

Commission on Human Rights

Two KY Human Rights commissioners helping organize two of Kentucky's largest Martin Luther King Holiday events, one will be in Madisonville, the other in Lexington

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The Kentucky Commission on Human Rights is pleased to share that two of its commissioners, Timothy Thomas of Madisonville, Ky., and Rev. Danny Everett of Lexington, are helping lead two of the state's largest Martin Luther King Holiday events. The events will be held in their cities. The Madisonville celebration is on Saturday. The Lexington breakfast is on Monday.

Madisonville event:

Commissioner Thomas, who only yesterday received the state annual Martin Luther King Citizenship Award, is the architect of the Hopkins County Martin Luther King Celebration that began 31 years ago. He said it started at a little church the first year and just continued to grow and is now held at the Byrnes Auditorium on the Madisonville Community College campus.

He said he began observing other communities that were holding King celebrations and wanted to put something together for Madisonville-Hopkins County to honor Dr. King. The first program he organized 31 years ago in 1984 was entitled, "Dr. King – The Man, the Preacher and the Civil Rights Leader."

Commissioner Thomas said the first celebration was such a huge success that "we just kept doing it each year." He said it has been a great journey to be able to do the celebration for so long. There are usually 200 to 300 people in attendance, and he hopes to surpass 300 this year, he said.

According to Commissioner Thomas, the celebration has brought many noteworthy people to the community, such as Naomi Scott King, sister-in-law of the late Martin Luther King. This year, Kentucky State University President Raymond Burse will be the keynote speaker. Burse is nationally known for his giving back \$90,000 of his own salary to enable KSU to raise the pay rate of employees there, who are making minimum wage, Surfky.com said.

Commission Executive Director John J. Johnson will participate in the Madisonville event and will introduce President Burse.

Thomas encourages everyone to come to the 2015 Hopkins County MLK celebration at 4 p.m. (Central Standard Time), on Saturday, Jan. 17, at the Byrnes Auditorium to hear Dr. Burse and enjoy all the musical talent. "It's going to be an exciting time," Thomas said. Call 270.836.2281 for information.

(Commissioner Thomas's statements, above, were published this week by the online news site, surfky.com.)

Lexington Event:

Commissioner Everett, who is pastor of the Wesley United Methodist Church in Lexington, serves on the Martin Luther King Holiday planning committee of the Lexington affiliate of the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Inc. The group's Martin Luther King Holiday 2015 Unity Breakfast is Monday, January 19, at 6:30 a.m. (Eastern Standard Time). The event theme is "Unity: Striving for Justice, Equality and World Peace." Tickets are \$20 and can be purchased online at www.lexingtonalpha.org. The breakfast will be at Heritage Hall West in the Lexington Center. For information, call 859.539.5337.

Commissioner Everett, who only recently joined the commission board, said the annual breakfast is usually attended by an average of 1,500 people.

The Kentucky Commission on Human Rights Board of Commissioners rules with the authority of a court of law on discrimination complaints on behalf of the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

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