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GOVERNOR • STATE OF OHIO

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KASICH & TAYLOR SPEAK AT MLK CELEBRATION

Ohioans Recognized for Carrying on King's Legacy

Columbus — Governor John R. Kasich and Lt. Governor Mary Taylor spoke today at the 28th annual Ohio Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemorative Celebration held at the Trinity Episcopal Church, Columbus. The event was sponsored by the Ohio Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Commission, which is housed within the Equal Opportunity Division of the Ohio Department of Administrative Services.

“Martin Luther King is one of the heroes of mine.” Kasich said. “When you think about Dr. King and you think about William Wilberforce, these are great men who accomplished great things. But let them not just be in a history book. Let them be a burning flame who can inspire all of us against what, at times, can seem to be impossibly long odds. And let’s not forget the fact that, at the end of the day, the Lord is in charge, and we can remember Him on the road where we met Him, and meet Him regularly in a humble and contrite way. We can make this world a better place for everyone.”

In her address to the group, Taylor said, “As a scholar, pastor, theologian, and Nobel Peace Prize winner, Dr. King touched the conscience of America with his dream of a better world for everyone... free of pain, suffering, prejudice and discrimination. Sometimes we need to look back in order to move forward. We need to re-apply the timeless, powerful messages of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., who became the eternal symbol of social justice and peace.”

Later in the program, Taylor and the Ohio Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Commission recognized the following five Ohio individuals and organizations for their efforts to advance social change:

Governor’s Humanitarian Award criteria: *The recipient of this award has acted independently of associations and organizations. The recipient has given his or her time and service freely to those in need without question and often without recognition. This award honors quiet soldiers who promote the welfare of humanity and elimination of pain and suffering through their own selfless service.*

Winner: Judge Nathaniel R. Jones, Cincinnati — Nathaniel R. Jones is an internationally renowned civil rights activist. As general counsel of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Jones gained recognition for his legal efforts to end school segregation in the northern United States. Also, he defended affirmative action and fought against discrimination in the U.S. military.

Jones' civil rights efforts have taken him to nations throughout the world, including South Africa where in 1993 he served on the team of observers for the country's first democratic elections. The drafters of South Africa's new constitution and laws consulted him.

Jones' positions included serving as an assistant U.S. attorney for the Northern District of Ohio and as assistant general counsel to President Johnson's National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders. He was a judge on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit from 1979 through 2002.

Community Building Award criteria: *The recipient selected in this category has made significant contributions toward building a sense of unity among Ohio citizens. The recipient has demonstrated the ability to build safer communities through various activities and programs that help to revitalize areas and serve the community beyond his or her regular job responsibilities.*

Winner: Wuyanbu Zutali, Canton — Zutali has taught chess to urban youth in a scholastic program for 15 years, winning 40 individual and team championships as well as three national championships. He teaches chess to provide them a skill they normally would not be afforded while gaining a sense of unity among their peers and keeping them away from negative environments. In addition, as a community activist, Zutali formed two successful organizations, the North Lehman Neighborhood Alliance and the Community Coalition Against Violence.

Cultural Awareness Award criteria: *The recipient selected in this category has demonstrated an appreciation for diversity and evidenced skill in building and maintaining harmonious cross-cultural relationships. The recipient's achievements foster King's vision of unity among people of diverse cultural backgrounds.*

Winner: Center of Science & Industry (COSI), Columbus — Last year COSI hosted the travelling exhibition *RACE: Are We So Different?* Developed by the American Anthropological Association in collaboration with the Science Museum of Minnesota, *RACE* is the first nationally traveling exhibition to tell the stories of race from biological, cultural and historical points of view. This exhibition brought together the everyday experience of living with race, its history as an idea, the role of science in that history, and the findings of contemporary science that are challenging its foundations. COSI developed additional exhibits to enhance the *RACE* experience and held numerous events to engage visitors.

Educational Excellence Award criteria: *The recipient selected in this category recognizes the personal commitment and example that King provided for academic achievement. Therefore, the recipient has demonstrated a personal commitment to scholarship and/or attainment of educational goals despite significant barriers or obstacles. The recipient also has demonstrated outstanding accomplishments in eradicating systemic barriers that impede the attainment of academic excellence.*

Winner: Emeka Aniagolu, Columbus — A professor of black world studies at Ohio Wesleyan University for more than 27 years, Aniagolu has written a dozen books and has taught his students about the history of Africans and people of African descent. In addition, for 25 years, Aniagolu taught and mentored college-bound African-American students through the Upward Bound Program, helping many African-American high school seniors apply to college and to be prepared for college-level learning.

Social Justice Award criteria: *The recipient selected in this category has made significant contributions toward achieving justice for individuals or communities. The recipient may have contributed through the legal, legislative and governmental systems as they apply to the more vulnerable elements of our society. The recipient has engaged in activities that embrace Dr. King's commitment to non-violence while fostering social justice.*

Winner: Rev. Dr. Jefferey P. Kee, Columbus — Kee, pastor of New Faith Baptist Church of Christ in Columbus' Olde Towne East neighborhood, is co-president of Building Responsibility, Equality and Dignity (BREAD) in Columbus and has served the organization for 15 years. Through his leadership with BREAD, Kee worked with the Franklin County Affordable Housing Trust to build more than 3,000 housing units. He spearheaded the efforts to reduce the interest on payday loans and pressed Columbus City Schools to reduce out-of-school suspensions for truancy and helped to get proven reading programs established in the school system.

Today's event also featured the following winners from the 2012 Statewide MLK Oratorical Contest, which also is sponsored by the Ohio Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Commission. The winners of this April contest who spoke today were Asher Reddington, Bre'Anna Walker and Assata Gilmore, all of Columbus; and Matthew Scott, South Euclid.

For more information about the Ohio Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Commission, visit das.ohio.gov/eod/mlk.

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