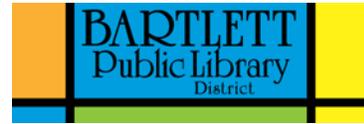


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Historian sheds light on life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. at Bartlett Library



On Thursday, Feb. 22, Historian Jim Gibbons discussed the life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. as well as the historic events leading up to how he became one of the most influential, nonviolent civil rights activists.

The catalysts for King to further his activist involvement were when 15-year-old Claudette Colvin was arrested for refusing to give up her bus seat for a white passenger, and months later when Rosa Parks did the same exact thing. The incidents led to the famous Montgomery Bus Boycott, which lasted a little over a year where African Americans refused to ride the busses, instead they carpooled or walked. The case made its way to the U.S. Supreme Court, where the bus segregation laws were found unconstitutional.

This act propelled King into the spotlight, marking him as a leader, a national symbol, in the Civil Rights Movement.

He gave many speeches to ignite a passionate flame in the people, including “Give Us the Ballot,” “If the Negro wins, Labor Wins,” “I Have a Dream,” “The Quest for Peace and Justice,” “I’ve Been to the Mountaintop” and much more.

His most famous of speeches would be “I Have a Dream,” given in front of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C. He spoke to over 250,000 attendees, calling to end racism and for economic and civil rights. In addition, his last speech, “I’ve Been to the Mountaintop,” was incredibly powerful. It was also strangely accurate when at the end he speaks about his possible forthcoming death, but says he is not afraid, that his “eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord.”

The day after giving that speech, King was shot and killed by James Earl Ray on April 4, 1968.

For his funeral, King had previously requested that his awards and recognitions not take part in the ceremony, so it was done just so. He wanted it to be simple, to be remembered as a man of the people, as a man who helped others through love and faith.

Today, King’s body is entombed at the Martin Luther King Jr. National Historical Park. On King’s tomb, it says “Free at last, Free at last, Thank God Almighty I’m Free at last.”

If you missed this program, an upcoming Adult Services program at the Bartlett Library is the “Understanding Hearing Loss” program on Thursday, March 8 at 10 a.m. Addressing hearing loss early on is vital for having the full and involved life you desire. According to the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA), hearing loss is a prevalent, chronic condition among adults of all ages. Michael Krupka from Easter Seals will give an overview on what services are available. This program is sponsored by the Bartlett Public Library District Foundation.

For more information and a complete listing of scheduled programs, call 630.837.2855 or visit www.bartlettlibrary.org.

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The Bartlett Public Library District, located at 800 S. Bartlett Rd., provides programs and services to meet the needs of the community. For more information and a complete listing of scheduled programs, call 630-837-2855 or visit www.bartlettlibrary.org.