

Candlelight vigil honors Martin Luther King Jr.

By Ashley Williams
Staff Writer

A candlelight vigil, inspirational words from civil rights advocate the Rev. Mazie Butler Ferguson, music and readings from Dr. King by members of the UNCP family marked the seventh annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., remembrance program on Jan. 13.

The candlelight vigil in honor of Dr. King first gathered everyone around in a circle on the University Center Annex lawn at 7 p.m. where they said what their dreams were.

During the program, Rev. Ferguson told the audience that people can connect themselves to one another through their shared vulnerability. She said that Mahatma Gandhi inspired Dr. King and also Bishop Desmond Tutu. She reminded the audience that Gandhi said, "If you want to change other people's behavior, you must change your own."

Rev. Ferguson said, "I



Students sing during the program Jan. 13 honoring Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Photo by Grant Merritt

like going to the university environment. In you, I touch the future."

Rev. Ferguson's words were informative and inspirational. She worked as a civil rights advocate for the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting

Rights Act of 1965 as a member of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE).

"I loved it," audience member James Hampton said. "It was very informative, first-hand information from someone who was there."

Rev. Ferguson is the great niece of legendary civil rights leader Mary McLeod Bethune. "She inspired me and continues to inspire me today," she said of Bethune. "I'm inspired by her boldness and how she broke ground every step of the way."

Music was interwoven throughout the event. Rev. Ferguson approached the podium singing "I Wish I Knew How It Would Feel To Be Free" and sang "Lift Every Voice and Sing" along with the audience.

Hollie Oxendine of Southeastern Family Violence Center sang "Wind Beneath My Wings" as her husband, Lee, played the piano for her.

Additional words of inspiration came from members of the UNCP family. Freshman Brandon Payton did a rendition of Dr. King's "I Have a Dream Speech."

Teresa Oxendine, assistant vice chancellor for Advancement, read a poem about Dr. King entitled

"Amazing Dancer." She drew comparisons between Dr. King and the founders of the university pointing out that they all started out as ordinary citizens.

Oxendine echoed Rev. Ferguson's mention of Gandhi. Oxendine said Dr. King's method of peaceful protesting was inspired by Gandhi and that Gandhi was Dr. King's hero.

Oxendine quoted Dr. King by saying, "We must live together as brothers or perish together as fools."

"I thought the event was incredibly timely," said Associate Director for Residence Life Cynthia Redfean. "The message was very poignant; it was a new and different perspective on the life and times of Dr. Martin Luther King."

Also during the event, the first Dr. Collie Coleman award was presented to student Troy Cotten. The award was presented by Robert Canida, director of the Office of Multicultural and Minority Affairs and Kappa Alpha Psi member; Anne Coleman, assistant dean for Research Services at the Livermore Library, Zeta Phi Beta member and widow of Dr. Coleman; and Kyle Chavis Coleman, Phi Beta Sigma member and son of Dr. Coleman.

The Dr. Collie Coleman Award of \$500 provides financial assistance to a member in good standing of UNCP's National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC) who demonstrates high academic achievement and financial need. The student must have a GPA of 2.5 or higher. The award honors and memorializes Dr. Coleman, the first African American Associate Vice Chancellor for Outreach at UNCP, who passed away in 2008, as a true educator, mentor, community activist, leader and visionary. He was a life-long member of Phi Beta Sigma.

"I loved the event," said freshman Drexton Russell.

"I liked the event, it brought up some good points," said AmeriCorps Vista and NC-ACTS Program Assistant for the Office for Community and Civic Engagement Derald Dryman.

The event was hosted by the Office of Multicultural and Minority Affairs, Housing and Residence Life and the university's NAACP chapter.

Despite the fact that it snowed three days before the event, Canida said that approximately 80 people attended the event.



Rev. Mazie Butler Ferguson speaks to a crowd of faculty and students honoring Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. on Jan. 13 in the UC Annex.

Photo by Gabrielle Lover

Little Rock Nine member describes experience

By Hillary Akers
Staff Writer

Dr. Terrence J. Roberts, one of the Little Rock Nine, described his experiences of being one of the first students who volunteered in 1957 to integrate an all-white school in Little Rock, Ark. He spoke to a crowd of 150 students, faculty and community member, Jan. 19 in the UC Annex.

"There is nothing I enjoy more than talking with people, sharing ideas, and learning from each other," Dr. Roberts, 68, said.

Through his retelling of the events that took place in Little Rock, Dr. Roberts gave the audience many tips on handling situations that they face.

He described his response to those who are less-than-kind. "Smile and walk off, my usual response to idioy."

Dr. Roberts also emphasized the point that "each of us is unique." When talking about segregation he said, "We as Americans, decided at some point that it was perfectly fine to separate people by race." Dr. Roberts

also underlined his belief that "there is no such thing as race."

Dr. Roberts shared his experiences at Little Rock Central High School. About his treatment by other students he said, "They seemed to have a lot of information about my mother," and "They explained to me there were regions of the world I should return to."

Dr. Roberts also described how he was treated by faculty and staff.

"I felt bad for them," he said. "They were being ordered by law to bring us in."

He also said that in the faculty, as in the whole population of Little Rock, there were those who were against and for them being there.

He said his math teacher was one of those who was supporting of them and referred to that class as a "safe haven."

Dr. Roberts also gave advice to the students about getting as much education as possible. He referred to himself in high school by saying, "I wanted to be baptized in education." He said there is a need for every

person to learn, even if they think they know everything.

"The biggest thing we own is a storehouse of ignorance," he said, "but I spend everyday trying to diminish the amount."

Dr. Roberts gave a

charge to the audience to "get busy and active on finding out what the truth really is, not always taking what people tell you."

He stressed the importance of helping others and knowing that just one per-

son cannot achieve great things.

"You get enough people together who share the same vision and you can get things accomplished," he said.



Dr. Terrence J. Roberts speaks to a large audience of community members, faculty and students in the UC Annex Jan. 19. Dr. Roberts was a member of the Little Rock Nine, a group of students who volunteered to integrate an all-white school in Little Rock, Ark., in 1957.

Photo by Austin Lowry