the content centered on the elimination of all forms of segregation and targeted particular importance to California voters rejecting Proposition 14. He spoke slowly and with purpose, to what he called "a beautiful, integrated audience,"⁴² and was interrupted over twenty times by enthusiastic applause. In his speech, King described the attack on his St. Augustine cottage only hours before his arrival in San Diego, emphasizing, "We work under these conditions all along and yet we do it without fear." King thrilled his audience, covering four central points—1) reaffirming the essential immorality of racial segregation, 2) rejecting the notion of superior and inferior races, 3) insisting that the struggle for equality be non-violent, and 4) explaining that this was a national problem. He used the story of Rip Van Winkle sleeping through the American Revolution as a parable for how to keep all Americans awake during the current social revolution. In closing, Dr. King urged those in attendance to "[s]tand up for justice, not next week, not even tomorrow, not even a[n] hour from now, but at this moment."

Similar to the recollections of those who witnessed King's speech at San Diego State, those in attendance at Cal Western were moved by King's passion and the urgency with which he spoke. Darrel Oliver was nine years old when he heard King speak at the Golden Gymnasium. He recalled that, "The place was electric. There was a feeling of solidarity between us."⁴³ Additional interviews echo Oliver's sentiments; many remarked that they recalled the sensation of being a part of something momentous.

Whether King left immediately following his speech at Cal Western for the airport is not certain. Reports indicated that King and his colleagues only intended to stay in San Diego for ten hours.⁴⁴ It is believed that King either received a ride back to Lindbergh Field following his speech or that he stayed in San Diego overnight and left from the airport the following day. The Olivers recalled that there were discussions about King altering his travel plans in an effort to thwart

planned attacks, especially considering the events that had just transpired in Florida.⁴⁵

Material Legacies

Despite King's iconic stature, the profundity of his message, and the importance of the times in which he spoke in San Diego, the region's historical archives contained remarkably little evidence of his 1964 appearance. San Diego State's records were especially sparse, leading multiple local administrators, politicians, and dignitaries to suggest that King never even visited the campus. This dearth of material was especially surprising and troubling when compared to the extensive collection the SDSU library from U.S. President John F. Kennedy's 1963 visit to campus, including audio, video, dozens of photos, programs, seating charts, transcribed oral histories, extensive contemporaneous media coverage, commemorative markers, and statuary. It is suggested here that the lack of memorabilia collection, preservation, and celebration was a continuation of San Diego's spotty record on civil rights. How else could so little remain from an event in which the famed "Man of the Year" spoke to a capacity crowd on the eve of the most important legislation of the 20th century?

SDSU Special Collections has only three items relating to King's 1964 appearance: a public announcement request, and two separate invitations to speak in 1965 and 1966. The P. A. spot request revealed that the announcement, "This Friday Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. will address the students and Faculty of San Diego State College. The place – Greek Bowl. The time – 2:00 p.m.," was read multiple times from May 27-29. The university's archive also contained evidence showing that although King never returned to San Diego after 1964, SDSC continued to send invitations for him to speak during the 1965 academic year and the 1966 summer session. In his 1965 reply, King alluded to the state of the struggle for civil rights across the country and declined the invitation, citing his newly adopted policy of not accepting speaking engagements more than three months in advance to avoid the potential embarrassment of having to cancel. In 1966, King wrote of his increasingly demanding schedule working with voter-rights' groups in Chicago, conducting workshops on non-violence, and his increased focus on grassroots movements across the nation as his reason for declining a return visit to San Diego State.

In 2007, Point Loma Nazarene University (formerly Cal Western) honored King's memory by dedicating a podium-shaped kiosk, replicating the one used during his speech. The interactive memorial, funded by the PLNU Alumni Association, allowed visitors to listen to portions of his speech, read a timeline of Dr. King's

accomplishments, and view multiple photographs. For the 50th anniversary of Dr. King's speech in 2014, the podium was rededicated.

In an effort to address and start correcting the institution's longstanding oversight of King's visit to campus, San Diego State University officials celebrated the golden anniversary of this historic event with a large ceremony that included hundreds of students, faculty, administrators, alumni, and community members. The public gala featured the dedication of a permanent plaque (the largest of its kind on campus), sponsored by California Coast Credit Union, SDSU Associated Students, and the SDSU Alumni Association, and placed prominently at the east entrance of what was once the Greek Bowl—today's California Coast Credit Union Amphitheatre. The marker included a brief history of King's visit and highlighted the excerpt from his speech: "We must learn to live together as brothers or we will perish together as fools." The ceremony included speeches by SDSU President Elliot Hirshman, SDSU Anthropology chair Seth Mallios, aforementioned SDSC alumnus Willie J. Horton, Jr., student-essay contest winners Jessica Ahern, Mary Stout-Clipper, and Thomas De La Garza, and a rousing from-memory rendition of Dr. King's "I Have a Dream" speech by local nine-year-old Jeremiah Carr.

Conclusions

The legacies of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s 1964 visit to San Diego are remarkably varied. Months after he left the city, Proposition 14 passed by a near two-thirds majority, seemingly marking the end of the state's Fair Housing Act.⁴⁶ In 1966, however, the California Supreme Court would strike down the proposition as unconstitutional. A year later, the U.S. Supreme Court would uphold this decision in *Reitman v. Mulkey* on the grounds that a state court could invalidate a state's constitutional amendment if the amendment violated the U.S. Constitution, in this case, the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Simply put, King was decidedly unsuccessful in his attempts at convincing West Coast voters to defeat Proposition 14, but state and federal courts would rescue the Rumford Act. Furthermore, King's setback in the Golden State was offset by landmark national gains, first and foremost being the Civil Rights Act in 1964, passed about a month after his San Diego appearance.⁴⁷ In addition, those groups that were actively protesting racial discrimination in the region before King's local collegiate tour in 1964, including CORE and many others, continued to gain momentum in demonstrations against bigoted employment practices in San Diego. Moreover, SDSU's institutional amnesia of King's historic visit has finally been at least partially addressed by the anniversary celebration and a prominent and permanent public plaque that will prevent



Photographers took a variety of images from King's Cal Western appearance. ©SDHC UT #85: D9216-11 (Marti#149309D).

anyone on campus from ever wondering again, "Did MLK really visit State?"

Lastly, the authors of this article insist on preserving King's Cal Western speech here in its entirety for multiple reasons. Not only did the address come at one of the most important times in the nation's history and contain a powerful message of peace and equality in the face of violence and hate, but it also was nearly lost from the permanent historical record. In fact, the San Diego State speech is apparently gone, and the Cal Western address has been accidentally misplaced multiple times.⁴⁸ With its reproduction here, King's words in his final address in San Diego will never be lost again.

"Remaining Awake through a Great Revolution," Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s California Western University Speech.⁴⁹

Ladies and gentlemen:

I need not pause to say how very delighted I am to have the opportunity of coming once more to the city of San Diego, California, and the opportunity of being a part of this meeting. It is always a rich and rewarding experience when I can take a brief break from the day to day and hour to hour demands of our struggle in the South, and discuss the issues involved in that struggle with concerned people all over this nation and all over the world. And I want to express my deep personal appreciation to all of the sponsoring groups this evening for making this magnificent meeting possible. I say this magnificent meeting because you have turned out in such large numbers, and I am sure that your presence here tonight is indicative of your support and your concern in the area of civil rights. Certainly we need that support in this hour and at this period in our nation's history. And I can assure you that I am deeply inspired as I look out into your faces and as I notice this beautiful integrated audience. It gives me deep joy within. I wish you could see yourselves and look how beautiful you look. And somehow this is what mankind should be and how mankind should look one day in our nation all over this vast land. We will come to see integration not as a problem, but as an opportunity to participate in the beauty of diversity. And so it is great and noble to have the privilege of being here tonight and I bring greetings to you from all of the members, all of the officers, and all of the staff members of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference who are working all over the Southland to make justice and freedom a reality in that section of the country.

We have our difficult moments as you well know. In fact I just talked with some of our staff members who are now in St. Augustine, Florida. Four of us who are here tonight just left there a few hours ago, and not long after we left they shot in the house some fifteen times where we were staying. They thought we were there, I guess, last night. Fortunately, nobody was in the house, because if we had been there somebody may have faced physical death. We work under these conditions all along and yet we do it without fear. We do it with a determination to go on because the destiny of our nation is involved and we are struggling not merely to free twenty million Negroes but we are struggling to free the soul of our nation. (APPLAUSE)

I am so happy that the religious forces of this community and of this state have participated in such a meaningful way by serving as a sponsoring organization for this particular meeting and the other meetings that I will be addressing in San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Fresno before returning to the South. It is good to see this because as you know this problem is a moral problem. And the religious institutions, being the moral guardians of the community, must certainly take a great responsibility in making brotherhood a reality.

This evening I would like to discuss some of the problems that we still face in our nation in the area of race relations and reiterate some of the things that I said earlier in the afternoon at San Diego State College by using as a subject from which to speak "Remaining Awake through a Great Revolution." Many of you have probably read that arresting little story by Washington Irving entitled "Rip Van Winkle." The thing that we usually remember about Rip Van Winkle is that he slept twenty years. But there is another point in that story that is almost always completely overlooked. It was a sign on the Inn in the little town on the Hudson in which Rip went up into the mountain for his long sleep. When he went up the sign had a picture of King George the Third of England. And when he came down the sign had a picture of George Washington, the first President of the United States. And when Rip looked up at the picture of George Washington he was amazed. He was completely lost. He knew not who he was. This incident reveals to us that the most striking thing about the story of Rip Van Winkle is not merely that he slept twenty years, but that he slept through a revolution. While he was peacefully snoring up in the mountain, a great revolution was taking place in the world; a revolution that at many points would change the course of history. And yet, Rip Van Winkle knew nothing about it. He was asleep. One of the great liabilities of history is that all too many people find themselves amid great periods of social change and yet they fail to achieve the new mental outlook, and the new attitudes, that the new situation demands. All too many people find themselves sleeping through a revolution. And I am convinced that there is nothing more tragic than to sleep through a revolution. There can be no gainsaying of the fact that a revolution has taken place in the world and in our nation and is sweeping away an old unjust order and bringing into being a new creative order. The great challenge facing every man and every woman today is to remain awake through this great social revolution.



Martin Luther King, Jr. (center) after giving speech at Cal Western University. ©SDHC #UT 85: D9216-4 (Martin#14933F2).

Now I would like to suggest some of the things that we must do here in America if we are to remain awake through this revolution. First I would like to say that we must reaffirm the essential immorality of racial segregation. Whether it is the legal *de jure* segregation of the South or whether it is the *de facto* segregation of the North, we must come to see that segregation is morally wrong and sinful. It is not only politically unsound. It is not only sociologically untenable, but segregation is morally wrong and sinful. Segregation is wrong because it is nothing but a new form of slavery covered up with certain niceties of complexity. Segregation is a cancer in the body politic which must be removed before our moral health can be realized. And I have come to see this over and over again in so many instances.

I remember not too long ago that Mrs. King and I had the privilege of journeying to that great country known as India. As we traveled all over the country hundreds and thousands of people followed us, everywhere we went, not so much because we had anything unique to say, but because we were Negroes in the United States (from the United States, rather), and they wanted to hear about the race problem. I never will forget one afternoon we journeyed to the southernmost part of India, the state of Kerala, the city of Trivandrum. And I was to speak

that afternoon in a school that was attended largely by students whose parents were considered untouchables. Now in India the problem of cast untouchability is similar to the problem that we face in race relations in the whole area of segregation. Untouchables for years were considered inferior and they could not use certain public facilities. They could not go into the temples. They were considered outcasts. And that afternoon as I entered into the auditorium to make my speech, the principal introduced me. And after he said several things he finally said to the students, I would now like introduce to you a fellow untouchable from the United States of America. (APPLAUSE)

For the moment I was a bit peeved and shocked that I would be referred to as an untouchable. In that moment my mind leaped back across the mighty Atlantic and I started thinking about the fact that in Montgomery, Alabama, where I was living at that time, I could not go to any restaurant that white people had the privilege of going to. I could not go to a lunch counter and get hamburger or a cup of coffee. I started thinking about the fact that even if I wanted to gain the great insights of the ages, in going to the public library; I couldn't go because it was for whites only. I started thinking about the fact that I could not go to a single public park in Montgomery, Alabama, because all of the parks were closed as a result of a court order calling for integration of recreational facilities. And I started thinking about the fact that my little daughter and other children that would be born in our family, would be raising nagging questions, "Why is it that we can't go here? Why is it that we can't go there?" And so deep down within I had to say to myself, "I am an untouchable and every Negro born in the United States is an untouchable." And this is evil. (APPLAUSE) And this is the evilness of segregation. It stigmatizes the segregated as an untouchable in a cast system. And so we must reaffirm the essential immorality of this system and we must make it clear all over the nation that segregation must go and that we are through with segregation now, henceforth, and forevermore. (APPLAUSE)

Now the second thing that I would like to mention deals with a problem that we still find. It is in the ideological realm. It is the idea that there are superior and inferior races. We are challenged more than ever before to get rid of the notion that there are superior and inferior races. But anybody who believes this is sleeping through a revolution.

(APPLAUSE) Now, certainly we don't need to sleep at this point. Great intellectual disciplines have pointed out that there is no truth in this. Great anthropologists like Ruth Benedict, Margaret Meade, the late Melville Herskovits and others, have made it clear over and over again that, as a result of their long years of study, they have found no evidence for this idea of superior and inferior races. There may be superior and inferior individuals within all racial groups, but there are no superior and inferior races. And yet in spite of this, many people still go along believing in this false notion. I was appalled to see as a result of a survey by Newsweek magazine a few months ago, the percentage of the white persons of this nation who believe that Negroes are inherently and biologically inferior. These people are sleeping through a revolution. Now there was a time that people used to try to justify the inferiority of the Negro on the basis of religion and the Bible. It's tragic indeed how people will use religion, I should say misuse religion and the Bible, to justify their prejudices. And so it was argued that the Negro was inferior by nature, because of Noah's curse upon the children of Ham. The Apostle Paul's dictum became a watchword, "Servants, be obedient to your master." And then one brother had probably read the logic of the great philosopher Aristotle. Aristotle was a philosopher who lived in the heyday of Greek culture. And he did a great deal to bring into being what we now know in philosophy as formal logic. And formal logic has a big word known as a "syllogism." A syllogism has a major premise, a minor premise, and a conclusion. And so this brother decided to put his argument of the inferiority of the Negro in the framework of an Aristotelian syllogism. He could say as his major premise "All men are made in the image of God."

Then came his minor premise, "God, as everybody knows, is not a Negro. Therefore, the Negro is not a man." This was a kind of reason. But on the whole we've gotten away from these arguments. Now not all together because I read the other day that a brother down in Mississippi said that God was a charter member of the White Citizens Council. But there seriously, we've gotten away from many of these arguments now and arguments are now on subtle sociological, cultural grounds. "The Negro is not culturally ready for integration." You've heard these arguments. If you integrate the schools and neighborhoods this will pull the white race back a generation. And you see the Negro as a criminal. These arguments go on ad infinitum. And individuals who set forth

such arguments never go on to say that if there are lagging standards in the Negro community, and there certainly are, they lag because of segregation and discrimination. Poverty, ignorance, social isolation, economic deprivation breed crime whatever the racial group may be. And it is a tortuous logic to use the tragic results of segregation as an argument for the continuation of it. (APPLAUSE) It is necessary to go back to the cause of it. And so it is necessary to get rid of this notion once and for all.

Now if you would allow me I would like to say just a word to those of us who have been on the oppressed end of the old order. We've lived with the system so long. And when one lives with an evil unjust system so long, that is always a danger. That system generates a feeling of inferiority. And I think this is one of ultimate evils of segregation. Not merely what it does to one in terms of physical inconvenience, but what it does to one's psychological makeup. And so it so often leaves the segregated with a nagging feeling of inferiority. And so many of us face that, and so many of us face it as a result of the long night of slavery and segregation. And I would like to say that in spite of this, we must work hard now to achieve excellence in our various fields of endeavor. I know the dilemma. Here we are now caught in a situation in history where we have been the victims of 344 years of slavery and segregation. And now the forces of history are saying that we must be as productive and as resourceful as individuals who have not known such oppression. This is a difficult problem. It is a real dilemma. For he who gets behind in the race must forever remain behind, or run faster than the man in front. This is the dilemma which the Negro faces in this nation today, and it is a real one. And so that means that we've got to work hard. We've got to study hard. We've got to go out of the way to gain new skills. We've got to go out of the way to burn the midnight oil. We've got to go out of the way to keep from dropping out of school. And I know the reasons why all of these things are done. But after we go through this sociological analysis, then we must get to the point that we are willing to work with determination to achieve excellence in our fields of endeavor. The doors are opening now that were not open to our mothers and our fathers. The great challenge facing us is to be ready to enter these doors as they open. Ralph Waldo Emerson said in a lecture back in 1871, that if a man can write a better book, or preach a better sermon or make a better mouse trap than his neighbor,

even if he builds his house in the woods, the world will make a beaten path to his door. This will become increasing true and so it means that we must set out to do a good job and try to do it so well that nobody could do it any better. Now don't set out to do a good Negro job. You see we are now in a situation where we are forced to compete with people. And anybody setting out to be a good Negro (APPLAUSE) you see if you set out merely to be a good Negro lawyer, or a good Negro doctor, or a good Negro school teacher, a good Negro preacher, a good Negro skilled laborer, a good Negro barber or beautician, you've already flunked your matriculation exam for entrance to the university of integration. (APPLAUSE) We must set out to do a good job and to do that job so well that the living, the dead, or the unborn couldn't do it any better. (APPLAUSE) And so to carry to one extreme, if it falls your lot to be a street sweeper, sweep streets like Michelangelo painted pictures. Sweep streets like Beethoven composed music. Sweep streets like Shakespeare wrote poetry. Sweep streets so well that all the host of heaven and earth will have to pause and say, "Here lived a great street sweeper who swept his job well." (APPLAUSE) If you can't be a pine on the top of the hill be a scrub in the valley, but be the best little scrub on the side of the rill. Be a bush if you can't be a tree. If you can't be a highway, just be a trail. If you can't be the sun, be a star, for it isn't by size that you win or you fail. Be the best of whatever you are. (APPLAUSE) And if we will do this we will remain awake through a great social revolution.

There is another thing, a thing that faces all of us. We are challenged to develop an action program all over our nation to get rid of the last vestiges of segregation and discrimination. And this problem will not work itself out, and anybody who believes that is sleeping through a revolution. If the problem of segregation and discrimination is to be removed from our nation, we must work hard in an action program to do it. Now, there are one or two ideas that I mention so often that we've got to get rid of. They're myths. And if we are going to solve this problem, we've got to get rid of them. One is the myth of time. You've heard this argument. The people who believe this go on to say to the Negro and his allies in the white community, that only time can solve the problem. And they go on to say if you will just be nice, and be patient, and continue to pray in a hundred or two hundred years the problem will work itself out. Now I am not criticizing prayer,

certainly not, for it has been one of the great resources of my life and in the darkest moments, the moments that I have had to stand amid the surging movement of life's restless sea, prayer has been so meaningful to me. So don't misunderstand me. I am not saying that prayer does not have a value. But I am saying that God never intended for prayer to be a substitute for working intelligence. (APPLAUSE) The only answer that we can give to those who believe in the myth of time is that time is neutral. It can be used either constructively or destructively. And I am absolutely convinced as I stand before you tonight my friends that the people of ill will in our nation have used time much more effectively than the people of good will. I am convinced tonight that the Wallace's of our nation and the extreme rightists of our nation and those who are committed to negative ends have used time much more effectively than those who are committed to good ends. And it may well be that we will have to repent in this generation not merely for the vitriolic words and the violent actions of the bad people who will bomb a church in Birmingham, Alabama, but also for the appalling silence of the good people who sit around saying, "Wait on time." (APPLAUSE) Somewhere we must come to see that human progress never rolls in on the wheels of inevitability. It comes through the tireless efforts and the persistent work of dedicated individuals who are willing to be co-workers with God, and without this hard work time itself becomes an ally of the primitive forces of social stagnation. And so we must help time and realize that the time is always right to do right.

And I am sure you have heard the other myth. You hear it here in California and we hear it all over the nation now because of the Civil Rights debate. It is the idea that legislation cannot solve the problem which we face in human relations. I am sure you have heard that. People who believe in this and who set forth this argument will go on to say that the only way that this problem can be solved is through changing the heart and changing attitudes. And they say you can't do that through legislation. Well certainly they are uttering a half truth. If we are to solve this problem that we face in our nation ultimately, Negroes and white people must come together as brothers and sisters, not merely because the law says it, but because it is natural and right. If this problem is to be solved ultimately, men must not only be obedient to that which can be enforced by the law. We must rise to the majestic heights of being obedient to the unenforceable. I am aware of this. But

we must go on and state the other side. It may be true that you can't legislate integration, but you can legislate desegregation. It may be true that morality cannot be legislated, but behavior can be regulated. (APPLAUSE) It may be true that the law cannot change the heart but it can restrain the heartless. It may be true that the law can't make a man love me, but it can restrain him from lynching me, and I think that's pretty important also. (APPLAUSE) And so while the law may not change the hearts of men, it does change the habits of men. And when the habits are changed, pretty soon the heart will be changed and the attitudes will be changed. (APPLAUSE)

And so there is a need for Civil Rights legislation now on the national scale and in local communities all over our nation. I would like to impress upon you this evening the importance of this. There is a debate taking place in the Senate of our nation now. And it has moved from the realm of legitimate debate. It is a filibuster. It is a filibuster clothed in the garments of gentlemanly debate, and it is time now that the Senate go on and vote on this vital bill which can do so much to restore the sense of hope in the Negro community and give the Negro new faith in the legislative and democratic process. It is urgent that this Civil Rights Bill be passed and passed very soon. Now there are those who are trying to weaken that bill. They are trying to weaken it with crippling amendments and somehow all people of goodwill through letter writing campaigns, through visits to Washington to various Senators, and through other methods of direct action and created witnesses, to make it clear that this bill must pass. It was on a sweltering afternoon last June, and a young vigorous intelligent dedicated President stood before this nation and said in eloquent terms, "The issue which we face in Civil Rights is not merely a political issue. It is at bottom a moral issue." He went on to say it is as old as the Scriptures and as modern as the Constitution. It is a question of whether we will treat our Negro brothers as we ourselves would like to be treated. And on the heels of this great speech he went and offered a Civil Rights package to Congress. The most comprehensive Civil Rights package every presented by any president of our great nation. (APPLAUSE) Since that sweltering afternoon last June, our nation has known a dark day and a dreary night, for that same President was cut down by an assassin's bullet on Elm Street in Dallas, Texas. And I think the greatest tribute that the United States of America can pay to the late

John Fitzgerald Kennedy is to see that this Civil Rights Bill is passed without being watered down at any point. (APPLAUSE)

So if this bill does not pass, I am absolutely convinced that our nation will experience a dark night. If this bill does not pass the already ugly sore of racial injustice on the body politic may suddenly turn malignant and our Nation may well be inflicted with an incurable cancer that will destroy our political and moral health. It is urgent for the health of the nation for this Civil Rights Bill to be passed. And it is necessary that in local communities, and in States all over our nation, to make Civil Rights legislation a reality and to make its firm enforcement a reality. And right here in this state, in this great state, in this state that has meant so much to our nation, in this the most populous state of our nation, you have a great choice. It is a choice of treading the low road of injustice or remaining true to the high road of justice. You have a choice of whether you will go backwards or whether you will go forward. You have a choice whether you will be true to the ideals of justice, or whether you will somehow go back and choose those principles of injustice, which will hurt our whole nation, for there are forces alive in this state seeking to repeal the Fair Housing Bill, which has existed on the books, on the statute books of California. And if this bill is repealed, it will be a setback not merely for California. It will be a setback for the nation; it will be a setback for democracy; and it will be one of the great tragedies of the 20th century. (APPLAUSE) And so, I call upon you each of you assembled here tonight to work passionately and unrelentingly to defeat the proposed Constitutional Housing Amendment in California. And with this, and with other forces working, I believe this can be done.

Now I do not want to give the impression that there is nothing for the Negro himself to do. The Federal Government can't solve the whole problem. I said over and over again that if justice is to be a reality for the Negro in America, the Negro must feel a basic responsibility and a basic urge to struggle and sacrifice for that freedom and justice. And so this is the meaning of the movement. This is the meaning of what is taking place in our nation today. It is the meaning of the demonstrations. This is behind the freedom rides that you hear about here and there, the sitins, the standins, the wadeins, the kneelins, and all of the other "ins." They are all for the purpose of getting America out of the dilemma in which

she finds herself as a result of the continued existence of segregation and discrimination. And I am convinced that if this problem is to be solved, we must delve deeper into strong action programs to keep the issue before the forefront of the nation.

But as I have said all across the country, I am convinced that our struggle must be a nonviolent struggle. I am convinced that our basic thrust must be nonviolent. But if the Negro succumbs to the temptation of using violence in his struggle, unborn generations will be the recipients of a long and desolate night of bitterness, and our chief legacy to the future will be an endless reign of meaningless chaos. And there is another way, a way as old as the insights of Jesus of Nazareth, and as modern as the techniques of Mohandas K. Gandhi. There is another way. A way as old as Jesus saying, "Turn the other cheek." And as modern as Gandhi saying, through Thoreau, that noncooperation with evil is as much a moral obligation as is cooperation with good. And I believe that through this other way we will have a powerful pushing movement that will change the very structure and bring about justice and freedom. And there is power in nonviolent resistance. It has a way of disarming the opponent. It exposes his moral defenses. It weakens his morale and at the same time it works on his conscience, and he just doesn't know how to handle it. If he doesn't beat you, wonderful. If he beats you, you develop the quiet courage of accepting blows without retaliating. If he doesn't put you in jail, wonderful, nobody with any sense loves to go to jail. But if he puts you in jail, you go in that jail and transform it from a dungeon of shame to a haven of freedom and human dignity. Even if he tries to kill you. (APPLAUSE)

Even if he tries to kill you, you develop the inner conviction that there are some things so clear, some things so precious, so eternally true that they're worth dying for. (APPLAUSE) And if a man stands before some truth he may be 30 years old, some great principle stands at the door of his life, some great truth, some great issue and he refuses to take a stand because he's afraid that his home may get bombed or he's afraid that he may lose a job or he's afraid that he may get killed. He may go and live until he's 80, but he's just as dead at 30 as he will be at 80. (APPLAUSE)

And in a real sense the cessation of breathing in his life is merely the

belated announcement of an earlier death of the spirit. He died when he refused to take a stand for that which is right, for that which is noble, for that which is just, and that which is true. When one is committed to this he has power, and there is another thing about this method of non-violence. It says that it is possible to struggle to secure moral ends through moral means. One of the great debates of history has been over the whole question of ends and means. There have been those thinkers who argue that the end justifies the means. Sometimes whole systems of government have followed this theory. And I think one of the great weaknesses of the misguided philosophy of communism is right here. In so many instances in its theoretical structure, it argues that any method is justifiable in order to bring into being the goal of the end of the classless society. For this is where nonviolence would break with communism or any other system which argues that the end justifies the means. In a real sense the end is preexistent in the means. The means represent the ideal in the making and the end in process. And in the long run of history, destructive means cannot bring about constructive ends, and it is a beautiful thing to have a method of struggle which says you can work to secure moral ends through moral means. And the other thing that is beautiful about nonviolence is that you can come to the point that you stand up against the unjust system and yet not hate the perpetrators of that unjust system. Oh this is very difficult, but it is possible. The love ethic can stand at the center of the struggle of racial justice. So often we fail to see the danger of hate. Hate is as injurious to the hater as it is to the hated. Psychiatrists are telling us now that many of the strange things that happen in the subconscious, many of the inner conflicts, are rooted in hate. And they are saying, "Love or perish." Well, Jesus said it long time ago: "Love your enemies. Bless them that curse you. Pray for them that despitefully use you." And so in some way, even though it has been very difficult, we have been able to say to our most violent opponents:

We will match your capacity to inflict suffering by our capacity to endure suffering. We will meet your physical force with soul force. Do to us what you will and we will still love you. We cannot in all good conscience obey your unjust laws and so, throw us in jail, and we will still love you. Yes, bomb our homes and threaten our children and, as difficult as it is, we will still love you. Send your hooded perpetrators of violence into our communities at the midnight hour, and drag us

out on some wayside road and beat us and leave us half dead and, as difficult as it is, we will still love you. But be you assured that we will wear you down by our capacity to suffer and one day we will win our freedom. But we will not only win freedom for ourselves. We will so appeal to your heart and your conscience that we will win you in the process, and our victory will be a double victory.

This is a nonviolent method, and this is its philosophy. And I believe that if we will go this way, and if we will continue to stand up against the unjust system with determination, we will be able to bring into being that better day, that great America. We will be able to bring into being the brotherhood of man. And may I reiterate, this problem will not work itself out. May I say, my friends, that it is not merely a sectional problem. Many things have happened over the last few months to reveal to us that we are dealing with a national problem, and that no section of our country can boast of clean hands in the area of brotherhood. And it is one thing for a white person of good will outside of the South to rise up with righteous indignation when the busses burn with freedom riders in Anniston, Alabama; or when a church is bombed in Birmingham, Alabama, killing four innocent, beautiful, unoffending girls; or when a courageous James Meredith cannot go to the University of Mississippi without confronting riotous conditions. That same white person of good will outside the South must rise up with righteous indignation when a Negro cannot live in his neighborhood, or when a Negro cannot get a job in his particular firm, or when a Negro cannot join a particular fraternity, sorority, academic or professional society. If this problem is to be solved there must be a Divine discontent. Somebody must come to believe this thing is so important that they are willing to give all that they have to make the brotherhood of man a reality. If this problem is to be solved there is need for another Amos to rise up in our nation. And cry out in words echoing across the centuries, "Let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream." If this problem is to be solved, there is need for another Abraham Lincoln to see that this nation cannot survive half slave and half free. If this problem is to be solved, there is need for another Jefferson to see in the midst of an age amazingly adjusted to slavery and in words lifted to cosmic proportions, "We hold these truths to be self-evident. That all men are created equal. That they are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights." If this

problem is to be solved, somebody must say, with Jesus of Nazareth, "He who lives by the sword will perish by the sword." And when we come to see this, we will be able to emerge from the bleak and desolate midnight of man's inhumanity to man, into the bright and glittering daybreak of freedom and justice. This is our challenge, and this is our responsibility.

And may I say to you, my friends, that I still have faith in the future. I know these are difficult moments and so many of us are faced with problems day in and day out. And I know that we are still at the bottom of the economic ladder, still the last hired and the first fired. I know that we are forced to stand amidst conditions of oppression, trampled over day in and day night by the iron feet of injustice. But in spite of this I still believe that we have the resources in this nation to solve this problem, and that we will solve this problem. And so I can still sing our theme song "We shall overcome, we shall overcome, deep in my heart I do believe, we shall overcome, before the victory's won." (APPLAUSE) Before the victory is won some more will be scarred up a bit, but we shall overcome. Before the victory for justice is won, some more will have to be thrown into dark and lonesome jail cells, but we shall overcome. Before the victory is won, some will be misunderstood and called bad names. Some will be called "communists" and "red" simply because they believe in the brotherhood of man, but we shall overcome. Before the victory is won, somebody else like a Medgar Evers may have to face physical death, but if physical death is the price that some must pay to free their children from a permanent psychological death, then nothing can be more redemptive. Yes, we shall overcome. And I'll tell you why. Because the arc of the moral universe is long but it bends toward justice. We shall overcome because Carlisle is right, "No lie can live forever." We shall overcome because William Cullen Bryant is right, "Truth crushed to earth will rise again." We shall overcome because James Russell Lowell is right, "Truth forever on the scaffold, wrong forever on the throne. Yet that scaffold sways the future and behind the dim unknown standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch upon his own." We shall overcome because the Bible is right, "You shall reap what you sow." (APPLAUSE) And so with this faith we will be able to hew out of this mountain of despair the stone of hope. With this faith we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. This is the challenge!

And so I leave you tonight by saying, Work with this movement, support this movement, struggle for this movement, knowing that in struggling for freedom and justice and human dignity, you are being a co-worker with God. Stand up for justice, not next week, not even tomorrow, not even a hour from now, but at this moment, realizing a tiny little minute, just sixty seconds in it, I didn't choose it, I can't refuse it, it's up to me to use it. A tiny little minute, just sixty seconds in it, but eternity is in it. God bless you. (APPLAUSE)

NOTES

1. Dr. King's "I Have a Dream" address on the steps of Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C. was on August 28, 1963.
2. Various local black leaders also called San Diego the "Selma of the West," again referencing a locale with an extremely poor record on racial equality.
3. Waymon often invoked the following example to describe the abysmal state of San Diego's civil rights situation during the early 1960s: "President Obama was born in 1961. If his mother had come to San Diego to give birth, as a [white] woman married to a black man, she could not have entered a major hospital except for Mercy Hospital. None of the other hospitals would have accepted her. She [and her husband] could not have eaten in a restaurant or stayed in a hotel. Not a single hotel in San Diego allowed blacks to be there."
4. During this time, the overwhelming majority of African-Americans in San Diego were restricted to living in Logan Heights, Linda Vista, and Frontier (Old Town). This was not a San Diego phenomenon as Los Angeles was 99% segregated in 1960.
5. SDSU alumnus Joaquin Banda recalled that on the day of the 1964 King speech at San Diego State, "I noticed people handing out RED flyers [stating] that COMMUNIST Martin Luther King was speaking and discouraging us from attending. I believe, but [am] not certain, that they were from the John Birch Society." (E-mail correspondence April 5, 2014) The May 30, 1964, San Diego Union (A15, 18) reported that, "Leaflets purporting to identify King as a former student at a 'Communist training school' in Tennessee were distributed at SDS and Cal Western yesterday before King's appearances... [T]he leaflets, which bore the imprint of the 'San Diego Patriotic Forum,' included a picture of King purportedly taken in 1957 at the Highlander Folk School at Monteagle, Tenn. The leaflet said the school later was closed 'because it was charged with being subservive [sic].'" Dr. Ralph Abernathy of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, who was part of Dr. King's coterie for the California trip, explained to reporters that, "the school was finally closed, not because it was subversive, but because a lot of people objected to its being interracial." Former SDSU student Lou Curtiss also recalled the protests against King at State, noting that, "There were a few right-wing kind of pickets out there, the 'Students for Freedom' and that gang. You know they have their little signs—'If it walks like a duck and talks like a duck...'—and all those sorts of things." Lou Curtiss, interviewed by Tobin Vaughn, April 3, 2014; Lou Curtiss, interviewed by Seth Mallios, April 18, 2014.
6. Taylor Branch, *Parting the Waters: America in the King Years, 1954-63*. (New York: Touchstone, 1988), 906.
7. David P. Oppenheimer, "California's Anti-Discrimination Legislation, Proposition 14, and the Constitutional Protection of Minority Rights: The Fiftieth Anniversary of the California Fair Employment and Housing Act," 40 Golden Gate U. L. Rev. (2009) pp. 117-127.

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8. Nixon was so frustrated by this upset defeat that he announced his departure from politics, famously declaring, "You won't have Dick Nixon to kick around anymore." He would be president six years later.
9. The repeal of the Berkeley Fair-Housing ordinance occurred on the same day that Dr. King arrived in Birmingham, Alabama, the most segregated city in the United States, for one of his most famous confrontations.
10. At this time, King was incarcerated in Birmingham for "parading without a permit" and had just been lambasted in print by fellow clergymen for "unwise and untimely" practices. The civil rights leader made a rare public response to this criticism with his "Letter from a Birmingham Jail," penned in the margins of a smuggled-in newspaper. One of the most famous and quoted essays of the century, King's letter directly linked the African-American cause with the discipleship of Christianity and the formation of the nation, concluding, "One day the South will know that when these disinherited children of God sat down at lunch counters they were in reality standing up for the best in the American dream and the most sacred values in our Judeo-Christian heritage, and thusly, carrying our whole nation back to those great wells of democracy which were dug deep by the Founding Fathers in the formulation of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence." James Washington, ed., *A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings and Speeches of Martin Luther King, Jr.* (San Francisco: Harper Collins: 1986), 302.
11. *Alpine Echo* 7, no. 2 (January 16, 1964), 2, 7.
12. Proposition 14 would have added the following amendment to the California constitution: "Neither the State nor any subdivision or agency thereof shall deny, limit or abridge, directly or indirectly, the right of any person, who is willing or desires to sell, lease or rent any part or all of his real property, to decline to sell, lease or rent such property to such person or persons as he, in his absolute discretion, chooses."
13. William H. Brown, Jr., "The Role of the Real Estate Industry," *Economic Geography* 48, no. 1 (January 1972): 66-78.
14. Charles Rice, "Bias in Housing: Toward a New Approach," *Santa Clara Lawyer* 6 (1965): 162-171.
15. King was simultaneously battling overt racism in the South—e.g., on January 18, 1963, incoming Alabama governor George Wallace called for "segregation now, segregation tomorrow, segregation forever!" in his inaugural address—and better-disguised bigotry in the North and West (like California's Proposition 14).
16. Both King, Sr. and his son were born "Michael Luther King" but would change their names in honor of the seminal Protestant, Martin Luther.
17. Willie J. Horton, Jr., interviewed by Seth Mallios, April 11, 2014.
18. Branch (1989) has an extended discussion and analysis about how King and his colleagues prepared to fight segregation on public transit in the South long before Parks' epic confrontation and waited for the perfect set of circumstances to launch their protest.
19. Chida Warren-Darby, "The Mortician and the King," *Voice & Viewpoint* 52, no. 3 (January 19, 2012), A1, B3, C8.
20. Willie J. Horton, Jr., interviewed by Tobin Vaughn, April 9, 2014.
21. Robert Fikes, Jr., "The Struggle for Equality" in *"America's Finest City": A History of the San Diego NAACP* (San Diego: San Diego State University, 2012), 8.
22. Monica Garske, "SDSU Seeks Mementos from MLK Jr., Campus Address," KNSD, NBC 7 San Diego, April 3, 2014.
23. Chida Warren-Darby, "The Mortician and the King," *Voice & Viewpoint* 52, no. 3 (January 19, 2012), A1, B3, C8.
24. Most of the pictures of King during the 1964 San Diego visit, including those with Oliver upon

landing, being interviewed by Keen, speaking at SDSC, and lecturing at Cal Western, show King wearing a dark suit with a dark tie. Only the image of King with Hartwell Ragsdale shows King with a dark suit and a light-colored tie. This also suggests that the King/Ragsdale meeting was from a different time, possibly 1960 instead of 1964, unless one believes that King started the day with a dark tie, switched to a light tie for the meeting with Ragsdale, and then switched back to a dark tie for his speaking engagements.

25. National media coverage captured many of the St. Augustine atrocities, including the ill-fated attempt of protestors to integrate the beaches of adjacent Anastasia Island. Segregationists beat and drove the activists into the water, many of whom could not swim. As the Keen interview detailed, King's cottage was fired upon while he traveled to California, but his troubles in St. Augustine were just beginning. He would be arrested there on June 11, 1964, which further escalated racial tensions. This conflict then erupted in one of the most dramatic episodes of the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s (and one whose disturbing photographs were most widely disseminated by the media) when black and white protestors jumped into the whites-only Monson Motor Lodge Pool and refused to leave; hotel manager James Brock responded by pouring muriatic acid into the pool.
26. Brooklyn CORE activists protested the opening of the World's Fair in New York on April 22, 1964, by blocking cars on major highways, attempting to cause the cars to run out of gas and stall on the roads. Their "stall-in" efforts would have been more successful had there not been a major generational rift within Brooklyn's CORE membership—elders were against these brash tactics and more youthful members even advocated releasing rats when President Johnson made his address—and had terrible weather not kept crowds to an opening-day minimum.
27. Democratic Alabama governor George Wallace announced his intention to run for president in opposition to President Kennedy a week before JFK was assassinated. He continued his pursuit of the presidency against President Johnson, entering the democratic primaries in 1964 and did well in Wisconsin, Indiana, and Maryland.
28. This question refers to prominent Republicans campaigning in California but not pursuing California offices. Nelson Rockefeller was the liberal Republican governor of New York, and Barry Goldwater was a conservative U.S. senator from Arizona.
29. Ross Barnett was the democratic governor of Mississippi from 1960-64; he was a staunch segregationist. Paul B. Johnson, Jr. succeeded Barnett, serving from 1964-68; he was also a democrat who opposed integration and supported Jim Crow laws.
30. The Greek Bowl, a WPA project that was formally dedicated on May 2, 1941, is part of SDSU's Historic District, which is on the National Register of Historic Places. Seth Mallios, *Hail Montezuma: The Hidden Treasures of San Diego State* (San Diego: Montezuma Publishing, 2012). During the 1970s, students and university officials began referring to it predominantly as the "Open Air Theatre," the name it uses today.
31. *Daily Aztec* 43, no. 110 (May 29, 1964), 1; *The San Diego Union*, May 29, 1964, A-13.
32. Cathy Pearson, *Daily Aztec* 43, no. 111 (June 2, 1964), 9.
33. *The San Diego Union*, May 30, 1964, A18.
34. Mary Cook, interviewed by Seth Mallios, April 14, 2014.
35. James Sibbet, e-mail correspondence, April 3, 2014.
36. Monica Garske, "SDSU Seeks Mementos from MLK Jr., Campus Address," *KNSD*, NBC 7 San Diego, April 3, 2014.
37. Ralph Clem, interviewed by Tobin Vaughn, March 6, 2014.
38. In 1907, Lela Goodwin was San Diego State's first African-American student. Mallios, *Hail Montezuma!*
39. For example, in March 1964, twenty San Diego State College students traveled to Atlanta to

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help with voter registration, a nationwide program sponsored by the Y.M.C.A. and aimed at combatting racial discrimination at the polls.

40. Mary Oliver, interviewed by Michael Armstrong, January 12, 2007. Interview provided to authors by Darrel Oliver.
41. Darrell Oliver, interviewed by Breana Campbell, April 29, 2014.
42. Although the footage of King' SDSC speech from Channel 8 is grainy, it does appear that nearly all of the audience was white. This may have led King to observe and remark, by contrast, that the Cal Western crowd was notably ethnically diverse.
43. Darrel Oliver, interviewed by Breana Campbell, April 29, 2014.
44. *The San Diego Union*, May 30, 1964, A15.
45. Darrel Oliver, interviewed by Breana Campbell, April 29, 2014.
46. Raymond E. Wolfinger and Fred I. Greenstein, in "The Repeal of Fair Housing in California: An Analysis of Referendum Voting," *American Political Science Review*, 42 (September 1968), 753-769, revealed that Californians overwhelmingly voted in favor of Proposition 14 according to race (white), region (Southern California), income levels (wealthy), and political ideology (Republican).
47. It was not until 1968 that the federal Fair Housing Act was passed, signed into law by President Johnson during the King assassination riots.
48. The authors were denied access to a copy by Stanford University's Martin Luther King, Jr. Research and Education Institute—even though its Online King Records Access website (OKRA) indicated that it had a copy of the Cal Western speech; Director Tenisha Hart Armstrong explained that, "The King Institute is not an archive." (E-mail correspondence from Tenisha Hart Armstrong, February 26, 2014). The authors then failed to get a copy from KPBS, which aired the speech in its entirety on January 20, 1992, but subsequently misplaced the audio during an archive transfer. After these missteps, the importance of locating the speech and making it part of the permanent historic record of San Diego was clear. Ironically, the address transcribed below came from Jack Rohrer, who had taped the re-broadcast of the speech off of the radio in 1992. Although initial attempts to obtain the speech through Point Loma Nazarene University officials were unsuccessful, they would fortunately locate the address in time for their anniversary celebration in 2014.
49. Dr. King gave different versions of this Cal Western speech on multiple occasions. In fact, the last Sunday morning sermon of his life on March 31, 1968, in Washington, D.C. was also entitled, "Remaining Awake through a Great Revolution." Regardless of context, the "Remaining Awake..." address always began with the Rip Van Winkle story, which came from a book of sermons by prominent American Methodist preacher Halford E. Luccock, entitled, *Marching off the Map: And Other Sermons* (Harper: New York, 1952). Arizona State University English professor and MLK specialist Keith Miller explained that, "For most of his career, Dr. King had about a dozen sermons that he gave and re-gave, sometimes mixing material. He had hours and hours of memorized material that he could give without a single note. And sometimes, he gave other speeches or sermons too. Hearing him was like going to a concert and hearing something familiar with something new (e.g., a comment on a very recent event, like the St. Augustine attacks). E-mail correspondence Keith Miller, February 7, 2014.