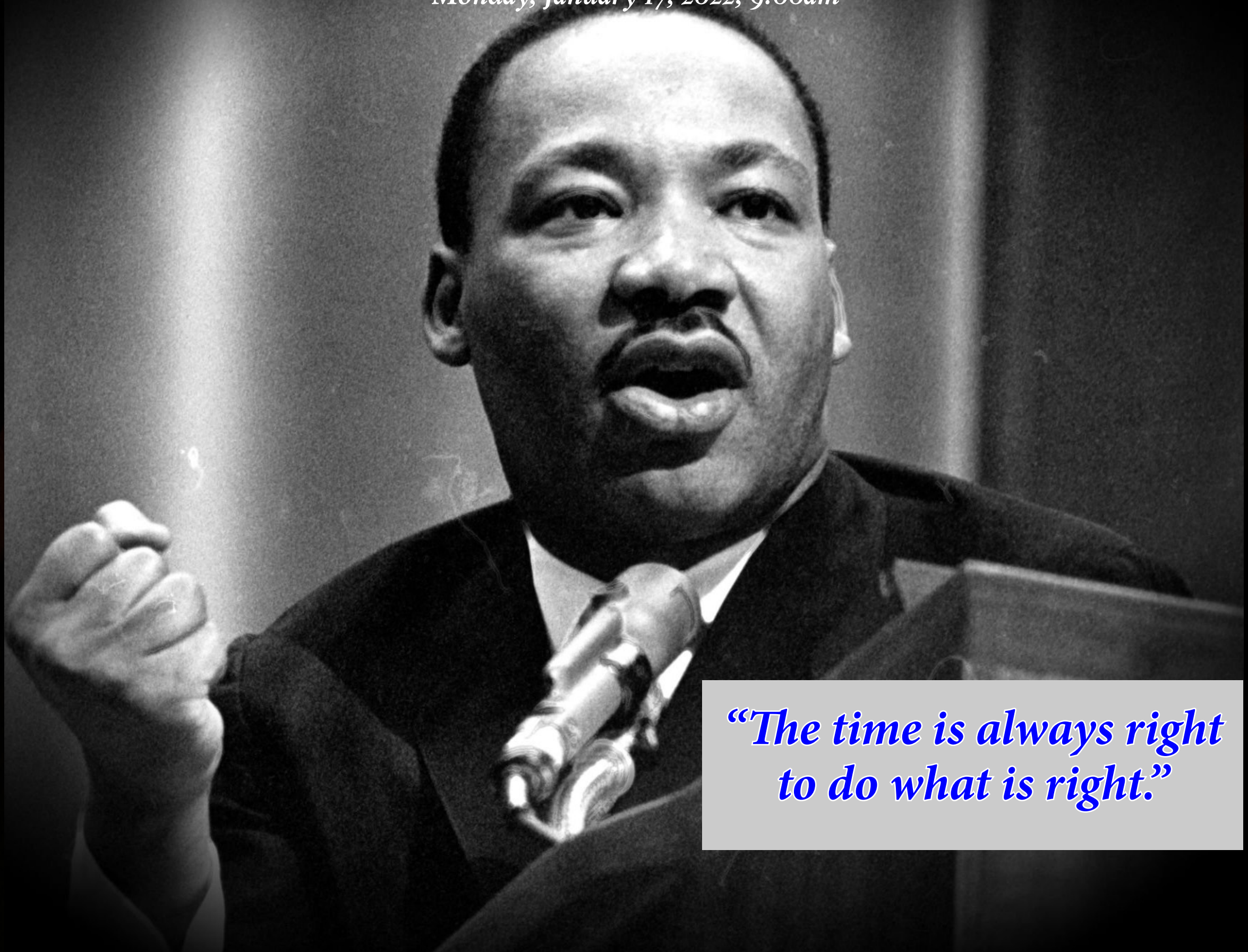


THE REV. DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. WESTSIDE COALITION PRESENTS

37TH ANNUAL CELEBRATION

Monday, January 17, 2022, 9:00am



***“The time is always right
to do what is right.”***

ABOUT US

The Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Westside Coalition was founded in 1986, as a community partnership with the City of Santa Monica, Santa Monica College, Westside Interfaith Council, NAACP Santa Monica Venice Branch, Neighborhood Resource Development Corporation, Temple Beth Shir Shalom, NCCJ (which became the Human Relations Council of Santa Monica Bay Area) and others.

Today the coalition is a nonprofit organization comprised of a diverse group of volunteers including individual community members, churches, institutions, community organizations, and businesses.

VISION

To remind the community of Dr. King's challenge to bring peace, hope, love and dignity to all peoples of the earth, and Dr. King's vision of a worldwide community that respects and values all people, presses for social and economic justice, and counters racism, sexism and intolerance through nonviolent action.

MISSION STATEMENT

To educate adults and youth,
To inspire community participation, and
To promote the ideals of
Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
for understanding, knowledge and healing

PROGRAM OF CELEBRATION

WELCOME

Darlene Evans, Chair, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Westside Coalition
and Sue Himmelrich, Mayor of Santa Monica

INVOCATION

Rev. Tim Vance, Pastor First Presbyterian, Church of Santa Monica

COMMUNITY LIGHT AWARD PRESENTATION and ACCEPTANCE

Dr. Monika White, Chair, Community Light Award Committee,
to Get Lit – Words Ignite, Mason Granger, accepting

PERFORMANCE

Cyrus Roberts, Member, Get Lit- Words Ignite

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Darlene Evans, Chair, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Westside Coalition

EDUCATION AWARDS PRESENTATION

Alexander Korinth and Jacob Scranton, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Westside Coalition

Youth Committee Members, to Awardees

Elyse Day, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Award

Taya Good-Smith, Sue Schuerman & Sally Mendelsohn Award

Christian Hagos, Clyde Smith Award

Eddie Jones, Saul Morrison Award

Leilani Rimmer, Rebecca Benjamin Award

Tyler Williams, Lillie Bell Blakley Award

PROGRAM OF CELEBRATION

PERFORMANCE

Elora Sparnicht, Member, Get-Lit-Words Ignite

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS PRESENTATION and ACCEPTANCE

Nat Trives, Member, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Westside Coalition to LaVerne Ross

INTRODUCTION OF KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Darlene Evans, Chair, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Westside Coalition

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

LZ Granderson, writer and commentator

PERFORMANCE

Salome Agbaroji, Get Lit-Words Ignite

PRESENTATION

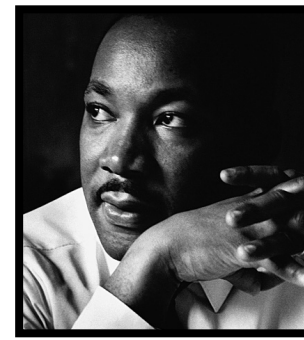
In Memoriam and Appreciation by Beth Guynn

PERFORMANCE

We Shall Overcome by Linda Alvarez Trio

CLOSING REMARKS

Darlene Evans, Chair, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Westside Coalition



his- to- ry

- 1986 Norma Gonzales, The Gas Co.
"We Have A Dream"
- 1987 Nathaniel Trives, Former Mayor, City of Santa Monica
"Celebrate The Dream"
- 1988 Rev. Clarence Jefferson Davis, Jr., Calvary Baptist Church
"Living The Dream, Let Freedom Ring"
- 1989 Pastor Lydia Waters, Compton Methodist Church
"Living The Dream, Let Freedom Ring"
- 1990 Dr. Richard Moore, Superintendent/President, Santa Monica College
"We Still Have A Dream"
- 1991 Rev. Bernice King, CEO, The King Center
"Sharing Our Dreams: On the Road to the Mountaintop"
- 1992 John E. Jacob, President/CEO, National Urban League
"Education: The Road to Freedom"
- 1993 Rev. Dr. James M. Lawson, Holman United Methodist Church
"Fulfill The Dream Now: Education, Equality and Justice for All"
- 1994 Dr. Paul Cummins, Crossroads School, Dr. Sylvia Rousseau, SMMUSD and Cheryl Miller, USC Basketball and TNT sportscaster
"From Dreams to Reality: Undoing Racism"

- 1995 Hugh B. Price, President/CEO, National Urban League
"Commitment to The Dream: Community & World Unity"
- 1996 Walter J. Leonard, President (Ret.), Fisk University
"Sleeping through the Revolution"
- 1997 John Bryant, President/CEO, Operation Hope
"Passing the Torch: Are you Ready?"
- 1998 Joe R. Hicks, Executive Director, Los Angeles City Human Relations Commission
"His Dream, His Hope: Our Challenge"
- 1999 Angela E. Oh, President Clinton's Initiative on Race
"Why We Won't Wait: Education, Jobs, Justice, Peace, Community Now!"
- 2000 Donzaleigh Abernathy, Actress/Activist
"Hate Against Hate Has Not Worked: Give a Hug, Give Love"
- 2001 Dr. Carolyn Jefferson-Jenkins, National League of Women Voters
"Unity and Diversity"
- 2002 Father Michael D. Gutierrez, Pastor, Saint Anne's Catholic Church
"A Man and His Impact on Contemporary Society"
- 2003 Dr. Sylvia Rousseau, District 1 Area Superintendent, LAUSD
"Soul and Spirit of the Man"
- 2004 The Honorable Judge Dorothy Nelson, United States Court of Appeals, 9th Circuit
"Marching Backwards: Trampling Our Civil Rights"

- 2005 Paul Cummins, Founding Headmaster, Crossroads School
"State of the Union: A Time For Love Not Hate For Understanding Not Anger A Time for Peace Not War"
- 2006 Yolanda King, Founder, Higher Ground Productions
"Remember, Celebrate, Act: A Day On, Not A Day Off"
- 2007 Dr. Lawrence Edward Carter, Sr., Morehouse College
"Peace is not absence of violence It is the presence of justice"
- 2008 Dr. Firuz Kazemzadeh, Yale University Emeritus and Dr. Wilma M. Ellis, Chair, Women on the Move
"We have flown the air like birds and swum the sea like fishes but have yet to learn the simple act of walking the earth like brothers"
- 2009 The Honorable Anwarul K. Chowdhury, Former Under-Secretary-General And High Representative of the United Nations
"Be the Change You Want to See In the World"
- 2010 Dr. Adena Williams Loston, President, St. Phillip's College
"For Hope to Become Reality: We Must All Do Our Share"
- 2011 Val Zavala, Vice President, SoCal Connected KCET LA
"Democracy is Not a Spectator Sport: We Must Act Now!"
- 2012 Congresswoman Janice Hahn, 36th California District
"Peace Begins with Me"

- 2013 Nathaniel Trives, Former Mayor, City of Santa Monica
"Redeem The Dream"
- 2014 Gerald C. Rivers, Entertainer
"Unity in Community"
- 2015 Gabriela Rosco, Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice—Los Angeles
"The Fierce Urgency of Now"
- 2016 Sheila James Kuehl, Los Angeles County Supervisor, 3rd District
"Peace Requires Justice"
- 2017 Dr. Kathryn E. Jeffery, Superintendent/ President, Santa Monica College
"Stand Against Injustice"
- 2018 Dr. Tommie C. Smith, 200m Olympic Gold Medalist, XIX Olympiad, 1968
"Never Lose Hope: Unity Wins"
- 2019 Derric Johnson, Founding Director of the Equity & Justice Institute
"Injustice Anywhere Is a Threat to Justice Everywhere"
- 2020 Amanda Gorman, First Youth Poet Laureate of the United States
"Now is the Time to Make Real the Promises of Democracy"
- 2021 Congressmember Karen Bass, Rep. 37th District, California
Tamika L. Butler, Esq.
"If not us, then who? If not now, then when?"
- 2022 LZ Granderson, sports, culture columnist, Los Angeles Times and host of Life Out Loud podcast
"The time is always right to do what is right"



COMMUNITY LIGHT AWARD

GET LIT-WORDS IGNITE

Get Lit - Words Ignite

Get Lit -Words Ignite is a Los Angeles-based non-profit organization working with youth for the past 15 years. Their programs cover a multitude of creative learning, teaching, and performances through written and spoken word and music experiences. Get Lit – Words Ignite has developed a variety of ways to uncover student creativity, help them find their voices, and enhance their social consciousness. In turn, students interact with schools and communities to educate others about important social and cultural issues through their performances and activities. The programs promote teen literacy and inspire a sense of social consciousness in diverse communities. The Get Lit – Words Ignite programs have touched thousands of youths directly and unknown more online. As noted on their website, (www.getlit.org), participants “... transform students into artists, activists, scholars, and stars.”



SALOME AGBAROJI



ELORA SPARNICHT



CYRUS ROBERTS



Music: The Linda Alvarez Trio

Linda Alvarez (singer) is a talented gospel singer known throughout Southern California for her powerful voice and dynamic performance style. She frequently performs with a number of church choirs and sings with the Santa Monica College Emeritus Chorus. Many audiences have enjoyed her remarkable one-woman show, “The Veil of Mahalia,” featuring the life of Mahalia Jackson in song. Linda also participates in local roots festivals and other events where her vocal range and energetic shows can be appreciated.

Severin Behnen (piano) is a versatile musician who plays a wide variety of musical styles including classical, bluegrass, jazz, avant-garde, and opera. A talented composer, his works have been performed in a variety of venues, including Disney Hall. He has toured and performed throughout the US and Asia. He teaches Music Theory and Musicianship classes in primary and secondary schools and college and is the Music Director for the Pacific Unitarian Church in Rancho Palos Verdes.

Michael Saucier (bass) is a master bassist who has played and composed music for more than 40 years. With the asset of “perfect pitch,” he is both self-taught and formally trained, resulting in superb musicianship immediately evident to his audiences. His extensive repertoire consists of jazz, blues, R&B, gospel, bossa nova, pop, salsa, classical and contemporary music. He has performed broadly on radio, TV, recordings, sitcoms, theaters, churches and in festivals and many private events. He also taught bass for many years.



KEYNOTE SPEAKER

LZ GRANDERSON

LZ GRANDERSON is a sports and culture columnist with the LA Times and the host of the Life out Loud Audio podcast. He has worked for several other newspapers including the Atlanta Journal Constitution, the South Bend Tribune and the Grand Rapids Press where he covered sports, politics, education and entertainment.

He was at ESPN for 17 years, where his duties included editing *ESPN The Magazine*, maintaining a regular column for ESPN.com for several years and serving as a contributing commentator on *Outside the Lines*, *Around the Horn* and *SportsCenter*. As part of ESPN's tennis team, he interviewed athletes such as Serena Williams, Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal. His work has been recognized by Human Rights Campaign and GLAAD.

In 2011, he was named journalist of the Year by the National Lesbian and Gay Journalists Assn and his columns have been recognized by the National Assn of Black Journalists as well as the Online News Assn. His TED Talk on LGBTQ equality has more than 1.6 million views.



EDUCATION AWARD WINNERS

REV. DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. AWARD

Elyse Day – Bishop Montgomery High School

Elyse Day is a senior at Bishop Montgomery High School (BMHS) in Torrance. She is a member of the California Scholarship Federation and will graduate in 2022 with Honors. She loves playing volleyball and is on the BMHS Varsity Team. Her hobbies are painting, going to amusement parks, traveling, and shopping.

Elyse will continue her education in college, majoring in Sports Management/Business Management. She aspires to become a Sports Agent. Elyse is confident that with her determination, along with the love and support from family and friends, her dreams will come true.



SUE SCHUERMAN & SALLY MENDELSON AWARD

Taya Good-Smith – El Segundo High School

Taya Good-Smith is a 17-year-old senior at El Segundo High School (ESHS). She was born in Long Beach and grew up in South Los Angeles. Taya loves engaging in extracurricular activities. She plays volleyball, cheers for her high school team, and is the current Black Student Union president. Taya has been a Girl's Scout for 11 years. She is in Associated Student Body (ASB), and currently serves as a co-commissioner for culture and diversity for ESHS.

Taya plans to attend a 4-year university. She will study business administration to pursue her goal of working in Human Resources (HR) for the entertainment industry. She is a proponent of diversity and representation and feels it is lacking in the entertainment industry. Taya plans to become an HR manager for a large entertainment company to expand and provide opportunities to underrepresented minorities.





CLYDE SMITH AWARD

Cristian Hagos - Santa Monica High School



Cristian Hagos is a senior at Santa Monica High School. He has maintained a 4.0 GPA while taking rigorous classes and being active in his community. His parents immigrated from Ethiopia to Santa Monica, where he was born and raised. In elementary school, Cristian was one of the only two black boys in his grade, where he became acquainted with racial prejudice and exclusion at a very young age. This experience compelled him to compose an essay based on Dr. King's principles of non-violence as his entry for the Education Awards.

Cristian loves volunteering, exploring technology, hanging out with friends, and taking care of his health. He will attend a four-year university where he will major in biology and minor in African American studies. He will pursue a career in the medical field---most likely in pediatrics.

SAUL MORRISON AWARD

Eddie Jones – Alexander Hamilton High School

Eddie Jones is a 17-year-old senior at Alexander Hamilton High School in Los Angeles. He lives in Los Angeles with his mother and sister. He enjoys cooking, singing, wrestling and just having a great time. He is an aspiring entertainer and has his own record label. Next year to plans to release his first single. In January 2022, he will take his first real-estate course with the anticipation of receiving his license before graduation.

After graduation from high school, Eddie will attend Universal Technical Institute (UTI) to major in auto mechanics and custom design. Upon completion of UTI, he plans to open his own custom car design company. He has many goals to achieve, and he is eager to experience all that life has in store for him.



REBECCA BENJAMIN AWARD

Leilani Rimmer - Bishop Montgomery High School

Leilani Rimmer is a senior at Bishop Montgomery High School (BMHS) in Torrance and is actively involved in school-wide events. She is a Link Crew Leader, where she is a mentor for underclassmen and helps to keep them on track for success while having fun. She is involved in the following school clubs: Marine Biology, Concordia, Black Student Union (BSU), and Book Club. She plays volleyball for BMHS Varsity Team, and she runs track for BMHS.

Leilani has played club volleyball since she was 11 years old. Outside of school, she enjoys cooking, volunteering, and playing with and caring for her dogs. Leilani's love for animals has inspired her to become a veterinarian. She is applying to Tuskegee University in Alabama, UC Davis, and Cal Polytech in San Luis Obispo to fulfill her academic success.



LILLIE BELL BLAKLEY AWARD

Tyler Williams – Larchmont Charter School

Tyler Williams is a 17-year-old senior at Larchmont Charter School in Los Angeles. His primary interests are playing basketball and making music. He incorporates music with basketball a great deal because it helps him to play better and gets him focused before practice. Although he listens to all genres of music, hip hop and underground are his favorites.

Tyler aspires to become a music producer, to earn a living doing what he loves, which is making music. In 6th grade, he realized his passion for music and he has never digressed from this point of view. He is undecided about which college or university he will attend yet he is positive that he will study music or mechanical engineering in pursuit of fulfilling his dreams.





2022 LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

LAVERNE ROSS

*FOR PRESERVING THE LEGACY OF DR. KING BY BRINGING THE
JUNETEENTH CELEBRATION OF FREEDOM TO SANTA MONICA AND
LEADING THE COALITION'S EFFORTS TO RECOGNIZE
STUDENT EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT*

JANUARY 17, 2022

Santa Monica's Ms. Juneteenth: LaVerne Ross

Ms. LaVerne Ross is a community treasure as well as a lifetime achiever. Her talents run from theater arts to cosmetology. But we recognize her today for her decades of community leadership as a longtime supporter of education and producer of the cultural event we know as “Juneteenth.”

Arriving in Santa Monica in 1957 from Lubbock, Texas, Ms. Ross was welcomed by relatives who had recently been displaced from the Belmar Triangle. A decade later they were displaced by the Santa Monica Freeway. But she and her family endured.

While attending Santa Monica High School, Ms. Ross took an elective course in Theater and was cast in the senior play. Aspiring to be an actress, she enrolled in Theater Arts classes at Santa Monica College.

Then, she met and married Mr. Raven Ross and together they raised two children. Later, she enrolled at California State University, Northridge, took UCLA Extension classes and earned a master certificate in cosmetology. For decades she ran her own beauty salon next to a Black-owned barbershop in the 1800 block of Broadway.

In 1991, Ms. Ross thought back to the celebrations she knew as a child in Texas. For over a hundred years, Black Texans had gathered the week of the 19th of June at a place called Comanche Creek. Each year, they read the Emancipation Proclamation aloud, picnicked under the oak trees, danced and sang in celebration of the 19th of June, 1865 when news arrived in Texas of the end of slavery.

She asked “Why not bring this event to Santa Monica?” It was time. And there was money! Santa Monica's Assistant City Manager Susan McCarthy had just learned of an opportunity to receive state funding if it were to be used on a cultural event. Ms. Ross convinced her that a Juneteenth Celebration was exactly the cultural event the City should sponsor. As she tells it, “the rest is history.”

The first Santa Monica Juneteenth Festival was held outdoors, just like in Texas. Children's voices lent a festive air to the scene in Virginia Ave Park. NAACP President Norm Curry ran the barbeque. There was homemade peach cobbler for dessert.

Over the years, Ms. Ross produced ever more elaborate and celebratory Juneteenth events. The 20th anniversary of the event, in 2011, was a fundraiser that included a Founders' Day supper in the SGI community room, honoring Former Mayor Nat Trives as well as the Mayor at that time, Richard Bloom.

Ms. Ross donated her time to many other causes as well. Her events brought attention to serious health concerns that affect the Black community. For years, she served on the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr Westside Coalition Reception and Education Awards Committee. She was given the Humanitarian Award by the California State Chapter of the Eastern Star.

Last year's local Juneteenth community celebration, produced by Rev. Lemuel “Mack” Mossett's congregation and held outdoors on the Calvary Baptist Church campus, was especially sweet because it marked the first time that the entire country celebrated Juneteenth—as a NATIONAL holiday. On June 19, 2021 Ms. Ross received well-deserved recognition from the City for bringing Juneteenth to Santa Monica three decades earlier.

Ms. Ross may have had to give up her dream of becoming an actress but she has been Santa Monica's Leading Lady of Community Service. She has led with impeccable style, grace and just the right blend of celebration and seriousness. Thank you, Ms. Juneteenth, and God Bless You, from a grateful Santa Monica.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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*Amazon Smile Foundation
Ralph's Community Donations*

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MLK AWARDS ENDOWMENT

*Santa Monica Legacy Fund for Women and Girls
Grant*

REBECCA BENJAMIN AWARD

Kathleen Benjamin

SUE SCHUERMAN & SALLY MENDELSON AWARD

*LaVerne Ross
Sue Scherman*

REV. DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. EDUCATION AWARDS

LaVerne Ross

SAUL MORRISON AWARD

LaVerne Ross

CLYDE SMITH AWARD

LaVerne Ross

LILLIE BELL BLAKLEY AWARD

LaVerne Ross



A SPECIAL THANK YOU

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REV. DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. WESTSIDE COALITION

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감사합니다

GRAZIE VINAKA

TERIMA KASIH

THANK YOU TAKK

merci

謝謝

ありがとう