September—December 2011

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Southern Christian Leadership Conference
NATIONAL MAGAZINE

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Dr. King's *Nonviolence Movement*

One on One with

Newly Elected
SCLC National President
Isaac Newton Farris, Jr.

Farewell Salute to
Rev. Dr. Howard Creecy, Jr.
& Rev. Fred Shuttlesworth

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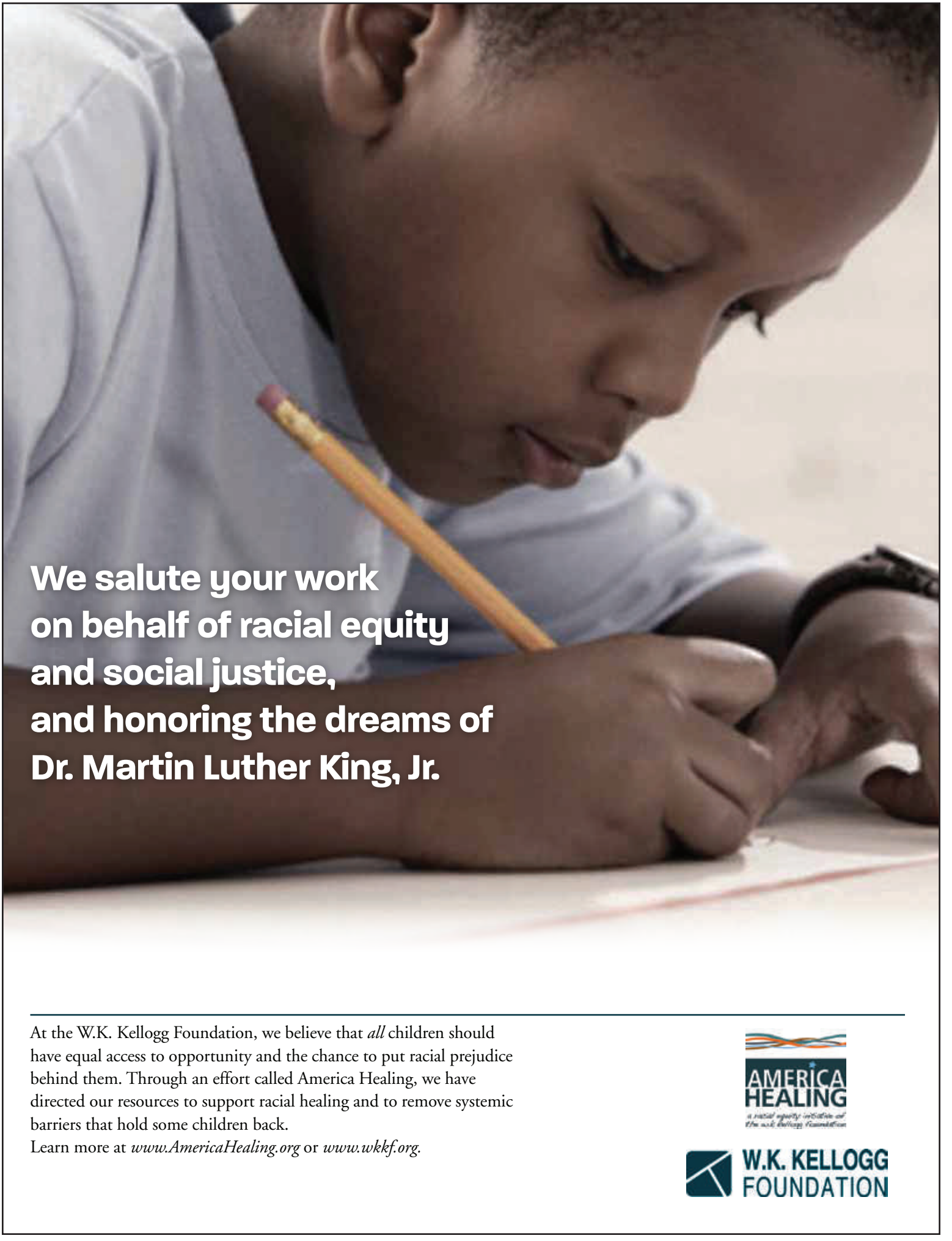

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Romare Bearden, *Train Whistle Blues* (detail), watercolor, pen, pencil and collage on paper, circa 1979. Estimate $20,000 to $30,000.

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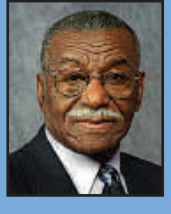

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On the anniversary of the "I Have a Dream" speech, history will once again be made on the National Mall. The Washington, D.C. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial will be unveiled as the first and only tribute to a man of peace and to a person of color. This August 28th, why just read about history when you can be a part of it? Come to Washington, D.C. and celebrate what will forever stand as a testament to his timeless ideals and legacy of peace.

Awaken his spirit in all of us

Chevrolet is honored to celebrate the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Rev. Dr. Bernard LaFayette, Jr.

message from the chairman:

I would like to thank the chapters of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) for faithfully supporting our beloved organization. Over the past few years, we have endured a number of transitions that for many were disorienting to say the least. Our chapters and affiliates, nonetheless, have remained committed to the causes of peace and justice. Our chapters and affiliates have exemplified extraordinary courage amidst some of our most difficult moments—for the loyalty our chapters have demonstrated, I am grateful!

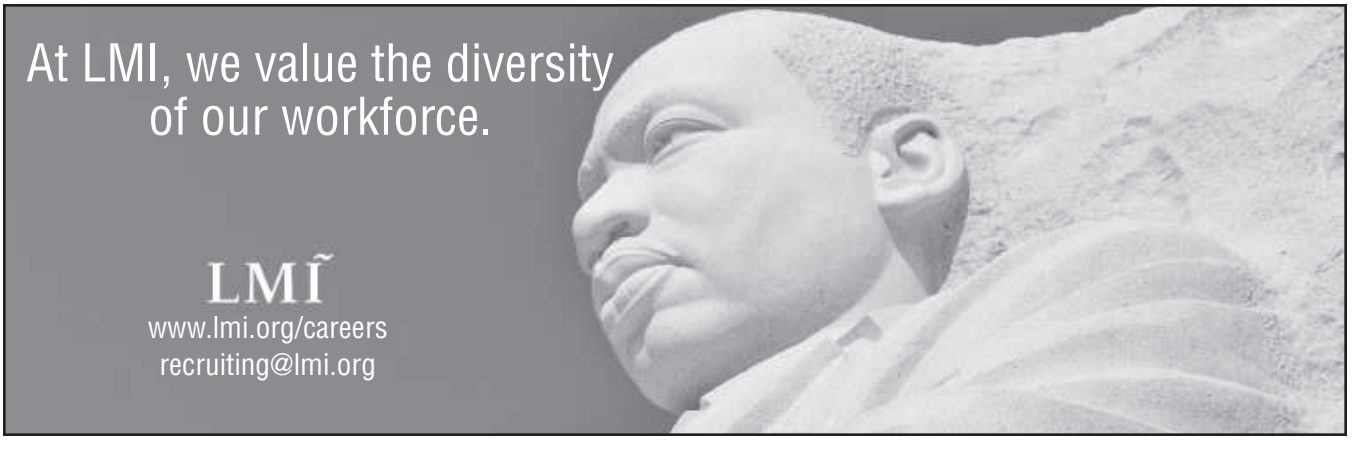
For many, SCLC has been a family and companion; and for our nation's disenfranchised and disinherited SCLC has been an advocate. I believe that SCLC's commitment to ensure justice, equity and the provision of resources to the historically underserved is the reason why our chapters and affiliates have faithfully stood behind our efforts. SCLC chapters and affiliates are a courageous contingent of servant leaders who collectively understand the imperative of consistently pursuing equity and peace.

I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to have worked with the SCLC staff for more than 40 years. As the current Chairman of the National Board of Directors, I feel it necessary to extend my gratitude to all SCLC supporters; but, specifically, SCLC chapters and affiliates as they are the lifeblood of the organization and foundation of all we do.

Again, thank you SCLC chapters and affiliates for your tenacity. You all embody the legacy of freedom fighting and courageous persuasion modeled for us through our founder and hero, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Please review my accompanying article as I expound upon the theme of courage in the movement *(see page 16)*.

Your Brother in Peace,
Dr. Bernard LaFayette, Jr.
SCLC National Chairman



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By Bernard LaFayette, Jr.
SCLC National Chairman

Dr. King's Nonviolence Movement

ATLANTA

Fifty years ago today I arrived in Montgomery, Ala. on a Greyhound bus. I was there as part of the Freedom Riders, a diverse group of people who had volunteered to ride buses through the South to test the Supreme Court's recent ban on segregation in waiting rooms and restaurants that served interstate travelers.

I was one of twenty-two Freedom Riders on that bus. We well knew the dangers we faced: other riders had already been attacked in Anniston and Birmingham. And, indeed, soon after we disembarked a group of hooligans attacked us. I saw three of my friends, William Barbee, John Lewis and Jim Zwerg, beaten unconscious. I suffered a cracked rib, but luckily I could still move around. Eventually the mob let up, and several of us were rushed to the hospital.

The next evening, the Freedom Riders joined local blacks in a meeting of 1,500 people at the First Baptist Church on Ripley Street, in downtown Montgomery. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and others from the Southern Christian Leadership Conference joined the gathering to offer words of encouragement and support on our journey for equality.

As the sun set, a mob of whites began to gather around the church. As the crowd grew in number—eventually as many as 3,000 people appeared it also grew in vitriol and hostility. The crowd began hurling rocks and bricks through the stained glass windows, and tear gas drifted throughout the sanctuary. While outside people flipped over cars and set them on fire, inside Dr. King attempted to reach U.S. Attorney General Robert Kennedy to request federal protection.

All of us gathered in the church were uncertain about our safety; I certainly felt in danger. Many feared that the church would be bombed. After all, not only had Dr. King's house been bombed with his wife, child and a family friend inside during the 1956 Montgomery Bus Boycott campaign, but the very church where we were gathered was also bombed in 1957.

There was little we felt we could do but wait and pray. We sat in the church and sang freedom songs and other church songs that strengthened our spirits and dwarfed our fears. Occasionally, I would take a deep breath to get a little relief from the chest pains that resulted from my fractured ribs. At times I wondered whether it would be better to be safe in jail or to be there, in the church, surrounded by a vicious mob.

Eventually Dr. King mounted the lectern and announced that he had a special mission for which he would need volunteers. The main qualification, Dr. King noted, was that he only wanted volunteers who were sure about their commitment to nonviolence. He didn't need hotheads, or people overcome by anger. Needless to say, no one rushed the pulpit. After my experience at the bus station, I didn't feel I could handle another mob, so I held back too.

However, about ten or twelve people eventually did volunteer for the mission, which Dr. King then explained. Reports had come in over the phone that a group of black men, led by cab drivers, were mobilizing at a nearby service station with guns and other weapons and were planning to attack the mob and rescue the people trapped in the church. Some of them, no doubt, had family members and friends in the church.

Black cab drivers were an important part of the local civil rights movement. A number of them had helped out in the car pooling efforts during the bus boycott. After the boycott was over, some of them formed their own cab companies to serve black customers. But they were more than just drivers: some saw themselves as part of a security force as they moved passengers around the segregated city.

Dr. King and his movement were committed to nonviolence, but not everyone in Montgomery shared their view. When Dr. King's home was bombed a number of black men gathered outside it to stand guard. These men included veterans of World War II and the Korean War who knew how to use a weapon. Some were from rural areas and were experienced hunters and probably more experienced with weapons than their white counterparts. Had these men attacked the mob surrounding the church, the story of the Freedom Rides would have had a much different ending.

Dr. King's mission then was to persuade the cab drivers to abandon their rescue attempt, lay down their weapons, and go home. His small group gathered at the front door of the church lined up in twos, then they walked out the doors—as if they were marching.

There was an unforgettable silence as they passed out of the church. We watched as they walked through the howling violent crowd; I was sure I would never see them again. And yet, for all the yelling, the mob didn't touch them—such is the power of nonviolence.

About an hour passed. Suddenly, out of the dark night, they all reappeared, unharmed. The mission was complete: Dr. King had convinced the cab drivers to abandon their mission. This was no small miracle. Dr. King showed through this act of courage in this most harrowing moment of the campaign that fear was not a factor for him. It was, at that point in the Freedom Rides, the greatest lesson he could have offered.

Early the next morning, with the help of the Alabama National Guard (which arrived after hours of pressure from Kennedy on the Alabama governor) we were able to evacuate the church unharmed. Dr. King's courageous mission to our would-be rescuers prevented great bloodshed and kept the Freedom Rides on its nonviolent course. And it showed us what the Freedom Rides and the movement overall was about.

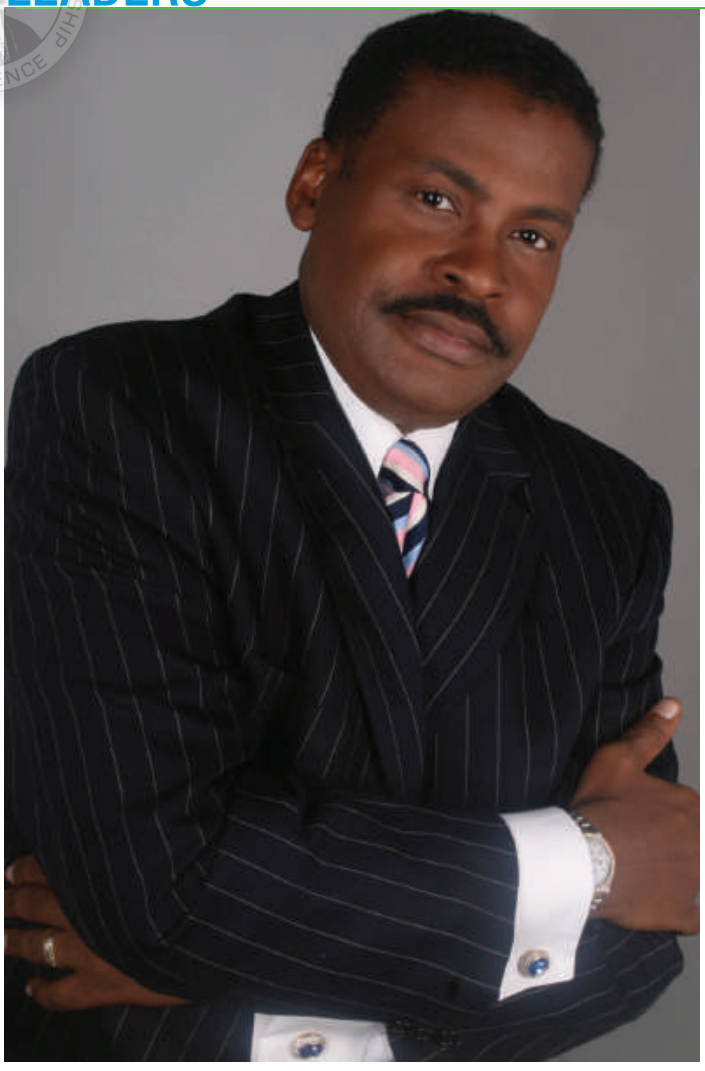
The man and the movement were the cause behind the decision by each of us to stand up and take action, even if it required extraordinary courage. If we were ever in doubt, Dr. King reminded us why we had chosen to leave the comforts of our homes, college campuses, and family and friends to travel to unknown places fully aware of the potential dangers and the possibility of not returning. **He showed how quiet strength could overcome violence, how courage can overcome fear, and how peace can overcome the most awful hate.** SCLC

Bernard LaFayette, Jr. is a scholar-in-residence at the Candler School of Theology at Emory University, Atlanta.

1961, Montgomery, Ala.: The Freedom Riders are welcomed by more than a thousand people at Rev. Ralph Abernathy's First Baptist Church. But an angry white mob gathers outside and everyone inside is trapped.

(Picture, Page 166, Top, Right) Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. who flew to Montgomery to support and help the Freedom Riders, speaks to the fearful people inside the church: "*We are going to be calm and we are going to stand up for what we know is right. Alabama will have to face the fact that we are determined to be free... Fear not, we've come too far to turn back.* (Above) During Dr. King's address a white mob surrounded the building. The governor of Alabama declared a state of martial law. At 4:00 a.m. troops arrived at the church and escorted parishioners safely to their homes.

As the disturbance outside continues, some inside the church apprehensively keep their vigil while others sleep in the pews.



One on One with

New SCLC President & CEO
Isaac Newton Farris, Jr.

Interview by Arit Essien

He has been a stalwart King Family soldier and confidant for decades with a time line of service upholding the legacy including serving as President and CEO of the King Center, along with a background of several political support roles. Now the election of Dr. King's 48-year-old nephew, Isaac Newton Farris Jr., as the 8th SCLC president has been referred to as "a return to the family business," and as "the thrust of young new leadership."

Farris's election comes however during a turbulent time in the organization's history with the sudden unexpected passing of former SCLC President Rev. Howard Creecy who charted SCLC on a path of rebranding and reinvention. Farris sat down recently with SCLC T.O.D.A.Y. at SCLC National Headquarters in Atlanta to discuss the current transitional climate of SCLC, his objectives for moving the organization forward and current societal issues.

Great leaders become legends

The only way to really see change is to speak up and fight for it. Lockheed Martin supports the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and their T.O.D.A.Y initiative to transform our destiny through activism and youth. We work hard every day to promote the same principles of personal responsibility, leadership potential, and community service.

LOCKHEED MARTIN

SCLC: How have your first 30 days been for you transitioning into the role that your great friend and predecessor Rev. Creecy previously held?

FARRIS: It's been a mix of exuberance but also sadness because I was pretty close to our former President Rev. Howard Creecy. I miss being around him, strategizing with him—but on the other hand I'm excited about the challenges that lie ahead of us and the opportunity that we have to remake SCLC, and to make it relevant for today.

SCLC: T.O.D.A.Y. is an acronym concerning the youth, correct?

FARRIS: It is…Which really I think cuts straight to where we are headed. It is an acronym for transforming our destiny through activism and youth. We certainly have an emphasis on the youth because those are our future leaders; those are our future policy makers; those are our future voters; they're our future tax payers. Most of the stuff that we're dealing with impacts them, so they should be a part of it. That's not to say that we don't appreciate the veterans who have come before us and who are still with us and who provide us with a lot of support and wisdom.

SCLC: What are some of the strategies that you will employ in engaging the youth?

FARRIS: We're in the middle of a pretty aggressive campaign to establish college chapters, something that SCLC has never done before. I think it highlights where our focus really is. The youth are clearly a major part of everything we are trying to do. We also want to speak with them in their language about their concerns. Civil rights as it's traditionally known is not necessarily one of their concerns. The youth of today, thanks to SCLC have grown up in integrated schools and in an integrated society, so their challenges are different.

SCLC: What are the specific actions that will be taken to keep SCLC relevant today?

FARRIS: First of all poverty, because you really can't have the *beloved community* that my Uncle spoke often about if you don't have resources. And then education, which truly is the civil right issue of today. The reason is because education is becoming harder and harder for people to attain beyond the post-secondary level—and we're talking about hard working middle class families with two parents working in the home who are going about doing their jobs honestly and diligently everyday; and doing everything that society has asked them to do and still they don't know how they're going to be able to help their kids go to college. And then we have a political landscape that has to be addressed. We are living in a time right now where we have the political will to give the wealthy tax write-offs for the second vacation home that they don't even live in year-round, but that same political will is not there to give that hard working family a tax write-off to help offset the expense of sending their kids to college or to any education institution for that fact. That's where we've got to start—poverty and education and certainly we'll always have to be engaged with policy makers.

SCLC: What are your thoughts on helping to stop needless violence?

FARRIS: We've got to improve the economic climate. We've got to do our best to try to recapture what increasingly is looking like a lost generation of people of who have turned to a glamorized life of crime. At some point we've got to start taking some responsibility ourselves, we and society need to do our part to create an economy where people can have a fair shot to create the resources that they need to make it in life. We've also got to reexamine some of the things we are doing and influences we are allowing. Kids were coming up with a notion of, "Work hard and everything in the world will be possible." That notion is disappearing to, "Strap up, go out and take it." Our kids are being bombarded with that message everyday through rap music and pop culture.

Most people in my generation had parents who would spank them. The notion of calling Division of Family and Chid Services (DFCS) or somebody never occurred to me. We've got a situation now that kids who are disciplined can actually call the government. Kids are very hip to that. We are losing a moral fiber and that does not mean that everyone has to be a priest or a nun.

I do think faith in God is a good thing, but I'm not trying to make saints out of people. It starts with our politics, the noncaring environment and stuff happening at home. I know that we working hard trying to do the right things for our family and sometimes it's easy for us to leave the rearing of our kids to the TV or to the computer, or the school. We never got to get engaged. There's a difference between discipline and abuse. My parents never balled their fist up at me. Also our business community has got to become more pro-family. We've got to be a little more flexible in how we deal with our workforce and the needs of our workforce. It's just not the blame of the Tea Party, or government; it's a complete package.

SCLC: What is the perspective of SCLC as far as the economy is concerned?

FARRIS: Here again that is a civil rights issue. It starts with education. When I say education that's a pretty broad spectrum because it encompasses a lot of things, not merely the access which has to be addressed but we've also got to reexamine how we're education our people and what we're educating them for. The once thought to be traditional four-year liberal arts education might not be the move for everyone now because our society and needs have changed. Here in America, things have changed from an agricultural / manufacturing-based economy more towards mass-science and technological and that calls for different skills. I quite frankly I don't know if our educational system, as good as it is preparing the masses for that new reality. The goal for everyone might not be the Harvard or Yale; community colleges have a large role to play here; technical colleges have a large role.

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Education certainly is the root and it cuts across all color lines, everyone is affected by that. We have college-degreed individuals walking around who cannot find work.

SCLC: President Farris, over the next twelve months, give us a breakdown of the goals and objectives that you hope to put into place?

FARRIS: The first six months quite frankly are more internal. Our organization is coming out of a traumatic period and there are things that we need to address internally to make us more effective in today's economy. There's retooling and restructuring of our systems, our structure and how we do what we do. Simultaneously, it does not mean that we are limiting ourselves, but we have to have our house in order before we can help others to get the houses in order.

The second phase, the next six months, will be more externally focused ramping up our campaign for the college chapters and strengthening our relationships with our current chapters throughout the nation; also integrating them more in our day-to-day work and strengthening our lines of communication so that we have a better sense of what happening on the ground in the various communities where we are. We are also rebuilding our board and there is a bit of enthusiasm out there; we're seeing new members coming in so naturally we feel good about that. We also want to diversify our membership a bit more by reaching out in different communities. For example, just earlier in September, we signed an alliance with the Korean community. As I said, we are a human rights organization. While we do have the name Christian in our name, we are certainly not limiting ourselves to people of that persuasion.

SCLC: What are your thoughts on the execution of Troy Davis?

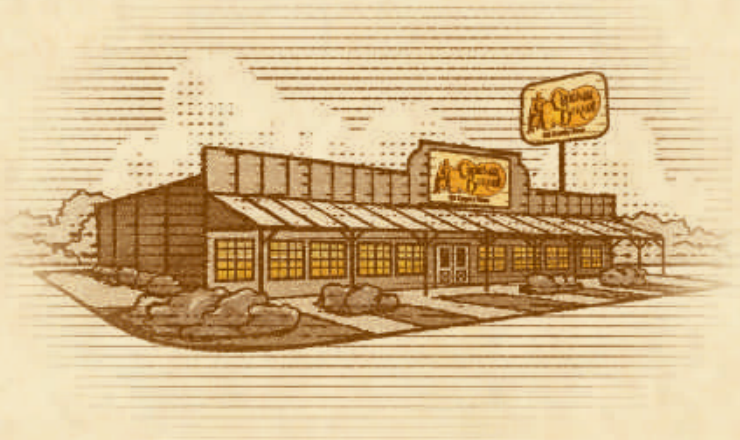
FARRIS: First of all, it's a real travesty of justice what happened to Troy Davis. Our legal standard is beyond a reasonable doubt and there certainly was doubt here. Two, once again we've got someone about to lose their life who really did not have the resources to adequately defend himself.

We've got a governor in Georgia that apparently does not have the conscience to stand up. I personally do not believe in the death penalty. My grandmother was shot in church while she was playing the "Lord's Prayer" on the piano. The guy was caught immediately and was convicted and sentenced to death; but we intervened to stop that. I have a track record on this and it is close to my heart. Policy makers need to look at the fact that life is sacred and we need to be really sure before we attempt to play God and take someone's life.

SCLC: As the greatest civil rights organization of its kind in the world, what are SCLC's present missions and objectives?

FARRIS: The mission and objective will never change. We are the voice of the voiceless. Unfortunately, there's been a misconception that we are just the voice of the African Americans. We are the voice of all humans who are voiceless; that's Hispanic, that's Christian, that's Muslim, that's Hindu, Jewish; that's also people of different sexual orientations. We are the voice of the voiceless, and we will always be that. The only thing that's changing is our goals. Primarily we have achieved most of our past goals. That's not to say that there is no racism that still exists in our society; it does, but there is not racism that is institutionalized or legally sanctioned for racism. We are at the hearts and minds stages now.

As great as an organization as we are—and we are the greatest of our type in American history but we're not that great that we can get inside of people's heads, all we can do is create the environment for that to flourish. Our goals and our tactics will change, but or mission will never change. sclc



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Uncle M.L.

By Isaac Newton Farris, Jr.
SCLC National President & CEO

Unfortunately I never met the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., but fortunately, I did meet Uncle M.L. (short for Martin Luther), the name he was referred to by his parents, siblings, family and friends as he was growing up to become Dr. King. During his lifetime, I was too young to understand or be aware of the societal injustices that were surrounding me, and certainly too young to comprehend his great dream for America, or his nonviolent philosophy as an instruction manual on how to live one's life.

My memories are of a guy I used to play with. A man that I would curiously notice during the hours of family time at the annual Thanksgiving dinner who would slip away to another room to get a quick nap. It would be years before I could appreciate how the mantle of his leadership and the weight of his work and travel schedule created the conditions where he desperately needed those quick naps.

I do have a very vague memory or two of him in the pulpit of Ebenezer Baptist, our family church, but my memories are overwhelmingly of a playful comical man. Just as in his work as a man of the cloth and as a human and civil rights leader, Uncle M.L. during his family and friend time was determined to bring joy, relief and laughter to those surrounding him. Aside from remembering playing with him, I vividly remember the fun effect he had on others. After his assassination, as I grew and learned of his work, I recognized the compassion I saw at home in his work.

As I grew to comprehend his philosophy and meet Dr. King, I realized that one of the true regrets that I have in life is that I was not old enough for us to have worked together, as we played together. As the newly elected President/CEO of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) the most successful human rights organization in American history, I now follow in his footsteps as the second generation of King Leadership. But I can only imagine how the multitude of citizens: black and white, male and female, and the old and the young; whose names are not held up in the bright lights, who enabled him to be the great Dr. King. I can only imagine how they must feel having been apart of a revolution that not only changed our country but the world. There is a sense of pride when I think about the fact that a guy I share DNA with, a guy who precedes me by only one generation and a guy I actually knew will have a monument built in his honor in the A-list section on the National Mall in our nation's capital.

I know my fellow African Americans have a sense of pride knowing that a person that looks like them will have a place along side some of our greatest presidents. But for me, the proudest thing (and I think it would be the proudest thing for Uncle M.L.) is the long-term impact this will have on American society. In the immediate term, the focus will probably center on the fact that this is the first time a monument will be built to honor an African American. In the long term the true point of pride for me is that this will be the first monument given for PEACE and NONVIOLENCE on the mall.

This in no way is a criticism or negative reflection on the other existing monuments; they all deserve to be there, just like the monument to Uncle M.L. But the monument to Uncle M.L. will provide future generations an example of a citizen leader who led, fought and won a war without ever having fired a shot. Future generations will see an army of black and white, male and female, and old and young who met the violence of attack dogs, water hoses, bombings, gunfire and lynchings. With the nonviolence of passive resistance, peace and love for one's fellow human being, future generations will know it is possible to meet violence with nonviolence and win. They will know that conflicts can be resolved without use of weapons that rights don't have to be achieved at the point of a gun.

This monument will be a gathering place for people of all hues, any ethnicity and any religious orientation or no religious orientation. This monument will be both a reminder and an example to people around the world demonstrating how to change the negative aspects of their societies, while preserving the best, and most importantly, preserving life and the infrastructure needed to maintain it.

Just as the National Holiday commemorating Uncle M.L.'s life has become much more than a day of hero worship of a man, to a day where millions of Americans perform acts of service to others, in fact, it's the only holiday on the American calendar whose official designation states that is not a day for play but a day of service to others. Because of what Uncle M.L. did as a citizen leader, the principles he fought and stood for this monument will follow that tradition and become more than a memorial to the man but an inspirational NONVIOLENT path to a more caring, a more peaceful and a more just society.

As one who shares DNA with a guy, who I personally consider the greatest leader of the 20th century, it's not the brick and mortar on the mall that gives me the greatest sense of pride, but the lesson that it conveys, CHANGE THROUGH NONVIOLENCE.

Congratulations Uncle M.L. on a life well lived! sclc

Isaac Newton Farris, Jr. is the nephew of Martin Luther King, Jr. and currently serves as President/CEO of the SCLC.

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Supporting the Dream of

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

OPINION

By Michael McCray, Esq., CPA

Lynching Troy Davis...

Georgia Judges Have Gone Wild

GEORGIA—Troy Davis was wrongfully executed at 11:08 p.m. on Wednesday, September 21, 2011.

MSNBC Host Rev. Al Sharpton argued that Davis should not have been executed when there was more than a "reasonable doubt" because seven out of nine eyewitnesses recanted their prior testimony. However, the question is whether there was a "reasonable doubt" at the time of the conviction—not his execution.

Troy Davis was convicted beyond a reasonable doubt in a jury trial, at that time. Unfortunately, our courts do not recognize "actual innocence" as an appealable defense (another problem all together). *The question ultimately was not whether Troy Davis was innocent or guilty—but rather did he receive due process of law?*

But I have a problem with the fact that everyone seems to admit and agree that there was police intimidation and witness tampering during the original trial. In my opinion, this level of police misconduct under the color of law is a clear "due process" and "civil rights" violation by local law enforcement—which should have resulted in a new trial, not an execution.

Unfortunately, Georgia Judges did not agree with this viewpoint. I personally believe that Troy Davis was executed out of defiance and spite. Georgia Judges and the Parole Board simply decided they were not going to be intimidated by mass public demonstrations, Jimmy Carter, Bob Barr or Al Sharpton.

It's cynical to admit, but how can we have faith in Georgia Judges in this case… considering what else has been going on with the judges in Georgia? In the most extreme example, Georgia judicial misconduct has led both the *Wall Street Journal* and *Forbes* to declare, "Georgia judges have gone wild."

Prime examples include judicial misconduct and criminal conduct in the Georgia / Fulton County Superior Courts. As it stands, more than twenty-four Georgia Judges have had to resign for violations of ethics, and for even wrongful execution orders—not unlike Troy Davis.

Public and judicial corruption is now so bad in Georgia, the FBI agreed to intervene. Brian Lambkin, who heads the FBI office in Georgia, has announced it was opening a large investigation into judicial corruption. Larkin elaborated:

"It impacts the everyday system. It's not just a dirty law enforcement officer that might be shaking you down," he said. "You're talking about people that you elect to an office to represent you who try to line their pockets."

Judicial misconduct and public corruption affect American's everyday lives—especially Black Americans. In the

movie *The Godfather,* Vito Corleone, played by Marlon Brando, carried judges in his pockets "like so many nickels." *What chance do average Americans have when powerful special interests are pulling judicial puppet strings?*

The problem of judicial misconduct and public corruption is not just manifest in death penalty cases.

One glaring example of the need for additional judicial scrutiny to protect public funds is Courtney Dillard and the Dillard-Winecoff, LLC, a small minority development firm, that was an early victim of commercial mortgage fraud. His company acquired and developed the first financially feasible plan to renovate the Historic Winecoff Hotel on Peachtree Street (now the Ellis Hotel) in Atlanta, with nearly $25 million of taxpayer funds.

Unfortunately, Dillard was the victim of commercial mortgage fraud by unlicensed Wall Street investment firms. He went to the Atlanta Police Department, Fulton County District Attorney's Office and Georgia Attorney General's Office, who all refused to investigate the crime after receiving political pressure from the City of Atlanta.

The case is more convoluted than can be described here—however, the bottom line is that Dillard believed he was the victim of commercial mortgage fraud but was never allowed to receive a criminal investigation or any hearing in civil court despite winning a Georgia Supreme Court decision requiring so.

Someone needs to look into this... will the SCLC take the lead in demanding a judicial investigation or a full criminal investigation of the alleged crime?

Do we want Vito Corleone to control U.S. justice? Are citizens finally going to unite for justice for all?

The SCLC must support these initiatives because low-income and minority families are disproportionately affected by a corrupt judiciary. sclc

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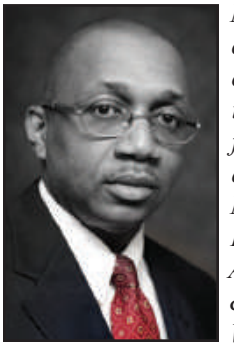

Michael McCray, Esq., CPA is a dedicated human rights and public interest advocate who champions national issues such as federal worker's rights, fair lending (mortgage fraud) and judicial reform. He is a National Board Member of Federal Employed Women/ Legal Education Fund (FEW/LEF) and Author of "ACORN 8: RACE, POWER & POLITICS—Memoirs of an ACORN Whistle blower".

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IN MEMORIAM

President Farris Responds to Rev. Shuttlesworth's Death

1922-2011

"I went to jail 30 or 40 times, not for fighting or stealing or drugs ... I went to jail for a good thing, trying to make a difference."

—Rev. Fred Shuttlesworth Quote

Friday afternoon, October 4, 2011—SCLC President Farris responded to Rev. Fred Shuttlesworth's recent death by releasing the following statement:

The Rev. Fred Shuttlesworth was a giant of the Civil Rights Movement. His *courage, commitment and charisma made him a legendary leader, who stood shoulder to shoulder with my uncle, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., as a cofounder of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference; and a provocative and passionate past president of our esteemed human rights organization—SCLC.*

Rev. Shuttlesworth was a pioneering leader of the Civil Rights Movement who was engaged in the struggle for human rights long before the world knew of Martin Luther King, Jr. Quite frankly, there could not have been a Martin Luther King without there first being a Fred Shuttlesworth. He continued to feverishly fight for equality until he fell ill.

As the current and eighth SCLC President, I lament the loss of this civil rights warrior and I humbly salute his contributions as a lion whose voice and vision visibly changed America. Rev. Shuttlesworth epitomized the spirit, spunk and strength of the organization I now am honored to lead. I am proudly walking in his wondrous wake.

Rev. Shuttlesworth was an audacious and daring leader who held firm to the quest for justice. His uncompromising pursuit to overturn the hardened soil of racism, bigotry and inequality stands as an example to us all on how to live a committed life.

The world has lost a hero, a leader, and a man; who epitomized self-sacrifice, service and advocacy. We should all grieve his loss because Rev. Shuttlesworth was a great American whose life's deeds freed us all. sclc

—Isaac Newton Farris, Jr.

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Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
1929-1968

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The Passing of a Civil Right Icon:

The Reverend Fred Shuttlesworth

BIRMINGHAM, ALA.—The Rev. Fred L. Shuttlesworth, who was bombed, beaten and repeatedly arrested in the fight for civil rights and hailed by the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. for his courage and tenacity, has died. He was 89.

Relatives and hospital officials said Shuttlesworth died Wednesday, October 5, at Princeton Baptist Medical Center in Birmingham. A former truck driver who studied religion at night, Shuttlesworth became pastor of Bethel Baptist Church in Birmingham in 1953 and soon emerged as an outspoken leader in the struggle for racial equality.

"My church was a beehive," Shuttlesworth once said. "I made the movement. I made the challenge. Birmingham was the citadel of segregation, and the people wanted to march."

In his 1963 book, *Why We Can't Wait,* Dr. King called Shuttlesworth, "one of the nation's most courageous freedom fighters ... a wiry, energetic and indomitable man."

Birmingham Mayor William Bell ordered city flags lowered to half-staff until after Shuttleworth's funeral. Bell, who is black, said he would not be mayor if not for leaders like Shuttlesworth.

"Rev. Shuttlesworth means so much to this city and his legacy will continue for generations," he said.

Shuttlesworth survived a 1956 bombing; an assault during a 1957 demonstration; chest injuries when Birmingham authorities turned fire hoses on demonstrators in 1963; and countless arrests.

"I went to jail 30 or 40 times, not for fighting or stealing or drugs," Shuttlesworth told grade school students in 1997. "I went to jail for a good thing, trying to make a difference."

Alabama's first black federal judge, U.W. Clemon, said Shuttlesworth flung himself at injustice well knowing he could be killed at any moment. "He was the first black man I knew who was totally unafraid of white folks," said Clemon, who retired from the bench and is now a privately practicing attorney.

Shuttlesworth remained active in the movement in Alabama even after moving in 1961 to Cincinnati, where he was a pastor for most of the next 47 years. He moved back to Birmingham in February 2008 for rehabilitation after a mild stroke. That summer, the once-segregated city honored him with a four-day tribute and named its airport after him. His statue also stands outside the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute.

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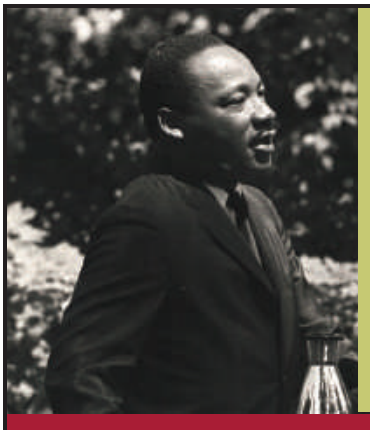

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– Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., 1965 Commencement Address at Antioch College, alma mater to his wife, Coretta Scott King (Class of 1951), and her sister, Edythe Scott Bagley (Class of 1947)

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Selma, Ala., March 2007: Then-Sen. Barack Obama pushes the wheelchair of the Rev. Shuttlesworth across the Edmund Pettus Bridge, as the pastor greets former President Bill Clinton during a commemoration of the 1965 Selma to Montgomery Voting Rights March.

And in November 2008, Shuttlesworth watched from a hospital bed as Sen. Barack Obama was elected the nation's first African-American president. The year before, Obama had pushed Shuttlesworth's wheelchair across the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma during a commemoration of the Selma-to-Montgomery voting rights march-—a moment Obama recalled Wednesday.

In Washington, Obama released a statement lauding Shuttlesworth as a "testament to the strength of the human spirit" and said America owes him a "debt of gratitude" for his fight for equality.

"As one of the founders of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, Reverend Shuttlesworth dedicated his life to advancing the cause of justice for all Americans," Obama said.

In the early 1960s, Shuttlesworth had invited King back to Birmingham. Televised scenes of police dogs and fire hoses being turned on black marchers, including children, in the spring of 1963 helped the rest of the nation grasp the depth of racial animosity in the Deep South.

. "He marched into the jaws of death every day in Birmingham before we got there," said Andrew Young, the former Atlanta mayor and U.N. ambassador who served as an aide to King.

Young said it was Shuttlesworth's fearlessness that persuaded King to take the struggle to Birmingham.

"We shouldn't have been strong enough to take on Birmingham ... But God had a plan that was far better than our plan," Young said. "Fred didn't invite us to come to Birmingham. He told us we had to come."

Referring to the city's notoriously racist safety commissioner, Shuttlesworth would tell followers, "We're telling ol' 'Bull' Connor right here tonight that we're on the march and we're not going to stop marching until we get our rights."

According to a May 1963 *New York Times* profile of Shuttlesworth, Connor responded to the word Shuttlesworth had been injured by the spray of fire hoses by saying, "I'm sorry I missed it. ... I wish they'd carried him away in a hearse."

Fellow civil rights pioneer the Rev. Joseph Lowery said Shuttlesworth was determined.

"When God made Bull Connor, one of the real negative forces in this country, He was sure to make Fred Shuttlesworth." Lowery said.

While King won international fame, Shuttlesworth was relatively little known outside Alabama. But he was a key figure in Spike Lee's 1997 documentary titled, *4 Little Girls,* about the September 1963 Birmingham church bombing that killed four black children.

Shuttlesworth was born March 18, 1922, near Montgomery and grew up in Birmingham.

As a child, he knew he would either be a minister or a doctor and by 1943, he decided to enter the ministry. He began his theological courses at night while working as a truck driver and cement worker by day. He was licensed to preach in 1944 and ordained in 1948.

It was 1954 when King, then a pastor in Montgomery, came to Birmingham to give a speech and asked to stop by Bethel Baptist and meet Shuttlesworth.

(L to R) Birmingham, Ala., May 1963: Dr. King, Rev. Shuttlesworth and Rev. Abernathy during a news conference. Dr. King praised Rev. Shuttlesworth for his courage and lauded energy.

Then in late 1955 in Montgomery, Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on a city bus, prompting the boycott led by King that gave new impetus to the civil rights movement.

In January 1956, King's Montgomery home was bombed while he attended a rally. Eleven months later, on Christmas night 1956, 16 sticks of dynamite were detonated outside Shuttlesworth's bedroom as he slept at the Bethel Baptist parsonage. No one was injured in either bombing, although shards of glass and wood pierced Shuttleworth's coat and hat left hanging on a hook.

The next day, Shuttlesworth led 250 people in a protest of segregation on buses in Birmingham.

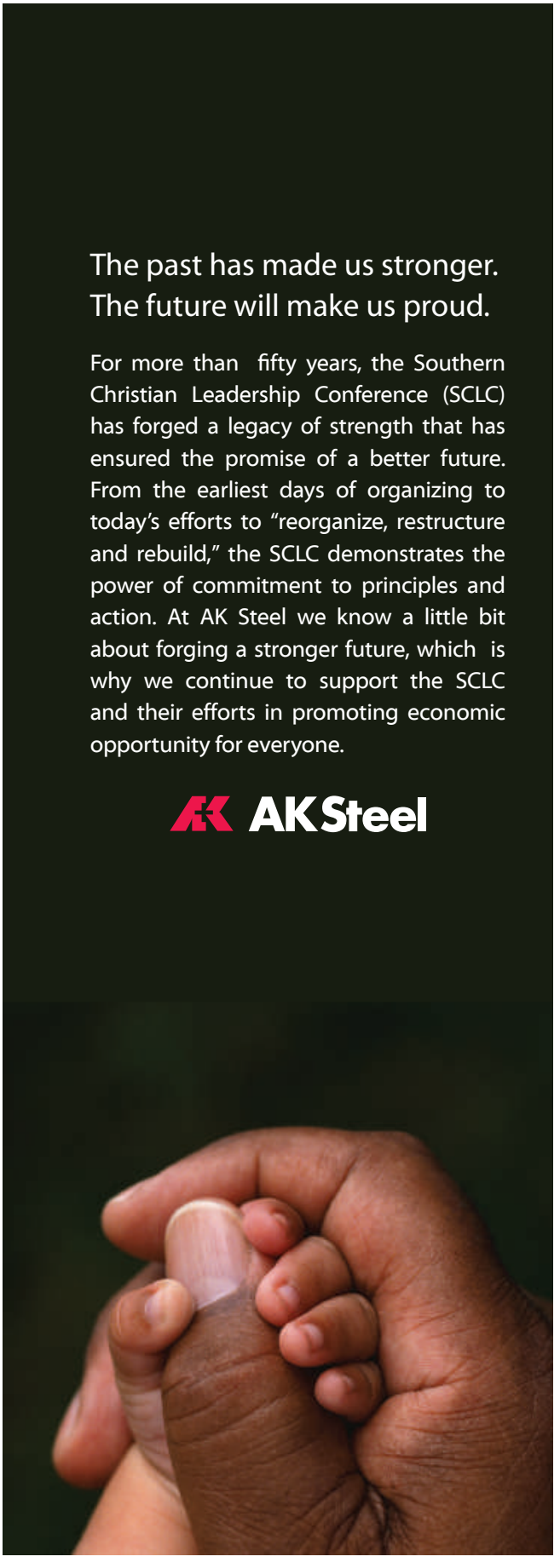
In 1957, he was beaten by a mob when he tried to enroll two of his children in an all-white school in Birmingham.

In Cincinnati, Ohio Shuttlesworth left Revelation Baptist Church and became pastor of the Greater New Light Baptist Church in 1966.

In 2004, he was president of the SCLC.

He was 84 when he retired as the pastor of Greater New Light in 2006.

"The best thing we can do is be a servant of God," he said in his final sermon. "It does good to stand up and serve others." sclc



The Farewell Salute to *The Reverend Dr. Howard Creecy, Jr.*

By Arit Essien

ATLANTA—Remembered as a "Renaissance Man," a "Teaching Giant," and a "Quintessential Preacher," funeral services for former Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) president the Rev. Dr. Howard W. Creecy, Jr., were held Saturday, August 6, at Jackson Memorial Baptist Church in Atlanta. It was a moving, meaningful and memorable ceremony.

Thousands attended what Rev. Sutton termed, "the graduation," including civil rights leaders Amb. Andrew Young, Congressman John Lewis, and the Rev. Joseph Lowery; elected officials, and people from all walks, who gathered to pay tribute to Creecy's life and legacy.

Creecy, who passed unexpectedly in his home on July 28, from head trauma caused by accidental fall in his home; was remembered for many accomplishments including his prophetic style of preaching.

Born in Mobile, Alabama, and raised in Atlanta; Creecy was a third-generation preacher and pastor at The Olivet Church in Fayetteville, Georgia.

"Preaching was stamped in his DNA," remarked Bishop Ron Sailor, a fellow preacher and close friend of Creecy. "He got from osmosis what most of us don't even get in seminary."

Creecy served as Director of the Office of Chaplain Services for Atlanta Fulton County Government and was regarded by many as "Atlanta Fulton County's pastor."

> renaissance man, teaching giant & a quintessential preacher

Creecy received ministering instruction at Morehouse College, where he then continued on to earn a Graduate Degree in Religion and later a Doctor of Divinity from Abotra Bible Institute and Seminary.

While others chose to reflect on Creecy from an earlier time during his youth as a skinny kid with straight black hair and glasses, looking almost "Jesus-like;" he was most prominently remembered by mourners for his roles as a "sweet-as-honey" father and as a charismatic leader.

Creecy has been lauded for "saving" SCLC, the benchmark civil rights organization founded by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in 1957.

SCLC communications director Maynard Eaton said, "The organization was almost at the brink of extinction before Dr. Creecy was elected. He told us that we could not memorialize SCLC talking about marches of the past; that we had to move forward and

Rev. Dr. Howard Creecy, Jr.
1954-2011

focus on SCLC today. T.O.D.A.Y. is an acronym for "Transforming Our Destiny Through Activism and Youth."

The graduation was celebratory, as people refused to pay tribute in sorrow or without hope and humor.

Lewis said in his remarks, "Blessed are they who mourn, for they shall be comforted."

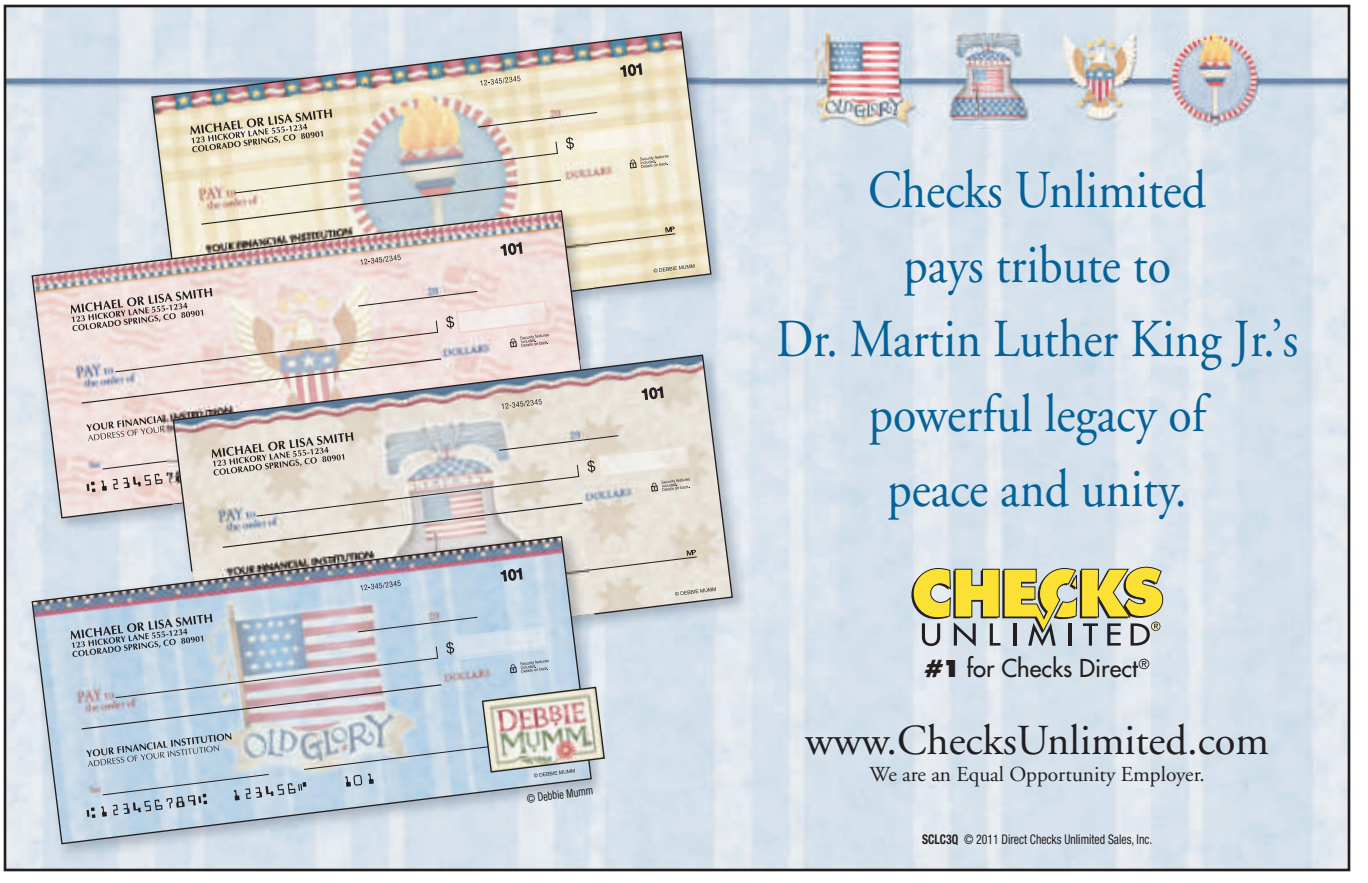
Young also assuaged the congregation assuring that Creecy was not gone in spirit.

"The dead do not die in vain or get far from us," he said. "Creecy is in heaven now signifying on who's gonna say what and why."

And Lowery with his universal candor and wit brought laughs: "See how they do old people?… They waited so long to call me I almost forgot what I came up here to say…but if you want to see Howard Creecy, his daughter [Teresa] is the embodiment of his spirit."

Teresa, the older of Creecy's two daughters, spoke sharing fond memories of her special relationship with her father, concluding with an, "I love you Daddy."

Following her testament, Creecy's gold encasement was carried from the church by an assemblage of men wearing black, who in unison raised their hats to the sky in a final salute. sclc



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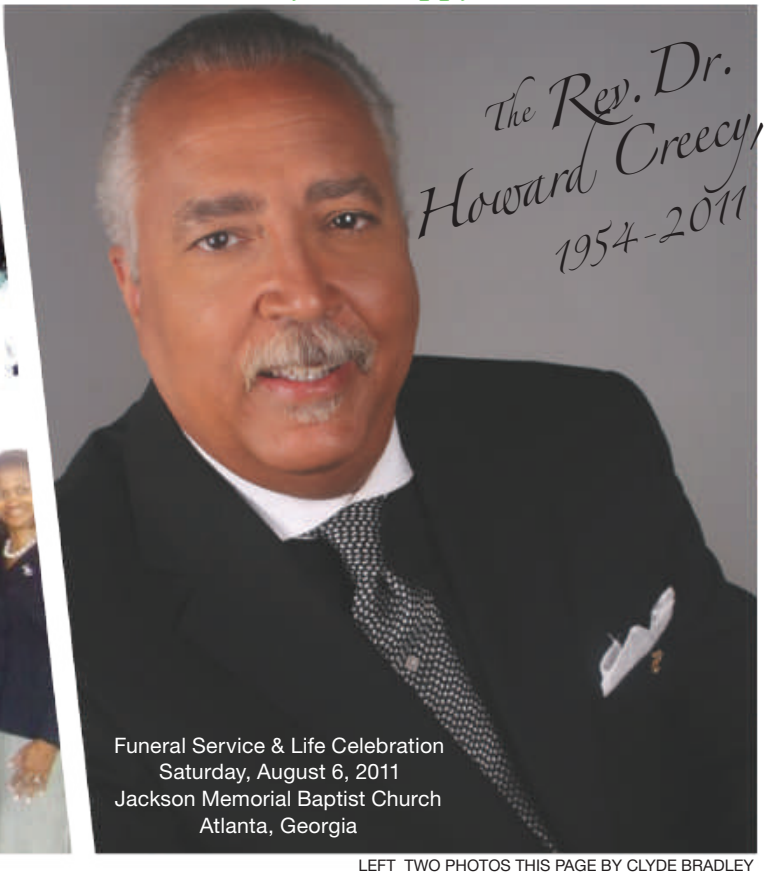

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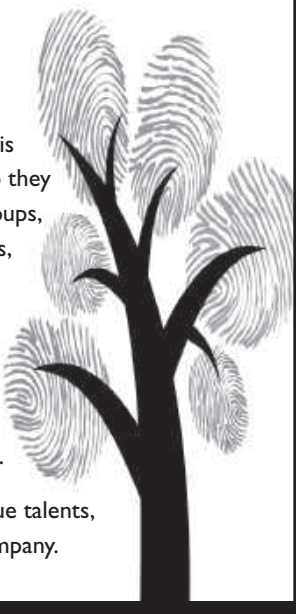

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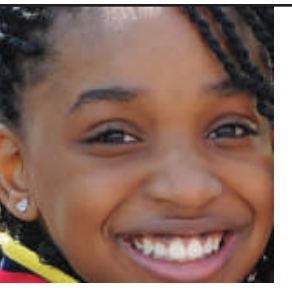

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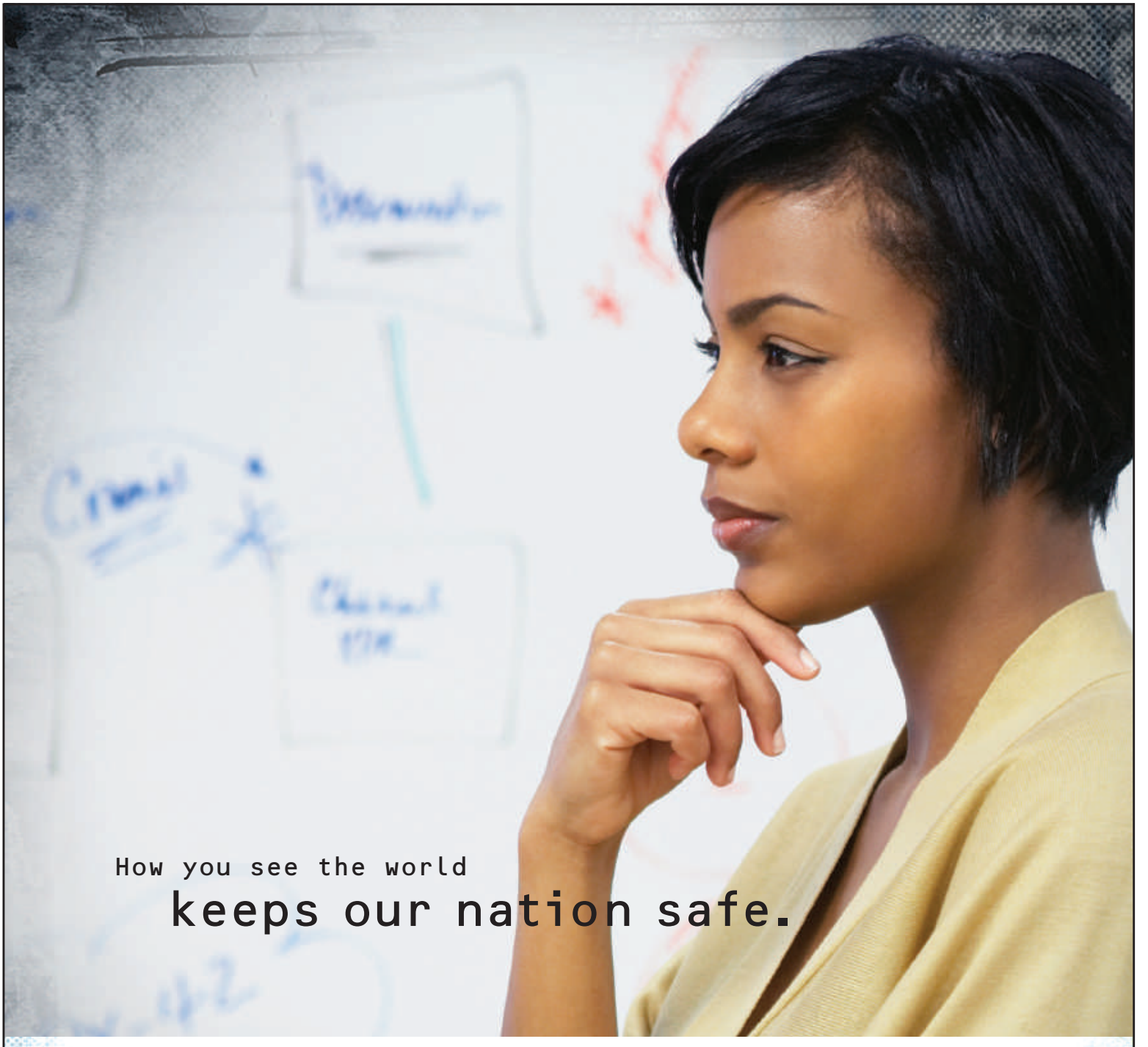

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