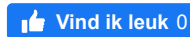




Justice resounds in MLK's words 46 years after his death



By [Jordan Gass-Pooré - Spring 2015](#) Jan 21, 2015



Click on photo to enlarge or download: The National Park Service celebrates the legacy of Martin Luther King Jr. on Monday with a wreath. It stands at the base of the 30-foot statue of King on the National Mall. Similar wreath-laying ceremonies took place around the U.S. in observance of the slain civil rights leader, who was assassinated in 1968. SHFWire photo by Jordan Gass-Poore

WASHINGTON – Martin Luther King Jr. had a tendency to quote other people in his works, Jan Buerger, park ranger for the [National Park Service](#), said in a talk Monday about the civil rights leader.

The quotes King chose, and the five that are inscribed in his [memorial](#), are about justice for all

people, Buerger said.

“We’ve got a lot of issues that have come up that have to do with justice,” Buerger said about why she chose the theme of justice for her Martin Luther King Jr. Day discussion.

The King memorial, dedicated in 2011, the 48th anniversary of the [March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom](#), was inspired by his legendary “I Have a Dream” speech.

King is the fourth person who was not president to be honored in a national park in Washington.

Other memorials that commemorate non-presidents honor engineer and inventor [John Ericsson](#), naval hero [John Paul Jones](#) and politician [George Mason](#).

Buerger said the quote in King’s memorial that caught her attention was from his 1968 sermon in D.C. “Remaining Awake through a Great Revolution”: “We shall overcome because the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice.”

She said this quote, chosen by President Barack Obama to be featured in the [rug](#) in the Oval Office, is paraphrased from the 19th-century Massachusetts minister and abolitionist Theodore Parker.

King routinely discussed the theme of justice and quoted other people in his speeches. He initially gave credit to those he quoted, Buerger said.



Click on photo to enlarge or download: A young boy at the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial on Monday reads King's quote: "The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy." This is an excerpt from a collection of King's sermons published in 1963. SHFWire photo by Jordan Gass-Poore

Most of the people listening to King during his lifetime were Jewish or Christian, she said, so they knew the context of these messages.

"We've kind of lost that," Buerger said, adding that it's still important to understand the context of King's quotes.

People enter the King memorial through the Mountain of Despair, two massive white granite halves, toward the Stone of Hope.

A crescent-shaped wall, behind a 30-foot statue of King, is inscribed with quotations from his works.

In 2013 the park removed the quote: "I was a drum major for justice, peace and righteousness" from the north side of the Stone of Hope after public objections that it was an edit of what King originally said and that it negatively represented him.

The quote has not been replaced.

King's original quote in his 1968 sermon "[The Drum Major Instinct](#)" identified the traits he wanted to be remembered by if he was remembered.

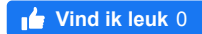
Buerger said when King delivered this sermon he believed he wasn't going to live much longer.

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About Jordan Gass-Pooré - Spring 2015

Jordan Gass-Pooré is a Spring 2015 reporter for the SHFWire from Texas State University.



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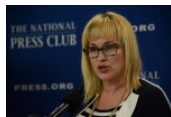
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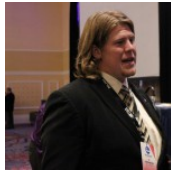
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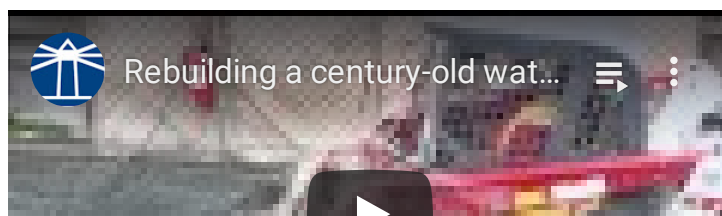


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