



Parade honors legacy of Martin Luther King Jr.

FRONT PAGE

By *CHELSEA SHOUN*



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KINGSPORT - Martin Luther King Jr. would have been pleased with how he was remembered in Kingsport Monday, said the organizer of a **parade** held to honor the late civil rights advocate.

"I believe the legacy, the legacy of Dr. King as we stood together, really came through very well," said the Rev. Ronnie Collins, who organized the **parade** in downtown Kingsport.

More than 100 people turned out for the event, Collins said. Alderman Nathan Vaughn, Police Chief Mark Addington and various church leaders took part in the **parade**.

King, who advocated nonviolent protest and would have been 73 last week, was assassinated in 1968 in Memphis.

"It's not just a black thing, and it's not just that Dr. King was a great black American," Collins said.

"He was a great American and challenged all of us to walk together and see each other as brothers and sisters."

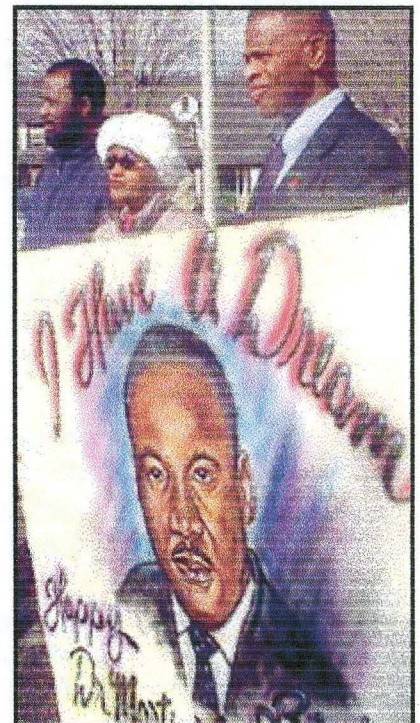
However, King would say American society still has a ways to go before truly seeing each other as equals, Collins said.

"And it's not just in Kingsport but in the region and country itself. We've come a long way in the last 30 years, but we have not come to the fruition of the true dream," Collins said.

Over the next year, Collins said he hopes some of the people who took part Monday will encourage others to attend 2003's **parade**.

"We're one of those areas throughout the country with a smaller percent of African Americans," Collins said.

"It's really difficult for us to keep up with what's going on in major cities. We're far



Alderman Nathan Vaughn, right, was among the Kingsport residents participating in Monday's march. King's legacy remembered during candlelight march at Wise.

behind what goes on in Atlanta, in D.C. and other major cities," he said,

Over the past five years, Collins said the Tennessee and Virginia Fellowship Against Racism has tried to catch up.

"But part of our job is to make people aware of situations," he said of the effort to commemorate King.

"Children are still looking for examples, not just football players and superstars they see on TV. They're looking for people of all ethnic origins working together," Collins said.

While Collins said he wasn't disappointed in Monday's turnout, it definitely could have been larger and included more younger people. About 40 students participated, he said.

"To me, there could have been 5,000," Collins said of the turnout.

"Those who don't have the day off aren't willing to sacrifice an hour's vacation time to go. We have to be more committed and have to think about taking off at least during **parade** time," he said of the noon event.

Also at Monday's event, 60 low-income families received turkeys and other foodstuffs to help them through the coldest time of the year.

"Today is not a day off. We should be doing things to do things in our society," Collins said. "We need to change our communities and do it in a positive way."

"Project Food for Winter 2002" will continue through March and is sponsored by My Brother's Keeper and Food City Stores.

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