



Rev. Dr. Wendell Anthony
President, Detroit Branch NAACP

Jimmy Settles
Vice President, UAW Ford
Chairman, 2013 Freedom Walk

Tony Brown
Coordinator, 1963 Freedom Walk
Grand Marshal, 2013 Freedom Walk

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OFFICIAL PRESS STATEMENT

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50th Anniversary Commemoration

We Shall Not Default on Our Freedom!

It has been 50 years since Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. walked down Woodward Avenue in what would be portrayed as the "Walk to Freedom". We are indebted to those men and women who laid the foundation for Dr. King to use the City of Detroit as a national platform to engage in the most necessary discussion for jobs, justice, and peace.

We remember with tremendous gratitude the Rev. Dr. C.L. Franklin, Chairman of the Detroit Council For human rights; Mr. Benjamin McFall, Co-Chairman and Director; John H. Burns, Finance Chairman and Director; Mr. Tony Brown Coordinator and Director; Rev. Alvin B. Cleage, Director; Rev. Mrs. Ordie Burns, Director; Rev. William C. Ardrey, Director; Mr. Arthur Cartwright, Director; Mr. Jackie Vaughan III, Youth Chairman and Director; Mr. Snow Grigsby Director; Ms. Lillian Hatcher, Women's Chairman and Director; along with Walter Reuther, then President UAW. These were the stalwarts who organized for freedom, justice, and peace.

In 2013 it is not they, but it is all of us. Faith based, NAACP labor, community, city, state and nation who continue to Walk to Freedom. The names may be different but the cause is still the same. We need jobs. We need justice. We need peace. We need the dream of Dr. King to become a daily reality in all of our lives.

That is why on Friday, June 21, we will have Voices for Action panel discussions dealing with ending racism, anti-Semitism, islamaphobia, jobs, economic development, putting the neighbor back in the neighborhood, ending youth violence... to name only a few.

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This will be held at the International Training Center of UAW-Ford at 151 West Jefferson. Sessions will run from 8 a.m. until 4 p.m. It is free and open to the public. Panel leaders for these discussions will be both national and local experts and workers in the fields currently providing strategies for new directions. We are also pleased to welcome Mr. Tony Brown, the original coordinator of the 1963 March, as a special speaker on Friday.

As this will be a national march we are pleased to announce Mr. Ben Jealous, President and CEO of the NAACP; Rev. Jesse Louis Jackson, Founder of Rainbow PUSH; Rev. Dr. CT Vivian, Lieutenant to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.; Mr. Dick Gregory, comedian and social activist; Martin Luther King III, son of The Dreamer; Rev. Al Sharpton, National Talk Show Host and Founder of the National Action Network; along with national board members and organizational leaders from throughout the nation will join us here in the City of Detroit.

Detroit is the place to be, particularly on June 21 and 22, 2013.

We encourage and invite all people, all races, young and old to join with us for this historic moment in time. Detroit hosted the 30th commemoration in 1993, the 40th commemoration in 2003, and now we are blessed to host the 50th commemoration in 2013.

For those who say I didn't march in '63, for those who say I couldn't march in '93, for those who say I almost made it in 2003, we say that you can take a step towards freedom, justice, and equality in 2013. It is not where you have been, it is about where you are going. We are going towards a better Detroit, better Michigan, better jobs, better justice, and a better peace in our communities. We urge everyone to join us in this grand celebration of transforming the dream of 1963 into the reality of 2013.

People often ask why we are marching in commemoration of the dream. Quite simply because some things need to change. In the words of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. "change does not roll in on the wheels of inevitability but comes through continuous struggle. So we must straighten our backs and work for our freedom. A man can't ride you unless your back is bent". As we Walk to Freedom down Woodward Avenue we will walk with our backs straight, and our eyes focused, looking towards a brighter future.

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