

Martin Luther King Jr.

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Martin Luther King Jr.



King in 1964

1st President of the [Southern Christian Leadership Conference](#)

In office

1957–1968

Preceded by Inaugural holder

Succeeded by [Ralph Abernathy](#)

Personal details

Born Michael King Jr.

	<p>January 15, 1929</p> <p>Atlanta, Georgia, U.S.</p>
Died	<p>April 4, 1968 (aged 39)</p> <p>Memphis, Tennessee, U.S.</p>
Cause of death	Assassination
Spouse(s)	Coretta Scott King (m. 1953–68)
Children	<p>Yolanda Denise King</p> <p>Martin Luther King III</p> <p>Dexter Scott King</p> <p>Bernice Albertine King</p>
Parents	<p>Martin Luther King Sr.</p> <p>Alberta Williams King</p>
Relatives	<p>Christine King Farris (sister)</p> <p>Alfred Daniel Williams King(brother)</p>
Alma mater	<p>Morehouse College</p> <p>Crozer Theological Seminary</p> <p>Boston University</p>
Occupation	<p>Minister</p> <p>activist</p>
Known for	Civil Rights Movement, Peace movement
Religion	Baptist
Awards	<p>Nobel Peace Prize (1964)</p> <p>Presidential Medal of Freedom (1977, posthumous)</p> <p>Congressional Gold Medal (2004, posthumous)</p>
Monuments	Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial

Signature



This article is part of a series about
Martin Luther King Jr.

- **Biography**
- Sermons and speeches

Campaigns

- Montgomery bus boycott
- Prayer Pilgrimage for Freedom
- Youth March for Integrated Schools
 - Albany Movement
 - Birmingham campaign
 - Walk to Freedom
- March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom
 - St. Augustine movement
 - Selma to Montgomery marches
- Chicago Open Housing Movement
 - March Against Fear
 - Memphis sanitation strike
 - Poor People's Campaign

Death and memorial

- Assassination
- American federal holiday
- National memorial



Martin Luther King Jr. (born **Michael King Jr.**, January 15, 1929 – April 4, 1968) was an American **Baptist** minister and activist who was a leader in the **Civil Rights Movement**. He is best known for his role in the advancement of **civil rights** using **nonviolent civil disobedience** based on his **Christian** beliefs.

King became a civil rights activist early in his career. He led the 1955 **Montgomery bus boycott** and helped found the **Southern Christian Leadership Conference** (SCLC) in 1957, serving as its first president. With the SCLC, King led an unsuccessful 1962 struggle against segregation in **Albany, Georgia** (the **Albany Movement**), and helped organize the 1963 nonviolent protests in **Birmingham, Alabama**. King also helped to organize the 1963 **March on Washington**, where he delivered his famous "**I Have a Dream**" speech. There, he established his reputation as one of the greatest **orators** in American history.

On October 14, 1964, King received the **Nobel Peace Prize** for combating racial inequality through **nonviolent resistance**. In 1965, he helped to organize the **Selma to Montgomery marches**, and the following year he and SCLC took the movement north to **Chicago** to work on segregated housing. In the final years of his life, King expanded his focus to include opposition towards **poverty** and the **Vietnam War**, alienating many of his **liberal** allies with a 1967 speech titled "**Beyond Vietnam**".

In 1968, King was planning a national occupation of Washington, D.C., to be called the **Poor People's Campaign**, when he was **assassinated** on April 4 in **Memphis, Tennessee**. His death was followed by **riots in many U.S. cities**.

King was posthumously awarded the **Presidential Medal of Freedom** and the **Congressional Gold Medal**. **Martin Luther King Jr. Day** was established as a holiday in numerous cities and states beginning in 1971, and as a **U.S. federal holiday** in 1986. **Hundreds of streets** in the U.S. have been renamed in his honor, and a **county** in Washington State was also renamed for him. The **Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial** on the **National Mall** in Washington, D.C., was dedicated in 2011.