

- In the meaning of this program, so father we thank you that wherever there is a pharaoh you send a Moses. Wherever there is an imperial Caesar, you sent about Jesus Christ. And we thank you that when there is a Jim Crow, you send them Martin Luther King. We ask for that his Spirit, his life, might be an influence to us, and we might emulate everything that he stood for and he lived. That the dream that he had will become our dream. The visions that he had will become our visions. And then, one day we all might love each other, work for freedom and justice for all people in this world, Amen. We have two scripture readings tonight. The first one comes from the gospel of Saint Matthew the 23rd chapter, the 36th and the 37th verses. Verily I say it to you, all these things shall come upon this generation. Old Jerusalem Jerusalem, thou that kills the prophet, and stoneth them which are sent unto the, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathered her chickens under her wings, and you would not. Our second scripture comes from St Luke the third chapter and the fourth verse. As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, saying, "The voice of one crying "in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord, "make his path straight." Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and a crooked shall be made straight and the rough ways shall be made smooth, and all flesh shall see the salvation of God. (piano music)

♪ Lift every voice and sing ♪ ♪ Til earth and heaven ring ♪ ♪ Ring with the harmonies ♪ ♪ Of liberty ♪ ♪ Let our rejoicings rise ♪ ♪ High as the listening skies ♪ ♪ Let it resound loud as the rolling sea ♪ ♪ Sing a song full of the faith ♪ ♪ That the dark past has brought us ♪ ♪ Sing a song full of the hope that the present ♪ ♪ Has brought us ♪ ♪ Facing the rising sun ♪ ♪ Of our new day begun ♪ ♪ Let us march on ♪ ♪ Til victory is won ♪ ♪ God of our weary years ♪ ♪ God of our silent tears ♪ ♪ Thou who has brought us thus far on the way ♪ ♪ Thou who hast by thy might, led us into the light ♪ ♪ Keep us forever in the path, we pray ♪ ♪ Lest our feet stray from the places our God ♪ ♪ Where we met thee ♪ ♪ Lest our hearts, drunk with the wine of the world ♪ ♪ We forget thee ♪ ♪ Shadowed beneath thy hand, may we forever stand ♪ ♪ True to our God, true to our native land ♪

- I'd just like to welcome everyone here. I'm glad to see everyone came out. Before I begin with the poetry readings, I just wanted to say that we're celebrating the birthday of a beautiful man whose main message to us, I think, was a message of love. And although we always remember his dreams, let's not forget that he was a man of action, and hope that his memory challenges all of us to act to help his dream become a reality today. I've chosen three brief poems that I like to read, and I think each one of them reflects a different aspect of Martin Luther King's life and the message that he had for us. And the first poem that I'd like to read is entitled, I Dream of a World, and it was written by Langston Hughes. I dream a world where man no other man will scorn, where love will bless the earth and peace its paths adorn, I dream a world where we will know sweet freedom's way, where greed no longer saps the soul, nor avarice blights our day. A world I dream where black or white, whatever your race be, will share the bounties of the earth and every man is free, where wretchedness will hang its head, and joy, like a pearl, attend the needs of all mankind, of such a dream, our world. The second poem was written by our own Dr C. Eric Lincoln, who is a professor here at the divinity school, and it's entitled, Come Back Martin Luther King. I think it reflects how today many of us have become very complacent and we think that everything is okay. Come back Martin Luther King. Pray with me

and hold my hand, and help me still the turbulence, the agitation that shakes me when I walk the streets of Boston, where once you drew your strength. Oh see how quickly the people have forgot. Do you hear the mothers in the streets? Hail Mary, hail Mary, burn the buses. Kill the niggers. Hail Mary, hail Mary, come back Martin Luther King, and teach us as you once taught us to forgive. Teach us as you once taught us to endure, for we are not assured. The friends we used to have, have long since quit the scene. The responsible people, the proper Bostonians who's names guild the love of the Mayflower are silent and remote, in retirement from the cause, who marched with you in Selma, keep to their tents in Boston, to quiet the weary tumult and give the people respite from the strife. Come back Martin Luther King. See how the famous churches. See how the great cathedrals that once seized your name for public cause to guild their own pretensions are shuttled for want of a cause. Stand silent for want of a voice. Come back Martin Luther King. The dreamers you left with your dream wake not to the task of dreaming. The dream languishes. The cock crows. I hear the tolling of the bells. There is no sound of trumpets. When shall we overcome? When shall we overcome? The last poem is a very brief one, and it was written by a student here, an undergraduate student, Emmett Stewart. And I think it reflect the optimism that I hope everybody will leave here with, and it's entitled, Were He Here, a tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King. Stand tall, he would say, were he here, with your neighbor hand in hand, arm in arm, without fear. Beckon truth, he'd implore, you and me in our schools as we teach, in our streets as we march, in our homes as we pray, every minute of every hour of every day. Then, I'd inhale deeply, I'd reflect on the past and I'd look to the future, an arm stretched out to my neighbors, I'd stand tall. Thank you. (footsteps) (piano music) ♪ I don't know my purpose in life ♪ ♪ I don't know what I'm supposed to give ♪ ♪ But as a long as I know God put me on earth ♪ ♪ I'm going to serve him for as long as I live ♪ ♪ Mountains may seem too hard to climb ♪ ♪ And rivers may seem much too wide ♪ ♪ But I'll find a way to climb those mountains ♪ ♪ Find a way to cross those rivers ♪ ♪ 'Cause the Lord is standing right by my side ♪ ♪ Take your problems to the Lord ♪ ♪ And take a hold of his ever-loving hand ♪ ♪ Jesus is holding my hand ♪ ♪ Take your problems to the Lord ♪ ♪ And take a hold of his ever-loving hand ♪ ♪ Hand, Jesus' hand ♪ ♪ Hand Jesus' hand ♪ (piano music) ♪ Sometimes problems burden us down ♪ ♪ Sometimes pain seems too much to bare ♪ ♪ When you can't find a shoulder worth leaning on ♪ ♪ The Lord my God is always standing right there ♪ ♪ People turn their heads in surprise ♪ ♪ When I shout his holy name ♪ ♪ Well I'm sorry if I got in your way ♪ ♪ But the spirit got a hold of me today ♪ ♪ Holding back from the spirit just aint the same ♪ ♪ Take your problems to the lord ♪ ♪ And take a hold of his ever-loving hand ♪ ♪ Jesus is holding your hand ♪ ♪ Take your problems to the Lord ♪ ♪ And take a hold of his ever-loving hand ♪ ♪ Hand, Jesus' hand ♪ ♪ Hand, Jesus' hand ♪ ♪ Jesus take my hand ♪ ♪ Lead me on Lord ♪ ♪ Lead me, guide me, direct me, protect me Lord ♪ ♪ Jesus take my hand ♪ ♪ Lead me on Lord ♪ ♪ In a day and age, in a time like this, Jesus ♪ ♪ Jesus take my hand ♪ ♪ Lead me on Lord ♪ ♪ Lead me Jesus, lead me lord, lead me ♪ ♪ Jesus take my hand ♪ ♪ Lead me on Lord ♪ (choir clapping in unison) (choir vocalizing) ♪ Hand, Jesus' hand ♪ ♪ Hand, Jesus' hand ♪ ♪ Oh lead me on home ♪ (piano music)

- Good evening my colleagues and my friends united in the struggle. It is with a special sense of pride to present to each of you a man who exemplifies the character, the poise, the intellect, the courage, and yes the commitment to those ideals espoused by our beloved Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. A Durham native, our Speaker for this evening earned his Bachelor of Science and his Juris Doctorate degree from North Carolina Central University, with further study at Rutgers University. His expertise in the fields of law, real estate, business administration, public policy, biology, and Physiology are well-known. He has been and is

practicing also as a real estate broker, in the state of North Carolina for over 20 years. He has been, and is, a licensed property and casualty insurance agent, and broker, in the state of North Carolina for 21 years. He has served as Secretary of the Carolina Brokers and Builders Association. He is a former member of the Durham Human Relations Commission housing committee. He is Chairman of the housing subcommittee of the Durham Committee on the Affairs of Black People. He has testified before the subcommittee on Housing and Urban affairs, on the committee on Banking and Currency of the United States Senate. In the field of legal experience, he is a former member and Senior Partner in the law firm of Mishaw Mishaw and Willis. He has served as Chief Assistant District Attorney for the Durham County North Carolina. He was appointed by President Jimmy Carter on June 25th 1977, as the United States Attorney for the Middle District of North Carolina. He is a member of the North Carolina State Bar Association, and in 1972, 1974, and 1976 he was elected to the House of Representatives of the state of North Carolina General Assembly. He has been appointed to and served on numerous committees, among which are the Appropriations in Education, Constitutional Amendments Corrections, et cetera. He is author and co-author of numerous bills, including sickle-cell legislation, equal light rights amendment ratification, fair employment practices and numerous others. Among those honors than our guest has received, include the service award from the 14th Judicial District Bar, service award from the Triangle Council of Governments, service award from the North Carolina State Bar Association, honorary doctorate of law degrees, North Carolina Central University, civic award from the Committee for the Affairs of Black People, Co-citizen of the year award Beta Phi chapter Omega Psi Phi, citizen of merit award Black Student Board, North Carolina State University, and lawyer of the year award, North Carolina Association of Black Lawyers. He is a member of the Saint Joseph's AME Church of Durham, North Carolina, and is currently serving on the steward's board there. His daughter Jocelyn is a graduate of the Howard University School of Communications. In November 1982 he waged a vigorous campaign for the position of congressman from the second district the state of North Carolina. A judge, a lawyer, a realtor, a politician, and a man committed to the struggle for freedom, equality, and justice. Ladies and gentlemen, may I present to you, the honorable H.M. popular known as Mickey Michaux Jr. (audience applause)

- I want to take this opportunity to thank Dean Lattimore for such a kind and gracious introduction, and to commend her for reading it just as I wrote it. (audience laughing) No, but seriously, Caroline, you did an excellent job. The only other introduction that I've had that was a better than that was, I spoke to a group, and the introducer didn't show up, and I had to do it myself. So yours is the second-best. I appreciate the opportunity to join you this evening for the celebration of the birth of a man that has been much maligned, but a man who has really, in fact, paid his dues. And I just want to base my remarks to you this evening on the legacy of Martin Luther King Jr, and start out by simply saying to you that his struggles were inspired by his religious faith in his commitment to the brotherhood of Man. Without his faith he would never have had the strength to climb mountains, to move powerful men, or to walk so long, and so tall in the valley of the shadow of death. It was a central element of his light, of struggle, which rewards every new examination of it. The depth of meaning of his life is unfathomable, inexhaustible, and fertilizing from one generation to the next. Those who survive must confront the power of his character and moral presence, the force of his personality, the charisma of his being, the creativity of his thought, and the invincibility of his belief that God called him, and therefore, he knew no fear in the struggle. Now while these words are wholly inadequate to honor Martin Luther King Jr, they are equally inadequate to record the meaning and powerful

impact he had upon the future of his the greatest country on earth. The great theologian Martin Luther once wrote the following as his own epitaph and certainly characterizes his namesake, our leader. He said this, "I need or can, nor will recant anything, "since it is not a right, nor safe to act "against conscience. "Here I stand. "I can do no other." Martin Luther King Jr, at a later time, in another place stood his ground and could do no other in the struggle against bigotry, injustice, and immorality. Clear vision, courage, and determination were the cornerstones of his life. We meet here this evening to pay tribute to his leadership. For Black Americans, yes, but indeed for all Americans, and all people. It is a symbolic occasion to reaffirm our own commitment to the brotherhood of man, and to rededicate ourselves to his dream for America. We meet to gain strength from his courage from the beginning in Montgomery, Alabama in 1955 to the end in Memphis, Tennessee in 1968. Thirteen years which changed, and are still changing the life of a nation. We meet to remember the almost 20 years that have passed since that hot summer day in August, when more than 200 thousand gathered in Washington DC to hear about his dream for America. To recall his message of justice, equality, and freedom, which rang out across this country, echoing our hopes, refocusing our ideals, summoning our better selves, and, as I quote Martin, "The conscious of the nation, "before the judgment seat of morality." We meet tonight to say thanks for his victories on so many battlefields, the Montgomery Bus Boycott, public accommodations, voting rights, equal employment opportunity. We should be fired by his inspirations. We should take note of his sermon of love and hope, for we know that when that dream was stated almost 20 years ago no federal civil rights law, no Supreme Court decision denied the reality of the black experience. At the polling places black voters were turned away, if we dared show up at all, because it was said that we could not pass a literacy test. As if freedom could be limited to fine print. At the schools, black children were sent away by public officials brandishing bullwhips. There was no such thing as a routine ride on a public bus, never a routine stop at a roadside motel for any black American. Instead, we were routinely brushed to the back, or denied entry. How long ago my friends it seems, yet how recently is in fact, that Martin Luther King Jr. catapulted to the forefront of civil rights movement simply by insisting that a black woman be treated with dignity. And with all the strides made to remove the barriers, we continue and, we continue to share his dream that one day the sons of former slaves, and the sons of former slaveholders will be able to sit down at the table of brotherhood. And that little black boys and girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and girls as sisters and brothers. We need also to excuse the harsh criticism of his courageous stand against an immoral war, and his growing concern for the plight of the poor, of all races and colors to his larger vision of what was needed to bring true equality, not only to this country, but to the world. But above all, we meet to rededicate ourselves to the proposition that Martin Luther King's dream cannot and must not be deferred. And it's with these thoughts in mind that we mark the 54th anniversary of his birth. Now we could honor his memory in many ways. As for me, a son of the South, a former County Prosecuting Attorney, a former state legislator, a former United States Attorney, and more significantly, as a very close friend, I would like to honor him very simply for the political legacy that he gave to the disadvantage in America. His legacy challenges us to use the power inherent in the creative use of politics and public office to pursue equal justice, due process of law, and true liberation for all Americans. It challenges us to believe. And as he said that, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." And that quote, "We are caught in an inescapable network "of mutuality tied to a single garment of destiny, "which simply means, whatever affects one of us directly "also affects us indirectly." What Martin knew, as others did before him, was that in America, political participation is the shortest road to power sharing, and to improving human conditions. Law has its limits. Moral persuasion has its limits. But politics endure so

long as we profess to be a democratic society. In 1967 he said, "For years, I labored with the idea "of reforming the existing institutions of the society, "a little change here, a little change there. "Now I feel differently. "I think you have got to have a reconstruction "of the entire society, a revolution of values." My friends, this non-violent revolution must rely in part on law and moral persuasion, but it most certainly must rely on direct political action. Clearly, this is a new cutting edge of the Civil Rights Movement, which was envisioned by Martin's call for a new thrust powerful enough, dramatic enough, morally appealing enough, so that people of good will, the churches, labor, liberals, intellectuals, students, poor people themselves will begin to put pressure on congressmen to achieve the goals of a just society. As what well-known author put it, "Racial compassion has to be reinforced by old-fashioned "American political quid pro quo." This strategy is as old as America, and as American as apple pie. What is new in our day is the use, the use of political power in public office to pursue the hopes and the aspirations of minorities. Martin gave focus and leadership to the struggle for political empowerment. For he knew, better than most of us, that we need political power more desperately than any other group in American society. Many of us are too poor to have adequate economic power, and most of us are too rejected by the culture to be part of any tradition of power. The cause may have been education, or food, or jobs, or the right to sit in a restaurant, or take any seat on a bus, but the objective was always the same, to achieve true equality and justice. To be heard, to be taken seriously, to be respected, to sit in the legislative chambers, and take part of the decisions on who gets what, where, and how in our society. And as Martin new, as do we, that it is one thing to get laws on the books, but quite another to have them implemented. Implementation is what the political process is all about. Just before he died, Martin began to see his dream become a reality. Street politics had moved indoors, into the congresses, into the state houses, into city halls, and today the number of minority elected officials, as well as appointed, has quadrupled. For those who want to know, based on what has happened and what is going to happen, the Civil Rights Movement is not dead. It is marching simply to the beat of a different drummer. These leaders are now sitting in city halls, and state legislators, and the United States Congress. They are marching into executive offices. They are burning the political system with their ideas. In 1976, James Baldwin wrote, "No matter how diversely "and with what contradiction the black vote is cast "in the 24 years left in this century's life, "the impact of the visible, overt black presence "on the political machinery of this country "alters forever, the weight and meaning "of the Black presence in the world." Yet, so much remains to be done. There exists, for instance, in the present administration and in the mood of the country, and climate of reactionary conservatism that has not been seen since post-reconstruction days. The beginning, for instance, of this decade, these final two decades we have left in this century, led to the election of what I consider an amiable incompetent, who is leading a government bent on reversing hard-earned social programs and civil rights of Americans less fortunate. The election of Ronald Reagan in 1980 began the process of the national nullification of the needy, the gratuitous gratification of the gross and greedy, and ushered in the period of politics of penurious men, prevarication impropriety, pius beatitudes, and dare say it, downright swinishness. (audience laughs) (audience applause) The administration that took hold of the reins of leadership took the position that more jobs can best be provided by the private sector. Yet today, we see 13 million Americans out of work, and a known fact is that 80% of Blacks in some large cities in this nation are jobless. The last time, the very last time that the private sector provided full employment for Black Americans was more than 125 years ago, and it was known then as slavery. Well, not only are we faced with economic hard times, but we are also faced with an administration that has tried unsuccessfully to dismantle every hard-fought gain including the Voting Rights Act, and contrary to what

they may say, civil rights have taken a backseat to this pervasive air of conservatism, led by such a unwholesome recalcitrance as Jesse Helms, John Yeast, Jeremiah Benton, and a host of other right-wing hypocrites who hypothesized that minorities and women are not partners in the American dream. Equal opportunity, affirmative action, and desegregation are in danger. what we are beginning to see is a problem that we're gonna take a long time to overcome. There appears to be a need on the part of this present administration, backed by a conservative congress, a conservative senate mind you, to roll back all of the gains in the areas of human rights, that were so hard fought. We read about it in the newspapers. We hear about it on the radio, and see it on television. And it is then that we begin to realize that we have no one who cares about those gains, and they perceive no problem in dismantling the programs that have given us the opportunity to aid us and making it on our own. We know that budgets will be slashed. We know that certain programs will be tightened at all levels of government, but what I'm saying, in terms of Martin's legacy, is that we must be on hand throughout the political process where this is done to make sure that the cuts are made by sensitive, caring folks, who are sensitive and caring for our folk. For Blacks and for the poor it is a time of despair as well as the time for hope. It is a convergence of all of these realities which confronts, mesmerizes, and challenges us today. There is despair, because of this land of plenty we still live in the margin of economic existence. Because, talent continues to be wasted through prejudice and discrimination. Because, there remain in the land of the free visible vestiges of slavery and racism. Because we must continue to fight for quality education. Because we must bear the brunt of much that is wrong in America. Because there is a jelly bean mentality which exists that says affirmative action, legal services for the poor, and a host of other positive gains of the past, are fair targets for this wave of conservatism. But, there is also reason for Hope. Significant gains have been made. The promised land is not yet in sight, but perseverance has brought us this far and the time has come for us to give political participation a chance. To use our talents forged out of necessity, and slavery, and segregation, and to use our numerous ballots in place of our limited bucks. So this is why I celebrate the birth of Martin Luther King Jr, the human catalyst for the Voting Rights Act of 1965. A positive statement of our citizenship, which with the help of our political allies, will be a thing, really, of the past if the present administration has it's way about it. But I also celebrate with pleas for aggressive political participation, not only because it is our legacy, but because it represents perhaps the most effective way to empower the disadvantaged, to give voice to the voiceless, to give substance to the invisible, and in the process to really achieve true greatness for our country. Less we forget, the year 1976 will be long remembered because of the impact of the Black vote. However, we must demonstrate in 1983 and beyond our continuing determination to be taken seriously in the political process. Hopefully, and I believe this, there is a new consciousness among us, a new reality in our communities, and the fundamental premise certainly isn't new at all. Martin lived it, but I think Frederick Douglas stated it most eloquently when he said, "Power concedes nothing without demand. "It never did and it never will." Men may not get all they pay for in this world, but they most certainly pay for all they get. Martin and all of our most effective civil rights leaders, and most courageous citizens, understood this premise clearly and acted accordingly. They and their allies agitated all over American, and lynching ended. They fought in the courts and legal segregation of public facilities crumbled. They protested in the streets of Memphis, the boulevards of Atlanta, the avenues of Birmingham, and the roads of North Carolina, and public accommodations went from lily white and polka dot overnight. They marched on highway 80 from Selma to Montgomery and their right to vote was reestablished. And in 1964, a president of the United States said, "We shall overcome." And in 1976, another president said, "I shall not forget your support." But

in 1981, a president said, "The requirements under extension of the Voting Rights Act "as passed by the United States House of Representatives "was too harsh." I just want to remind you that the nature of our cause is not to seek power for power sake, nor notoriety, nor for the sake of massaging big egos, rather, our goal is the goal of America. And that simply is to achieve freedom, justice, and equality for all of us, lest none of us have true freedom, justice, and equality. Our goal in prayer, in protest, and in politics is to make government moral and responsive in employment, education, health, public services, and in our relations with help other peoples in other nations. Government must be the court of first resort everywhere that it touches our lives. And if this president and this nation truly want to show Black Americans that they are aware of the positive role that we have played in the development of this country, then they can insist that all of our public official's policies and programs be fused with the sensitivity to the special hurts of the black and the poor. And it is this sensitivity as minorities, which we have used, that has aided this country in reaching the heights it has in the world community. All we ask of this administration is that it be of moral leadership, that it recognize the need for that moral leadership, to a nation that sometimes seems too tired to fight for true justice and equality for all of us. The need for courage and conviction is greater today than it has been in the past. The legacy of Martin Luther King Jr is just as much this nation's as it is ours. We must recognize and accept the new Black consciousness to the extent that we are a part of the problem, we insist upon being a part of the solution. We want to be full partners in this country's policy-making franchise and equal beneficiaries of the fruits of a democratic society. We must make it clear that our program now is to revive and bring up to date the philosophical and moral dreams of the 60s, and the practical recognition that it is in the best interest of this country to convert these dreams to a reality. For any politician to receive the benefits of our legacy, there must be willingness on his part to adopt this as a part of his program, and be committed unreservedly to true racial equality, and hence the realization of the American dream. Those who do not, cannot take us for granted. Those who wish to turn the dream into a nightmare need not seek to share our political strength. Those who wish to put an end to the dream should be prepared to see us once again embark upon those courses of action that proved successful in the past, for we shall embark.