

Citizens rally against racism, social injustice. Matthew Lane. Kingsport Times-News. April 4, 1999.

April 4, 1999

Local/State

Citizens rally against racism, social injustice



■ **March for Justice** held under shadow of Kingsport Justice Center.

By **MATTHEW LANE**
mlane@timesnews.net

KINGSPORT — Elder Ronnie Collins believes that injustice for one is injustice for all.

Collins conveyed this message to a small group of local citizens who gathered at the Kingsport Justice Center Saturday evening to participate in the "March for Justice."

Organized by the Tennessee and Virginia Fellowship

“As we go through this country, we’re looking for justice, not special treatment, just justice.”

— Elder Ronnie Collins

Against Racism, Collins said Saturday’s prayer vigil and march is in conjunction with the National March for Justice to denounce police harassment, brutality and racial persecution.

Please see **GROUP**, page 2B

Ned Jilton II — njilton@timesnews.net

Elder Ronnie Collins leads the March for Justice Saturday in Kingsport.

Local/State

Kingsport Times-News

Student vaccines	3
Deaths	3,4,6
Cover story	5
Tax reform	5

B

Sunday, April 4, 1999

2B Kingsport Times-News / Sunday, April 4, 1999

Group rallies against racism, social injustice

Continued from page 1B

"What we're trying to say is there is a lot of police brutality, police harassment, minority profiling, and questionable murders," Collins said. "As we go through this country, we're looking for justice, not special treatment, just justice."

Thirty-one years ago today, civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., was assassinated in Memphis, Tenn., and the question remains of "how far has America come?" Collins said.

"We've still got the same stuff going on," he said. "But now it's starting to make headlines because of the Diallo case ... and those things have to stop."

Collins is referring to Amadou Diallo, a 22-year-old street vendor from Guinea with no criminal record, who was shot 19 times Feb. 4 by members of an elite street-crime unit looking for a rape suspect. The shooting has led to months of protests, and the indictment of the four officers on charges of second-degree murder.

"If I had shot a white man 41 times and hit him 19, they wouldn't be talking about second degree murder ... I would be put to death," Collins said. "But it's all different in America when it's whites perpetrating things on blacks, and that's what we're trying to say."

Collins believes America has not come as far as it should over the years. Dr. King's dream has not been realized because we have not become brothers and sisters, he said.

Collins made reference to problems that still exist at local high schools, to the February vandalism of heritage park where racial and religious slurs were spray painted on the soccer fields and bathrooms, and to his own experience with local police.

"Being pulled over by Kingsport police because a light is out," he said. "It turns out there was nothing wrong with the light ... Court threw it out."

"These are the things we're talking about. I feel we have come somewhere, but as far as what Dr. King was talking about, we got a long way to go."