



G. Leonard Beller, BSEE '71
David Bondor, BA '71
Martin Denes, BA '70



John D. Dial, BSME '70
Joy C. (Svehla) Dial, BSEd '70
Bob Foster, BSBA '70



John A. Gill, BSME '70
Jan Hanna-Simon, BSEd '69
Christine (Murdock) Kucklick, BA '70



Leonard "Bud" Lance, BSPH '70
Larry Lepard, BA '69
Karl E. May, BA '71



James L. Meredith, BS '70
Sharron (Dickinson) Newman, BA '70
Bob Parsons, BSPH '71



Jim Pyle, BA '68
Dennis Rectenwald, BSEd '69
Bob Roberts, BSEd '70



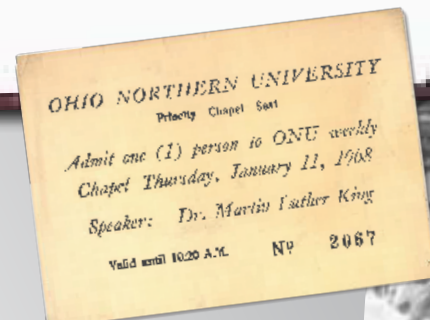
Sheldon W. Schuttenberg, BA '69
Gary D. Spahr, BA '71
Bill Van Doren, BSME '69



Jack Watchorn, BSEd '70
Dr. Joel M. Weaver, BSPH '68
Rollin L. Wellington Jr., BSPH '69



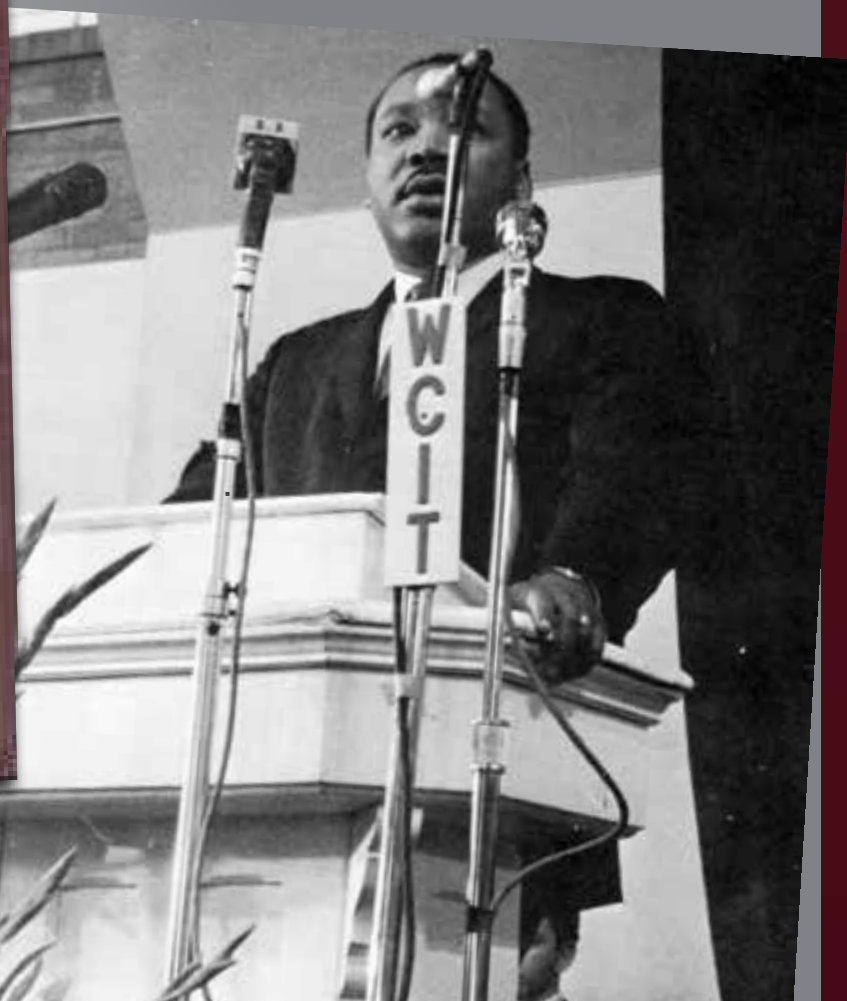
Barbara Lee (Wenger) White, BSEd '71
James Williams, BA '68
Dennis D. Hunt, BA '70



IN THEIR OWN WORDS

Alumni remember Jan. 11, 1968

The late 1960s were a turbulent time in America. The nation faced challenges at home and abroad, and college campuses were increasingly becoming hotbeds of conflict. Ohio Northern University, nestled in the rural expanse of northwest Ohio, remained mostly insulated from the social and societal changes that were occurring elsewhere. On Thursday, Jan. 11, 1968, the University welcomed a speaker whom some feared might change that. Incredibly, during the height of his fame and influence, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. spoke at ONU as part of the Chapel Speaker Series. His visit did change things. It changed hearts and minds, and it helped students see beyond themselves.



NOW, 50 YEARS LATER, SOME OF THE STUDENTS WHO WERE THERE SHARE THEIR MEMORIES OF THAT DAY.

The Rev. Dr. Sheldon W. Schuttenberg, BA '69: I vividly recall Dr. James Udy, our University chaplain who personally knew Dr. King from seminary, saying how excited he was that his friend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was coming to speak at ONU.

John D. Dial, BSME '70: I recall the excitement on campus preceding the event.

Jack Watchorn, BSEd '70: The anticipation by the student body to hear a world-renowned person speak at ONU was overwhelming.

Barbara Lee (Wenger) White, BSEd '71: We were filled with wonder that someone as famous as Dr. King would visit our small campus.

Bob Roberts, BSEd '70: There were students who just did not want to go listen to Dr. King. Some were against him even being on campus.

Karl E. May, BA '71: Sadly, I recall one person on my floor in Founders Hall saying he would not "walk across the street" to hear Dr. King on racial grounds.

Bob Foster, BSBA '70: I remember that there were large trucks from the "big three" news agencies parked outside the old gym for about three days setting up to broadcast.

Rollin L. Wellington Jr., BSPH '69: I was a second-year student dorm counselor at Founders Hall. Many of us were asked to serve as ushers for Dr. King's speech. I remember laying out the only suit I owned the night before.

Gary D. Spahr, BA '71: Jan. 11, 1968, was a very cold, blustery winter day.

Dr. Joel M. Weaver, BSPH '68: That morning, fellow pharmacy student Al Gatewood and I were walking to the student union for coffee after our early morning class when Dr. Udy approached us and asked if we would like to join him in his car to drive to the Lima airport to pick up his longtime friend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. We immediately agreed, and the three of us went to the airport. Unfortunately, when we got there, we were told that his flight was delayed and that he was driving to Ada, so Dr. Udy drove us back to Ada without our meeting Dr. King in person.

The story behind the speech



Retired Ohio Northern University Chaplain Vern LaSala traveled to Australia in 2004 to interview the surviving family of Dr. James Udy, ONU chaplain from 1963-69, to learn how he convinced Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. - one of the most famous men on the planet at the time - to come to Ada to speak as part of a new chapel lecture series.

The story began at the University of Boston, where Udy and King were both Ph.D. candidates in the School of Theology. The two men developed a friendship strong enough that when Udy contacted King with his request to speak at ONU, King said yes... eventually.

According to his widow, Ann, Dr. Udy pursued King for a couple of years to get him to come speak at ONU. Apparently, King accepted invitations on two prior occasions but was unable to fulfill these commitments due to incarceration. In all, King was jailed nearly 30 times for acts of civil disobedience or false charges.

"Dad was known for his perseverance," says Yelena Udy.



Upon becoming ONU chaplain in 1963, Udy sought a way to make the weekly chapel service more appealing to students. He had an idea to start a lecture series in which

guest speakers would discuss issues pertaining to Christianity. When King spoke in Taft Gymnasium, it was under the auspices of this lecture series and the theme "The Christian Faith and Contemporary Problems." In return, Dr. King's Southern Christian Leadership Conference was paid \$1,000 by the ONU Panhellenic Council.

On Jan. 11, 1968, classes ended at 10 a.m. to allow for students to attend the speech. It is estimated that approximately 4,500 people listened to King that day: 2,500 in Taft and another 2,000 in Lehr Auditorium where the audio from Taft was carried live. CBS-TV recorded the 60-minute speech, and the University used it to produce an album. This recording is available on the ONU website at onu.edu/mlk.

In the turbulent late 1960s, the announcement of King's visit was not without controversy. Three confirmed death threats were each sent to Ada Mayor Irvin Vandermark, ONU President Samuel Meyer and Udy. The FBI was called in to investigate the threats, and the Ohio National Guard was stationed around Ada the morning of the speech.

In the end, peace prevailed, and King delivered his historic speech at ONU with no issues. It remains one of the most important events in the University's long and proud history - and a defining moment in the lives of many who witnessed it. -V. LaSala

Bob Foster: A large contingency of visitors came to Ada the day of his speech, and suddenly our small campus was front and center in the national news. Security was noticeable, but nothing like today. We had to have a ticket to get in the gym.

James L. Meredith, BS '70: On that day I saw more police cars than had ever been seen in that village before.

Jan Hanna-Simon, BSEd '69: I lived in Clark Hall, which was next to Taft Gymnasium. I could look out my window and see people going into the gym. We were all so excited.

Bob Roberts: I was pulled by some force I did not understand to leave the Theta Chi house for a few minutes, to go across the street and enter Taft Gym that day.

Dennis Rectenwald, BSEd '69: After a little coaxing from some dorm buddies, I headed over to Taft Gymnasium for a look-see. I envisioned a small crowd gathered at Taft to listen to this relatively unknown person (at least in my provincial mind). Boy, was I shocked! I could not find a space to set foot in Taft Gymnasium.

Dr. Joel M. Weaver: The Taft Gym was overflowing.

Karl E. May: It was packed.

Barbara Lee (Wenger) White: I remember standing in a very long line waiting to get into Taft and trying to find a seat. The whole gym was filled. There were even people standing up on the running track.

G. Leonard Beller, BSEE '71: My friends and I wanted to go listen to him, but the venue was filled up with people, so we could not get in.

James L. Meredith: A morning class prior to the assembly in the gym kept me from camping out in order to get a seat. I was disappointed not to find a seat in Taft Gymnasium, but fortunately, Lehr Auditorium was set up to provide overflow seating. That's where I went to hear Dr. King's words.

Leonard "Bud" Lance, BSPH '70: I was one of the ushers that day. I led the guests to their seats in Taft Gym.

Joy C. Dial, BSEd '70: Because I played in the brass choir, I got to be up close for Dr. King's speech. I was thrilled.

Gary D. Spahr: There had been threats of violence received by the University prior to his speech, and the band director suggested the brass choir be relocated to some place other than directly behind where Dr. King was going to speak. We elected to stay where we were.

Jim Pyle, BA '68: Dr. King had flown into Lima, where he was met by Dr. Udy, his teenage son and myself. I was privileged to photograph Dr. King's arrival in Lima.

Bob Parsons: Due to the weather, Dr. King was running late, and Dr. Udy drove the car back to Ada, trying to "make up time."

Gary D. Spahr: By the time Dr. Udy and Dr. King arrived at Taft, he was nearly two hours late.

Rollin L. Wellington Jr.: The gymnasium was packed, and the crowd had an anticipatory excitement that was somewhat new to my experience. As Dr. King came to the podium, I remember a veritable hush coming over the assembly.

Bob Roberts: I remember sitting in the bleachers on the right side of the stage. I was not far from Dr. King, just perhaps about 50 feet or so. He had a commanding presence.

Gary D. Spahr: He received a thoroughly warm and welcoming applause, and after greeting us and thanking the University for having him, he apologized profusely for being so late.

David Louis Bondor, BA '71: Dr. King opened with a friendly and humorous anecdote about that trip to campus. He told us that Dr. Udy was in a hurry and was apparently exceeding the posted speed limit.

Bob Parsons: He was tempted to tell the driver that he would "prefer being Martin Luther King late to being the late Martin Luther King."

Rollin L. Wellington Jr.: I sat on the bottom row of the bleachers. When he began speaking, his delivery and charisma was almost palpable from my perspective. Details of the speech escape me, but his presence left a lasting impression of a man incredibly committed to improving civil liberties for all.

Karl E. May: In the preceding months, Dr. King had come out in opposition to the Vietnam War, and he reiterated his opposition in his speech. This got a very mixed reaction from the crowd and seemed to create discomfort for many in the audience.

Larry Lepard, BA '69: I was sitting in the bleachers directly across from the podium, at a right angle to Dr. King. I can recall my amazement that he could preach such an inspiring message from his head and his heart without a single note in front of him.

UPON REFLECTION:

Bob Roberts, BSEd '70

It was a different time. It was a different place. We were a predominantly white campus in a predominantly white, small, Midwestern farming community. The societal turbulence we heard about seemed mostly to be somewhere else, like some city in the deep South we had never visited and probably never would. We were busy being students, trying to get through chem-this, and calculus-that. We were busy trying to make grades in order to receive draft deferments, because who wanted to go to Vietnam? Who wanted to kill somebody else? Who wanted to die?

I don't know how I found myself in Taft Gym that day. I went alone. I was not far from Dr. King, perhaps 50 feet or so. He did not seem as scary as I had expected him to be given all the things I had heard about him. The Dr. King I "knew" was a radical, a communist sympathizer and a social malcontent who wanted to overthrow the country as we knew it. I realize now that we knew so little about the world - about people who lived in other parts of our own country. In many cases we were simply unable to comprehend differences, much less tolerate them, or even begin to try to understand.

What Dr. King brought to us that day was a level of compassion and an unending willingness to patiently move change in a positive direction, that I had never seen or heard in anyone else. No one can put a price on this valuable life-lesson. I hope that in some way, I am a better person for sitting in Taft Gym on that day.

UPON REFLECTION:

Dennis D. Hunt, BA '70

I did not attend the speech, and it is among my most embarrassing and humiliating lost opportunities from my time at ONU. I was in Founders Hall, playing euchre. Beyond fraternity and athletics, I very rarely ventured into experiences to examine the issues of the day, including civil rights, Vietnam War, women's rights, etc. Looking back, the late 60s were explosive with social issues extremely related to college students. I lived in a cloistered world at ONU of my own making and did not engage myself with such issues until after graduate school. Now, such issues and others are at the core of my daily life.





UPON REFLECTION:

Dennis Rectenwald, BSEd '69

I was 20. At the time, I was more concerned about my social life, athletic career, grade point average, draft status and future wedding than I was about a civil rights leader from a state in the South I had never visited. It piqued my curiosity that basically an all-white campus and community invited a black civil rights leader to speak on campus. So, I went, expecting a small crowd in Taft. In my provincial mind, Dr. King was a relatively unknown person. Boy, was I shocked to see how wrong I was! I could not find a space to set foot in Taft Gymnasium. The closest I came to the stage was the vestibule of Taft where I listened to Dr. King over speakers installed for those standing outside the overflowing gym. I don't recall much about the verbiage in the speech, but I can readily reflect the passion I heard in his voice and the cadence synonymous with Martin Luther King Jr. I left that day realizing I was indeed fortunate to have, even remotely, been in that man's presence.

UPON REFLECTION:

James L. Meredith, BS '70

I was a white student from a rural white school system, a white hometown and a white church. I supposed that my values and expectations were typical of the world's values and expectations. I was a chemistry major, receiving Cs in the philosophy and religion courses that I took only because they were required. In no way could I have imagined on Jan. 11, 1968, that I would go on to attend seminary and become a pastor myself, serving in Ohio churches for 35 years.

Dr. King's visit was a pivotal moment that challenged my assumptions and attitudes about race and privilege, of status and justice. Since that day, I've become more convinced that the all-white churches of my youth were incomplete visions of the Kingdom of God. I've seen that the depth of spirit and the diversity of God's gifts are discouraged by settings where invisible barriers ensure that everyone will look "just like us." I've felt an appreciation for brothers and sisters who warmly welcomed me to the urban neighborhoods that they called home, but which so many of my parishioners avoided. I began to see the racist attitudes that were, in fact, a part of me, even though I would have denied the idea. For me, seeing Dr. King was indeed a divinely appointed life-shaping moment. I am grateful for having had the opportunity to experience it.

Bob Roberts: His commanding voice did not command; it urged. His voice made clear his intention to never stop loving others, to never stop pressing for equality, and to never stop trying to make this world a better place for all, for his children and grandchildren, and our children and grandchildren to come.

Jack Watchorn: The speech was magnificent, and it was very mesmerizing to hear a leader of Dr. King's stature bring his views and philosophy to such a small Ohio college.

Sheldon W. Schuttenberg: Dr. King challenged us students to stand for what is right. He talked about faith informing action to do justice.

Christine (Murdock) Kucklick, BA '70: The image that remains with me from the speech is that of the African-American church ladies who traveled from Lima to see Dr. King. They were all dressed up as if for Sunday morning worship. It made me realize how important this visit was, not just to ONU, but to the larger local community.

James Williams, BA '68: What I remember most is the speech had many of the lines from his famous "I Have a Dream" speech given in Washington, D.C., in 1963. It was an extremely inspiring speech.

Bob Foster: Dr. King's speech was inspiring and very thought-provoking.

Dennis Rectenwald: The closest I came to the stage was the vestibule of Taft listening to Dr. King over speakers installed for those standing outside the gym in an overflowing crowd. I don't recall much about the verbiage in the speech, but I can readily reflect the passion I heard in his voice and the cadence synonymous with Martin Luther King Jr.!

James L. Meredith: After his speech, Dr. King took questions from the audience. By then the crowd had thinned out a bit, and I was able to find a seat in the gymnasium for the question-and-answer session. I was even more impressed by the depth and the warmth of Dr. King's voice seeing him in person.

Karl E. May: I felt very privileged to be able to hear this great man speak in person.

Jan Hanna-Simon: Dr. King was well-known and respected then, but now he has become a legend. I feel fortunate that I got to see him and hear him.

Joy Svehla Dial: It remains one of my favorite ONU memories.

Sharron (Dickinson) Newman: It was an inspiring thing to behold. I was very much encouraged to fight for justice and the common man. Currently, I stand in front of the federal building in Bellingham, Wash.,

twice a week to protest the current administration's policies and actions. Thanks to Dr. King, 50 years later I am still fighting for justice!

Gary D. Spahr: Dr. King's line about being late, which generated much laughter then, became very haunting less than 12 weeks later.

David Louis Bondor: When I heard of the murder, all of what I recalled from his presentation was lost. To this day, I only recall that tragically prophetic anecdote.

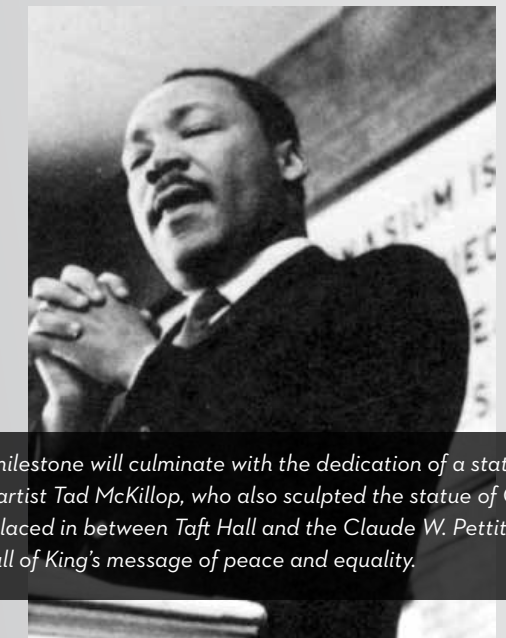
Dr. Joel M. Weaver: Three months later, the Phi Delta Chi pharmacy fraternity held an evening meeting at the home of professor Lou Vottero, where we heard on the television news that Dr. King had been assassinated. I remember it vividly. At age 72, I am still very disappointed that I came so close to have shaken his hand and personally spoken with him.

John A. Gill, BSME '70: I remember all the security that was in place for his speech in Ada, but I was still absolutely stunned when he was killed a few weeks later.

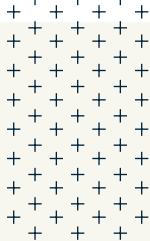
Martin Denes, BA '70: On the day King was assassinated, I remember going out and walking the streets of Ada in sorrow. A year later at a tea at his home, Dr. Udy reminisced about his friendship with Dr. King.

Jack Watchorn: After his assassination in Memphis, Tenn., I reflected on what I had seen and heard in Ada on Jan. 11, 1968. It was truly uplifting and special.

Bob Foster: We were one of his last college stops prior to his death. I feel very honored to have been a part of his visit and legacy to ONU.



ONU's recognition of this important milestone will culminate with the dedication of a statue of Dr. King on April 17, 2018. Created by artist Tad McKillop, who also sculpted the statue of ONU founder H.S. Lehr, the statue will be placed in between Taft Hall and the Claude W. Pettit College of Law. It will serve as a reminder to all of King's message of peace and equality.



MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

Statue Dedication and Speech Commemoration

Ohio Northern University
TUESDAY, APRIL 17, 2018
10:30 a.m.

Opening Remarks and Welcome

President Daniel A. DiBiasio
Ohio Northern University

Prayer of Dedication

The Rev. Dr. David MacDonald, Chaplain
Ohio Northern University

Musical Selection

The ONU Gospel Ensemble
under the direction of
Dr. Adriane Thompson Bradshaw,
Vice President for Student Affairs
Ohio Northern University

Introduction of Dr. Christopher Manning

Dr. John P. Lomax, Professor of History
Ohio Northern University

Dr. Christopher Manning

Associate Professor of History
Loyola University Chicago

Introduction of Dr. Bernard LaFayette Jr.

LaShonda Gurley
Director of Multicultural Development
Ohio Northern University

The Rev. Dr. Bernard LaFayette Jr.

Member of King's inner circle
Co-founder of the Student
Nonviolent Coordinating Committee

Statue Dedication

Sculptor's Remarks

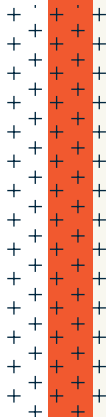
Tad McKillop, Artist

Closing Remarks

President DiBiasio

Benediction

The Rev. Gregory Palmer
ONU Board of Trustees
Bishop of the Ohio West Area
The United Methodist Church



On Thursday, Jan. 11, 1968, Ohio Northern University welcomed Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., during the height of his fame and influence, to speak as part of the Chapel Speaker Series. This was one of King's last university engagements before his assassination in April 1968. Created by artist Tad McKillop to celebrate the 50-year anniversary of King's ONU speech, this statue will serve to remind everyone of his message of peace and equality, and ONU's commitment to its motto *Ex Diversitate Vires* or "out of diversity strength."

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as of April 12, 2018

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 Mr. and Mrs. George J. Weiner in honor of
 her parents, Dale and Norma Wilhelm
 Mr. Rollin L. Wellington Jr. and
 Mrs. Katharine A. Wellington
 Mr. Hanley H. Wheeler III and
 Mrs. Mary Frances T. Wheeler
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