

Volume 1

Issue 1983 *Symposium-The Enforcement of Human
Rights Norms: Domestic and Transnational
Perspectives*

Article 2

1983

Dedication - Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

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Recommended Citation

(1983) "Dedication - Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.," *NYLS Journal of Human Rights*: Vol. 1 : Iss. 1983 , Article 2.
Available at: https://digitalcommons.nyls.edu/journal_of_human_rights/vol1/iss1983/2

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DEDICATION—DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

In 1983 Congress and the President acknowledged the social contributions of the late Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. by making Dr. King's birthday a national holiday. Yet never since the assassination of the civil rights leader has his dream of racial equality in the United States seemed farther from realization.

Disparities in income, housing, and educational facilities between the nation's white majority and its racial minorities remain as great today as they were fifteen years ago. In some areas, like that of youth unemployment, differences have grown. Social segregation, the most visible index of racial division, is still a fundamental fact of life in the United States.

Given this reality, the actions of the present administration in Washington are an affront to all who believe in the goal of a fully integrated society. As described by Robert Plotkin and the Washington Council of Lawyers in the following pages, federal rights enforcement agencies have been pulled out of the fight against racism in employment, housing, voting, and schools. The administration has announced that the government will not play an affirmative role in ending economic and social wrongs against minority citizens. Clearly, this is a time of crisis for human rights enforcement in the United States. In crisis, however, is the potential for positive change.

The Constitution and the Bill of Rights were the ultimate products of a revolution against British colonialism. The great protections of the fourteenth amendment were born in a civil war against the slave system. The "equality revolution" manifested in decisions of the Warren Court and in the social legislation of the 1960's was brought about by the courageous acts of tens of thousands of Black people and their supporters in non-violent Freedom Rides, sit-ins, and demonstrations to end segregation. Our nation's history is precedent for action against injustice.

We believe that the goal of racial equality, so eloquently espoused by Martin Luther King, Jr., has become inextricably part of the ideas of justice and fairness for which our country stands.

No administration can deny for long that part of our national purpose.

Dr. King alerted the nation to injustices suffered by Black people. The civil rights movement he led brought with it a heightened awareness of the importance of individual human rights in the framework of our social system. To the extent that the *Human Rights Annual* carries on that vital work, our publication will be a success.

— *The Staff*
1983-84