

H. Res. 655

In the House of Representatives, U.S.,

February 1, 2006.

Whereas Coretta Scott King was an inspirational figure and a woman of great strength, grace, and dignity who came to personify the ideals of the Civil Rights Movement, for which she and her husband fought;

Whereas Coretta Scott was born on April 27, 1927, to parents Obadiah and Bernice Scott, was raised in rural Alabama, graduated valedictorian from Lincoln High School, and received a B.A. from Antioch College in Yellow Springs, Ohio;

Whereas Coretta Scott came of age in the segregated South, took an active interest in the emerging Civil Rights Movement as an undergraduate, and joined the Antioch chapter of the NAACP, and the Race Relations and Civil Liberties Committees of Antioch College;

Whereas Coretta Scott won a scholarship to study concert singing at Boston's New England Conservatory of Music;

Whereas while in Boston, Coretta Scott met Martin Luther King, Jr., who was a graduate student studying for his doctorate at Boston University;

Whereas after Coretta Scott and Martin Luther King, Jr. were married on June 18, 1953, Mrs. Coretta Scott King completed her degree in voice and violin at the New Eng-

land Conservatory of Music, and the young couple moved in September 1954 to Montgomery, Alabama, where Martin Luther King, Jr. had accepted an appointment as Pastor of the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church;

Whereas their first child, Yolanda, was born in 1955, just two weeks before the beginning of the Montgomery bus boycott, during which the King house was bombed;

Whereas the Kings had four children: Yolanda Denise, Martin Luther, III, Dexter Scott, and Bernice Albertine;

Whereas during Dr. King's lifetime, Mrs. King served as an equal partner in the Civil Rights Movement, balancing the demands of raising their four children, serving as a pastor's wife, and speaking before church, civic, college, fraternal, and peace groups;

Whereas Mrs. King established and performed in more than 30 successful "Freedom Concerts" that combined prose and poetry narration with musical selections to increase awareness and understanding of the Movement and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, of which Dr. King served as the first president;

Whereas Mrs. King stood side-by-side with her husband during many civil rights marches and on other notable occasions, including a 1957 trip to Ghana to mark that country's independence, a 1959 trip to India to visit sites associated with Mahatma Gandhi, and a 1964 trip to Oslo, Norway, to accept Dr. King's Nobel Peace Prize;

Whereas just four days after her husband's assassination on April 4, 1968, Mrs. King led a march of 50,000 people through the streets of Memphis, Tennessee, and later that year took his place in the Poor People's March to Washington, D.C.;

Whereas Mrs. King devoted her energy to carrying on her husband's legacy of nonviolence and his work to create an America in which all people have equal rights;

Whereas Mrs. King dedicated herself to developing and building the Atlanta-based Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change as an enduring memorial to her husband's life and their dream of nonviolent social change and full civil rights for all Americans and, as its founding President, Chair, and Chief Executive Officer, she guided the creation and housing of the largest archive of documents from the Civil Rights Movement;

Whereas Mrs. King was instrumental in seeing her husband's birthday honored as a Federal holiday, an occasion first marked in 1986;

Whereas Mrs. King received honorary doctorates from over 60 colleges and universities and authored three books;

Whereas Mrs. King worked to advance the cause of justice and human rights around the world and spoke out on behalf of a number of important issues, including racial and economic justice, women's and children's rights, religious freedom, full employment, health care, and education; and

Whereas Mrs. Coretta Scott King was a civil rights icon and one of the most influential African Americans in history, and her work brought us closer to achieving the "Beloved Community": Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives honors the life and accomplishments of Mrs. Coretta Scott King and her

contributions as a leader in the struggle for civil rights, and expresses condolences to the King family on her passing.

Attest:

Clerk.