



## **Atlanta's 2011 Civil Rights Celebration Marks Anniversaries, New Discoveries**

ATLANTA (January 3, 2011) – Unexpected actions make for extraordinary stories. Who would expect that a young Martin Luther King Jr. would perform at the segregated movie premiere of "Gone with the Wind" in 1939? Who would think that revenue from the novel would fund medical scholarships for graduates of Morehouse College in Atlanta, an all-male, historically black college?

As the home of the Civil Rights Movement, Atlanta is the perfect destination to explore the history, personalities and places where one of America's most important movements was centered. Visitors will find that Atlanta's Civil Rights story extends beyond commonly known icons and venues.

The **25th anniversary** of the first observance of the Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday on January 17, 2011 and the **75th anniversary** of the publishing of *Gone with the Wind* bring forward the little-known connection between the leader of the civil rights movement and the author of one of the most popular novels in history.

Newly discovered correspondence between Margaret Mitchell and the president of Morehouse College Dr. Benjamin E Mays paints the author in a new light. Mitchell, who wrote "Gone with the Wind" in a small apartment in Atlanta, donated thousands of dollars to Morehouse College to fund undergraduate educations and medical and dental scholarships for graduates. According to her letters, she saw a disparity in African-American healthcare. Instead of accepting the status quo, she bravely devoted herself to fixing the problem.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., born and raised in Atlanta, attended Morehouse College, where he was granted early admission at age 15. Just five years before, the 10-year-old Dr. King performed at the segregated festivities for the premiere of "Gone with the Wind" with the boys' choir of Ebenezer Baptist Church. Rev. Martin Luther King Sr. had been urged to boycott the celebration by other community leaders because African Americans were not allowed to attend, including the film's actors. A brave and forward thinker, King Sr. attended because he was invited.

Mitchell quietly fought against racial prejudice, but did not get a chance to see Martin Luther King Jr. become the strongest voice for equality. Decades after their deaths, we are still learning about their impressive efforts to make Atlanta a beautiful city void of the stereotypes associated with their time.

This month, celebrate the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in Atlanta with the following events:

- 2.5 Mile Youth Stop the Violence Run in Honor of the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the National King Holiday  
Saturday, Jan. 8 at 9 a.m.  
The King Center

- 4<sup>th</sup> Annual King Peace Program: Celebrating the Peace Legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr.  
Thursday, Jan. 13 at 6 p.m.  
The King Center
- Atlanta Symphony Orchestra's King Celebration Concert  
Thursday, Jan. 13 at 8 p.m.  
King International Chapel, Morehouse College, Atlanta
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Annual Commemorative Service  
Monday, January 17 at 10 a.m.  
Ebenezer Baptist Church
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Service Summit Hosted by Hands on Atlanta  
Monday, Jan. 17 at 7:30 a.m.  
Begins with Freedom Rally at Ferst Center for the Performing Arts at Georgia Tech

For more information on Atlanta's civil rights history, visit [www.atlanta.net/civilrights](http://www.atlanta.net/civilrights).

Established in 1913, Atlanta Convention & Visitors Bureau is a private, nonprofit organization created to favorably impact the Atlanta economy through conventions and tourism.

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