



Civil Rights Section

WASHINGTON STATE BAR ASSOCIATION

Martin Luther King Jr. Day Is Monday, Jan. 20

The WSBA Civil Rights Law Section honors the legacy of the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and encourages us all to remember his work, the work of other civil rights activists, and the work that is still before us.

Last year, 2013, marked significant 50 year anniversaries of many major events in the civil rights movement, including the March on Washington, where Dr. King delivered his “I Have a Dream” speech, considered by many to be one of the greatest speeches in the history of our nation. Dr. King and the organizers of the “March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom” included the following in their list of demands:

- Passage of meaningful civil rights legislation;
- Immediate elimination of school segregation;
- A Federal law prohibiting discrimination in public or private hiring; and
- Withholding Federal funds from programs that tolerate discrimination.

This Year, 2014, is the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

This year, as Martin Luther King, Jr. Day approaches, it heralds one of the crowning achievements of the civil rights movement, which Dr. King led: the fifty (50) year anniversary of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The Civil Rights Act had many components but it is best known for banning discrimination in public accommodations, prohibiting most forms of discrimination against racial, ethnic, national and religious minorities, and barring federal funding recipients from engaging in discriminatory practices. The passage of the Civil Rights Act changed the world forever by giving people legal protections from those who wished to subject them to discriminatory treatment.

2014 also marks the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Nobel Peace Prize Award to Dr. King.

In recognition of his work for freedom and justice, while holding steadfast to the principle and practice of non-violence to affect political and social change, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., at just 35 years of age, became the youngest person awarded a Nobel Peace Prize. In presenting the Peace Prize to Dr. King, Gunnar Jahn, Chairman of the Nobel Committee said:

Though Martin Luther King has not personally committed himself to the international conflict, his own struggle is a clarion call to all who work for peace.

He is the first person in the Western world to have shown us that a struggle can be waged without





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violence. He is the first to make the message of brotherly love a reality in the course of his struggle, and he has brought this message to all men, to all nations and races.

Today we pay tribute to Martin Luther King, the man who has never abandoned his faith in the unarmed struggle he is waging, who has suffered for his faith, who has been imprisoned on many occasions, whose home has been subject to bomb attacks, whose life and the lives of his family have been threatened, and who nevertheless has never faltered.

To this undaunted champion of peace the Nobel Committee ... has awarded the Peace Prize for the year 1964.

1964 was not the end of Dr. King's work, and 50 years later in 2014, courts and communities will have to answer pressing questions about pressing civil rights issues. This year civil rights and civil liberties advocates will fight to protect against discriminatory and/or invasive practices involving race, voting, socioeconomic status, gender, sexual orientation, reproductive health, privacy, and police misconduct. As such, it is a year when we would do well to look to those, like Martin Luther King, Jr., who fought so hard for the victories of the civil rights era for lessons we can use to advance civil rights and civil liberties in our era.

2013-2014 Civil Rights Section Events

The mission of the Civil Rights Law Section is to educate and advocate for civil liberties and equal rights in the context of the legal issues of Washington state residents. The Section focuses on issues involving the civil rights of racial, ethnic, religious, sexual orientation, , immigrants, those with mental or physical disabilities, the socioeconomically marginalized, and those experiencing homelessness. The section also focuses on issues involving civil liberty issues including the freedom of speech, freedom from state-promulgated religion, and privacy rights. Lawyers who practice in any of these areas of law, or who are interested in these topics, are encouraged to join the Civil Rights Law Section.

2013-14 Civil Rights Law Section Celebrates and Observes the 50th anniversary of the Civil Rights Act

The Civil Rights Law Section kicked off its year-long celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Civil Rights Act by hosting a mini-CLE.

- **Mini-CLE Kicking off the 50th Anniversary of the Civil Rights Act (November 2013)**
The CLE, as a part of the Section's Annual Meeting, included a presentation by distinguished attorney Lem Howell. The presentation was a personal account of his





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experiences as a young African-American law student and attorney in the years leading up to, and after the passage of, the Civil Rights Act, and the impact that the Civil Rights Act had on his community, family, and the opportunities available to him. Also included were early legal struggles against race discrimination in the State of Washington.

The Section is planning a CLE focusing on the 1964 Civil Rights Act later this year.

If you'd like more information about the Section and how to join, visit their webpage:
<http://www.wsba.org/Legal-Community/Sections/Civil-Rights-Law-Section>.

