



DOUGLAS C. PIZAC/The Associated Press

A poster featuring Martin Luther King Jr. hangs on the podium as activist Angela Davis prepares to speak at the University of Utah's program honoring the late civil rights leader. Today, Utah is once again among a handful of states with a legislature that convenes on the day the federal government has designated a holiday in memory of King, who was assassinated in April 1968.

# State

From 1A

Legislature to start the third Monday in January, the same day designated in 2001 as a state holiday honoring King.

"If the constitution changes every time another holiday is created, it is cumbersome. It isn't simply a matter of approving it on the Hill, it has to go to the people," said Senate Majority Assistant Whip Sheldon Killpack, R-Syracuse.

Changing the constitution, however, is not unheard of. Voters did it a few months ago so businesses wouldn't have to pay property taxes on things like office furniture.

Williams believes it is time for Utah, which was the last state in the nation to establish a King holiday, to change its constitution again.

"We would like to see the legislative session begin on that Tuesday. It's just one day off," Williams said. "I don't see a reason why it could not happen, but for some reason, they just don't want to do it."

Senate President John Valentine, R-Orem, said he believes the Legislature is honoring King by meeting on his holiday. The first day of the session is largely ceremonial and includes speakers who talk to lawmakers about King's legacy.

"I've always felt good about the fact we honored Dr. King at that time, hearing about his efforts. It provides an overview for the attitude for the Legislature to take into its session," he said. "Personally, it would be very disappointing if we lost that."

That thinking is nice, said the Rev. France Davis of Calvary Baptist Church. But it would be more meaningful if



Pins depicting Martin Luther King Jr. were given out at the University of Utah as part of its MLK programs last week.

the Legislature, on MLK Day, passed civil rights and other legislation that benefited the needy, he said.

"If we're not going to get that, why just do the show?"

Rep. Dave Hansen, D-Ogden, agrees.

He's hoping he can get legislation passed today that would honor Juneteenth, which marks the June 19, 1865, date when slaves in Texas learned they had been freed by the 1863 Emancipation Proclamation.

Under the measure, the anniversary would be recognized on the third Saturday in June. He knows getting his bill passed in a single day — especially the first day — could be a tall order.

"It would be nice to have it approved (today), but if it doesn't, I'm OK. To me, I think it would be fitting."

So does Williams. "If legislators can't do that, there's a huge problem."

Hansen said he'd like to see the Legislature change when it convenes as part of broader changes that could extend the general session's 54-day limit.

Davis suggests that if the Legislature chose to not convene in honor of the King holiday, it would help others in the state recognize the importance

of the day.

"It's not just a holiday for blacks, but for all citizens. It's about the rights for all of us, not just one group. I think a lot of people still associate the holiday and think it is for one group of people, and at most, for people of color."

House Speaker Greg Curtis said he wouldn't have a problem with the Legislature changing the day it convenes, but agrees with Valentine that the current schedule allows lawmakers to publicly honor King.

"It's been in the Constitution for years and years," Curtis said. "Traditionally, the approach has been, let's have a creative time in opening and let's recognize civil rights and Dr. King."

"In no way is it meant to be disrespectful. We don't mean it as being disrespectful for Dr. King any more than we do to former presidents when we meet on Presidents Day" in February.

# King

From 1A

There were also those times when marchers would arrive by plane, only to have FBI agents or members of the Ku Klux Klan take photos of each of them as they disembarked.

"We had to be very careful," he said.

Though some attempted to thwart civil rights demonstrations, others supported such actions of democracy.

Former Gov. George Romney of Michigan — father to current presidential candidate Mitt Romney — arranged for a charter jet to pick up the marchers at the Birmingham airport when they were grounded, Durler said.

"They did not turn off any of the engines. We all flew on, and it took off. The governor had supplied steak dinners for everyone on the plane."

Romney later sent a letter to Durler recognizing him for his bravery and thanking him for his participation in the democratic process, Lamb said.

He said he believes his father-in-law participated in the marches because that was Durler's way of finding a great cause in his life as a result of the inequality he witnessed.

"He was part of that passion people had in the '60s for social change. He is not one to seek glory or fame," Lamb said of the man with a boom-

ing voice.

Durler moved to Davis County in 1985 to help build the Westminster Presbyterian Church in Fruit Heights.

"(Romney) was the first Mormon I ever met and talked to," Durler said, adding he still has Romney's letter. "I was going to frame it if he ever became president. But he didn't make it."

Neal Humphrey, pastor of the Westminster Presbyterian Church and Durler's successor, said he was unaware Durler had been involved in civil rights marches. But based on Durler's character, Humphrey said, he wasn't surprised.

"It puts feet on the gospel. You get to walk the walk, instead of just talk the talk," Humphrey said. "(Durler) walked the talk."

"They were rough times. Social transitions are rough times," Humphrey said of the '60s, when he was a teenager.

Durler said things have changed for the better when it comes to civil rights and equality. However, beneath the surface, he said, he still sees some who carry feelings of racism.

"We were very saddened with (King's) murder. We were very frightened," Durler said.

Durler was working as a pastor in Detroit when King was assassinated in April 1968 in Memphis, Tenn.

"The night of his murder, the governor called out the National Guard in fear of riots," Durler said.

"Nothing happened. Not a thing happened. Everyone mourned."



## Gunn McKay Integrity in Government Foundation

The Gunn McKay Integrity in Government Foundation has been established to recognize and honor Gunn McKay and to encourage young people to follow his example of leadership, hard work, cooperative spirit and, most of all, unquestioned integrity. Gunn, who passed away in 2000, made outstanding contributions to our community, state and nation, including service in the Utah Legislature, service as Administrative Assistant to Governor Calvin L. Rampton, service for five terms in the United States Congress as well as extensive volunteer service in his neighborhood and community. Gunn's example leaves a great legacy to those who aspire to such achievement and service in their community and in government.

The Gunn McKay Integrity in Government Foundation assists promising young students in preparing for lives of public service and integrity. Cash scholarships are made available to students based upon three criteria: 1. Demonstrated personal commitment to integrity and community service.; 2. An essay on the importance of integrity in government service.; and 3. Academic achievement.

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