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Seven Ohioans honored at event celebrating legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

COLUMBUS — Seven Ohioans were recognized today at the 30th annual Ohio Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemorative Celebration for their efforts to advance nonviolent social change.

The event, sponsored by the Ohio Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Commission, was held at Trinity Episcopal Church, 125 E. Broad St., Columbus.

The speakers included Andre T. Porter, director of the Ohio Department of Commerce.

"We gather to remember a man by remembering a law. Not just any law, to be sure, but the Voting Rights Act that 50 years ago addressed the rightful claim of a long disenfranchised people. And not just any man, but the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., who was the 20th century's preeminent voice of the American conscience," Porter said.

"So today to honor the man and the law his leadership gained, we must remember to honor our responsibilities to our nation and to our fellow Americans. We must speak for the disadvantaged and act beyond self-interest. We should fear no man or his ideas nor use violent rhetoric or actions to advance our ideas. We must accept the consequences of our own actions as we seek to impose consequences upon others. We cannot see all politics as life or death wars. We must do the work of citizens even when it is unclear that our work will give us the result we seek when we seek it. And, as citizens, we must honor all people even when we do not agree," Porter said.

Also at the event, Porter and the Ohio Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Commission presented the following awards:

Governor's Humanitarian Award criteria: *The recipient of this award has acted independently of associations and organizations. The recipient has given his or her time and service freely to those in need without question and often without recognition. This award honors quiet soldiers who promote the welfare of humanity and elimination of pain and suffering through their own selfless service.*

Winner: David W. Price, Twinsburg, helps others in need in a myriad of formal and informal ways. For example, since starting his own construction company more than 15 years ago, Price has made his mentor/protégé and internship programs part of his business model. He endowed a scholarship at Slippery Rock University, where as a

student he helped create strong scholastic support for minority college students by establishing a cooperative network among 25 Greek organizations.

Price also donates his time to numerous charities, including the PAWS Humane Society of Greater Akron, Wigs for Kids, Eddie Johnson Memorial Foundation, SIDS Network of Ohio, March of Dimes, Wilson-McCormick Scholarship program and the NFL Alumni Association. He also helped create youth and high school soccer programs in the Lima area. He has sat on various boards, including the Mental Health/MRDD Board of Allen, Auglaize and Hardin Counties and the Greater Cleveland Safety Council. Price also gives of his time freely to strangers, such as buying meals for veterans.

Community Building Award criteria: *The recipient selected in this category has made significant contributions toward building a sense of unity among Ohio citizens. The recipient has demonstrated the ability to build safer communities through various activities and programs that help to revitalize areas and make our communities a more wholesome and desirable place for living, learning and loving. The recipient has used Dr. King's vision of nonviolent social change in his efforts to successfully bring people from diverse backgrounds together to build a better community.*

Winner: Master Sgt. Antonia Anderson, Westerville, served as director of educational activities for Alpha Rho Lambda, the Columbus alumni chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., for two years. He oversaw the fraternity's nationally mandated community outreach mentoring programs which included voter education, youth leadership initiatives, and the promotion of high school and college education. Anderson's projects included leading "Project Alpha," a youth development seminar targeting male teens. Further displaying his passion for youth development, Anderson collaborated with leaders of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. and twice served as a mentor and group leader during the sorority's six-month youth male development program.

Cultural Awareness Award criteria: *The recipient selected in this category has demonstrated an appreciation for diversity and evidenced skill in building and maintaining harmonious cross-cultural relationships. The recipient's achievements foster Dr. King's vision of unity among people of diverse cultural backgrounds.*

Winner: John Upshaw, Lima, is special assistant and chief diversity officer for the Office of Institutional Diversity at The Ohio State University at Lima. He also has been a volunteer for more than 20 years with various cultural awareness activities and groups. His activities include volunteering with youth and promoting domestic violence awareness. In addition, Upshaw's work with the Lima Family YMCA Black Achievers program lead to OSU Lima being recognized as the volunteer organization of the year twice, and he received the individual Volunteer of the Year Award in 2010. Upshaw's other community involvement includes serving as a facilitator for STRIVE – Students Teaching Relationship Intervention through Violence Education via Crossroads Crisis Center, Inc., a domestic violence shelter in Lima. He also is a facilitator for the Positive Lifestyles Career Program of the Lima City Schools and serves on the Allen County

Museum and Historical Society board and the Men Choosing Nonviolence Committee through the Partnership for Violence Free Families.

Economic Opportunity Award criteria: *The recipient in this category may be an organization or individual who seeks to improve the quality of life for its citizens in economically challenged areas through economic incentive programs. The recipient has demonstrated accomplishments in one or more of the following areas: workforce development programs; upgrading skills of existing workforce; infrastructure improvements; creation of community partnerships; housing assistance programs; energy efficiency programs; environmental programs; encouragement of new business startups; or ability to take advantage of state and federal aid to provide economic opportunity.*

Winner: Atiba Thompson, Columbus, a mortgage lender, believes in educating his clients to ensure they become successful and effective homeowners. He holds free workshops and hosted an Internet radio show called “Financially Fit for Life” on TalkTainmentRadio.com to help individuals avoid financial hardships.

Health Equity and Awareness Award criteria: *The recipient selected in this category offers exemplary community outreach and educational programs that serve an underserved population in the state. These services increase the accessibility of health care for the under-served while providing a high quality of customer service.*

Winner: Lewis Shine II, Lima, is the founder, owner and general manager of the Lima Express, a member of the Premier Professional Basketball League, which has 12 teams in the Midwest and East regions of the United States. In addition to bringing professional basketball to Lima, Shine has helped people regain their lives through a boot camp fitness regimen he started in May 2014 to help individuals become physically fit.

Social Justice Award criteria: *The recipient selected in this category has made significant contributions to achieving justice for individuals or communities, including contributions made through the legal, legislative and governmental systems as they apply to the more vulnerable elements of our society.*

Winner: Hope Dudley, Cincinnati, has worked tirelessly to help solve unsolved homicides since her son Daniel “Chaz” Dudley was murdered in a drive-by shooting in 2007 in Cincinnati. She started making bookmarks and fliers featuring unsolved homicide cases in the hopes that individuals with information would see them and contact the police. She distributed them throughout the community in churches, libraries, stores and prisons. Because of her efforts, in 2008 law enforcement officials unveiled a statewide pilot project using posters fashioned after Dudley’s bookmarks featuring unsolved Cincinnati-area murders. In 2009 she started a victims’ assistance program called UCanSpeakForMe, which operated from her home until receiving State Victims Assistance funding from the Ohio Attorney General’s Office.

Youth: Capturing the Vision of Dr. King Award criteria: *The recipient, who must have been younger than 21 during the nomination period, exemplifies leadership, nonviolence and*

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commitment to excellence and interracial cooperation. He also demonstrates an adherence to one or more of Dr. King's Six Principles of Nonviolence.

Winner: Da'Quan Knuckles, Lima, competed in the Lima Regional MLK Oratorical Contest in 2012 and 2013. Both years he won his age group to advance to the Statewide MLK Oratorical Contest, which is held in Columbus each April and sponsored by the Ohio Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Commission. After graduating from high school, Knuckles continued his involvement in the regional contest through I Am Making a Difference, an organization that helps young people. Knuckles coached contestants twice a week during the school year while carrying a full-time course load at The Ohio State University.

Today's event also featured speeches from the following winners of the 2014 Statewide MLK Oratorical Contest: James Oram, 7, Columbus, a second-grader at Hubbard Mastery School; Courtney Stewart, 14, Columbus, an eighth-grader at Columbus City Preparatory School for Girls; and John Merkel, 18, Lima, a freshman at Ohio Northern University.

The commission is housed in the Equal Opportunity Division of the Ohio Department of Administrative Services, which provides centralized support for state agencies. For more information about the Ohio Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Commission, visit das.ohio.gov/mlk.

For photos from the event, visit <http://www.photos.publicsafety.ohio.gov/p833896866>. Photos by Rebecca Campbell of the Ohio Department of Public Safety.