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## Gov. Kasich recalls visit to King birthplace at MLK celebration

### *Seven awards given for carrying on MLK legacy*

COLUMBUS (Jan. 11, 2018) — Gov. John R. Kasich spoke today at the 33rd annual Ohio Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemorative Celebration held at the Trinity Episcopal Church, Columbus. The event was sponsored by the Ohio Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Commission.

In recalling his visit to the late civil rights leader's Atlanta birthplace, Gov. Kasich told the audience, "Dr. King didn't focus on the 'big shots.' Dr. King didn't focus on someone in a faraway place. He was most concerned with what was happening to his neighbor and in his community."

Jacqueline T. Williams, director of the Ohio Department of Commerce, also was one of the featured speakers at the event. Recalling her own upbringing during the Civil Rights era, Director Williams spoke of the examples of courage displayed by Dr. King, as well as members of her own family. "Dr. King left the comfortable to be on the front lines in the battle for justice," Williams said. "Each of us," she concluded, "can choose to engage in small or large acts of courage every single day."

The Ohio Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Commission presented the following awards during the program:

**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: Rev. Dr. Otis Moss, Jr., Cleveland.** Theologian, pastor and civic leader, Moss has been advocating for achievements in education, civil and human rights and social justice his entire adult life. After 33 years as pastor of Olivet Institutional Baptist Church in Cleveland, he retired in 2008. He also served as co-pastor with the Rev. Martin Luther King, Sr. at Ebenezer Baptist Church, Atlanta. Moss served as a board member and a regional director for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference during the tenure of founding president Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. He also served as a national board member and trustee of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Non-Violent Social Change. He was the first chair of the Progressive National Baptist Convention's Civil Rights Commission and chair of Rainbow PUSH Coalition's Board of Directors.

**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 efforts to successfully bring people from diverse backgrounds together to build a better community.*

**Winner: Cornerstone Global Network, Toledo.** This network is made up of more than 150 churches in the United States, Argentina, Colombia, Mexico, South Africa and the United Kingdom. The projects of the member churches include an annual volunteer week to help non-profit organizations. In addition, after Hurricane Harvey hit Texas last year, Cornerstone Global Network sent 13 volunteers to help with clean-up efforts. Many of these volunteers were skilled laborers. The network also raised more than \$22,000 to help with the hurricane relief efforts. The network also provides support to a school it built in Ghana in 2004.

**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: Marlon C. Shackelford, Dayton,** has spent the past 35 years building the self-esteem of young people throughout the United States. As one of the nation's top violence prevention specialists, he addresses young audiences on topics such as substance abuse, unemployment, homelessness, crime and violence prevention and educational deficits. In addition to addressing topical issues, he motivates youth to respect themselves and others while stressing the value of making wise and healthy choices.

**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: City of Cincinnati.** In 2014, Cincinnati Mayor John Cranley assembled a team of business and community leaders to improve the City of Cincinnati's contracting with minority- and women-owned businesses. The result was the Economic Inclusion Advisory Council. The council, which was led by Paul Booth and Kevin Kline, organized a team of 70 volunteers to examine how city government could create a sustainable structure to improve economic inclusion. They also created metrics to gauge its effectiveness. The mission of the council was to make the city best-in-class and a regional catalyst and role model for growing business for Minority Business Enterprise and Women Business Enterprise (MBE/WBE) certified businesses in the public and non-profit sectors. With the mayor's leadership and city council's support, the Department of Economic Inclusion was created on Jan. 1, 2016, to serve as a catalyst for change in procurement opportunities with the City of Cincinnati.

**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: Dr. Marilyn Joy Kindig, Dayton (formerly of Lima),** has been a practicing obstetrician/gynecologist for 19 years. In addition, she volunteers her medical expertise at Heartbeat of Lima, which offers emotional support to pregnant women and seeks practical ways to help them overcome their difficulties. She also works one day per week with Coleman Behavioral Services where she helps pregnant and non-pregnant women with drug addiction. She consults at the hospital when these women deliver to help their OB/GYN deal with the pain and social issues of women who struggle with addiction.

***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: Rev. Damon Lynch, Jr., Cincinnati.** Lynch's accomplishments include being a founding member and the current chair of the board of directors of the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center in Cincinnati. He also helped initiate the annual MLK Coalition march in Cincinnati 41 years ago. His long list of community involvement includes serving as a board member for the Dan Beard Council of the Boy Scouts of America and on the medical review board of the University of Cincinnati College of Medicine. He is a former member of the board of directors for Housing Opportunities Made Equal and a former commissioner on the Ohio Commission on Dispute Resolution and Conflict Management. He was the first president of the Pastors Conference of Greater Cincinnati. Lynch has served as pastor of New Jerusalem Baptist Church in Cincinnati since 1970.

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

**Winner: Keyaunte Jones, Toledo,** was named the Ohio Youth of the Year by the Boys & Girls Clubs of America in recognition of his leadership, service, academic excellence and dedication to living a healthy lifestyle. He then went on to win the Midwest Youth of the Year Award. At his Boys & Girls Club, the Homer Hanham Unit in Toledo, he served as a junior staff member and Keystone Club member and also served as a program volunteer whenever and wherever needed. At St. John's Jesuit High School and Academy, Jones was a standout student and athlete. He also was a member of the Christian service organization, Ambassador Society and baseball team. He volunteered as a tutor and delivered meals to homebound individuals. Jones is now a freshman biology major at Grambling State University and a member of the Tigers baseball team.

Others speaking at the event included the following winners of the 2017 Statewide MLK Oratorical Contest held last April: Addison Captain, now a third-grader, Bedford; Elena Earley, now a fourth-grader, Columbus; Alexis Cunningham, now a seventh-grader, Westerville; and Nana Eshun, now an 11th-grader, Canal Winchester.

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](https://das.ohio.gov/mlk).