



Family Medicine Moments

January 19, 2023

Introduction: With this week as an opportunity to honour Martin Luther King Jr. and the legacy he provided for our country and the world, we pause here at the FMM to reflect on his memory and message. Dr. Jennifer Bradford, Director of Social Justice and Inclusion for our Department, has written about her own personal experience and highlights some important words about MLK and his wife Coretta Scott King. Thank you, Dr. Bradford for your important message and the photos for us to contemplate.

The Embrace

By Jennifer Bradford

Every third Monday in January, we celebrate the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr who was born on January 15, 1929. Dr. King was pivotal in the United States' transformation as a nation moving towards social justice and civil rights for all human beings. It is not so long ago that my parents lived in a segregated world where they were obligated to use "negro only" facilities. On Dec. 11, 1965, Dr. King accepted a Noble Peace Prize for his monumental work, and upon learning about the win, Dr. King and his wife, Coretta Scott King, embraced each other. [View image: [Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Hugs Wife, Coretta](#)] A 20-foot-tall and 40-foot-wide bronze sculpture depicting the arms and hands of the embrace was recently unveiled in the Boston Commons. As we honor the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr, we thought we would share excerpts

from his 14-year-old granddaughter, Yolanda Renee King in response to the monument.*

I love this monument. I also see the love, strength, and unity in these hands and how they symbolize a beautiful marriage and partnership. And it was one that changed the world. I never met my grandparents in person as they died before I was born, and yet, I feel like I know them well. I have heard stories about them since I was a baby. I've studied their writings. I have listened to tapes of them speaking and I have watched videos that showed them in action, I feel that they are somehow with me, that our spirits are joined in the quest for a just, loving, and peaceful world. I am very proud to be their granddaughter, but I am also challenged by their inspiring legacies of vision and courage and hope and healing.

But I know that I am not alone. There is a sense in which we are all children and grandchildren of Martin and Coretta Scott King. We are all challenged to carry forward their unfinished work. This is the spirit we must keep as we commemorate the 37th Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday on Monday. Let's make it a great day of community service, a day of brotherhood, a day of sisterhood, a day of using your platform for good. A day of love and healing in the spirit of this wonderful monument.

In an interview after her formal speech, in answer to the question: Who do you think you are? from journalist Latoyia Edwards, Yolanda's answer was: **

Well, I just really see that there needs to be a lot of change in this world, and I think it is all of our responsibility to really do something. And so, I feel called to do this work. Yes, there are days when I want to give up, and days when I just never want to do this work again, and days when I feel it is tough, and days when I feel sad. But seeing the love, seeing so many people who also feel the same way as me, seeing monuments and just talking with my parents about this, it is almost like Love 360 as this monument is dedicated to their love and we really need more love in this world.



Image: The Embrace sculpture installed on Boston Common (Image via <https://www.flickr.com/photos/pmeimon/52641284993/in/photostream/>, licensed under <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/2.0/>).

* Transcribed from: <https://www.nbcboston.com/on-air/as-seen-on/an-amazing-and-wonderful-occasion-king-family-speaks-at-the-embrace-unveiling/2944842/>

** Transcribed from: <https://www.nbcboston.com/on-air/as-seen-on/this-is-like-love-360-latoyia-edwards-interviews-yolanda-renee-king-mlks-granddaughter/2944840/>

Keywords: Martin Luther King Jr., African Americans, racism, advocacy