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Res. No. 293

Resolution commemorating the 36th Anniversary of the death of Martin Luther King, Jr. on April 4, 2004.

By Council Members Perkins, Barron, Boyland, Clarke, Fidler, Foster, Gennaro, Gerson, James, Martinez, McMahon, Monserrate, Nelson, Rivera, Sanders, Vann, Weprin and Comrie

Whereas, Martin Luther King, Jr. is one of America's greatest heroes and a symbol of the struggle for racial equality and civil rights that occurred in the United States during the 1950's and 1960's; and

Whereas, Martin Luther King, Jr. was born on January 15, 1929 in Atlanta, Georgia, attended segregated public schools in Georgia, graduating from high school at the age of fifteen and attended Morehouse College, a distinguished black institution of higher learning from which both his father and grandfather had graduated and where he earned his Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology in 1948; and

Whereas, After Graduating from Morehouse College, Martin Luther King, Jr. enrolled in Crozer Theological Seminary in Chester, Pennsylvania where he was elected president of the predominately white senior class, won the Peral Plafkner Award as most outstanding student, delivered the valedictory address, graduated with a Bachelor of Divinity in 1951 and was awarded the J. Lewis Crozer Fellowship for graduate study at a university of his choice; and

Whereas, With the J. Lewis Crozer Fellowship, Martin Luther King, Jr. enrolled for graduate studies in Systematic Theology at Boston University, completing his residence for the doctorate in 1953 and receiving the degree on June 5, 1955 at the age of twenty-six after completing his dissertation; and

Whereas, Upon completion of his theological studies at Boston University, Martin Luther King, Jr. accepted a position as Pastor of the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama; and

Whereas, As a strong worker for the civil rights for members of his race, by the time Martin Luther

King, Jr. took over the pastorate of the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church, he was already a member of the executive committee of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; and

Whereas, In December 1955 Martin Luther King, Jr. led the first great nonviolent demonstration of contemporary times in the United States against segregation on buses that resulted in a bus boycott that lasted 382 days and culminated with the United States Supreme Court declaring unconstitutional the laws requiring segregation on buses; and

Whereas, During the bus boycott, Martin Luther King, Jr. was arrested, subjected to personal abuse, and had his home bombed, however, he never lost the resolve of his cause and emerged as a first-rate leader; and

Whereas, In 1957 Martin Luther King, Jr. was elected President of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, an organization formed to provide new leadership for the country's burgeoning civil rights movement; and

Whereas, Between 1957 and 1968, Martin Luther King, Jr. traveled over six million miles and spoke over twenty-five hundred times, appearing at places where there was injustice, protest and action; and

Whereas, Between 1957 and 1968, Martin Luther King, Jr. also wrote five books, led a massive civil rights protest in Birmingham, Alabama, wrote his inspiring "Letter from a Birmingham Jail," and planned voter registration drives for blacks in Alabama; and

Whereas, On August 28, 1963, Martin Luther King, Jr. delivered his famous "I Have a Dream" address during a peaceful march for jobs and freedom held in Washington, D.C which drew more than 250,000 people; and

Whereas, Martin Luther King, Jr. was also the recipient of five honorary degrees, was named Man of the Year by Time Magazine in 1963, and was the symbolic leader of American blacks during their quest for civil rights; and

Whereas, At the age of thirty-five, Martin Luther King, Jr. became the youngest man ever to receive the Nobel Peace Prize when he won the award in 1964; and

Whereas, On the evening of April 4, 1968, while standing on the balcony of his motel room in Memphis, Tennessee, where he was to lead a protest March in sympathy with striking sanitation workers, Martin Luther King, Jr.'s life was cut short by an assassins bullet at the age of 39; and

Whereas, Until the day he died Martin Luther King, Jr. stood for peace, racial harmony, non-violence and courage; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York commemorates the 36th Anniversary of the death of Martin Luther King, Jr. on April 4, 2004.

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