

Martin Luther King: Freemason Or Not?  
by Midnight Freemason contributor  
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Martin Luther King Jr. is universally recognized as one of the principal leaders of the civil rights movement in the United States and a prominent advocate of nonviolent protest. King's challenges to segregation and racial discrimination helped convince many to support the cause of civil rights in the United States.

Born in Atlanta, Georgia, he was ordained as a Baptist minister at age 18. He graduated from Morehouse College in 1948 and from Crozer Theological Seminary in 1951. In 1955 he earned a doctoral degree in systematic theology from Boston University. While in Boston, King met Coretta Scott, whom he married in 1953. He's also been identified many times over as being a Freemason.

The question is, was Martin Luther King, Jr. a Freemason? It's a little more complicated than you might think.

It was widely reported in 1999, that the Most Worshipful Brother Benjamin P. Barksdale, Grand Master of Prince Hall Freemasonry in Georgia, posthumously made Dr. Martin Luther King a Mason at sight.



That story has created a huge controversy. If true, it is one of the few instances (if not the only one) when a man was declared a Master Master after his death. Dr. King's widow, Coretta Scott King, accepted the honor on behalf of her late husband.

However, some dispute that Martin Luther King was made a Mason at sight--I've received a lot of emails on this post since I originally published it, and articles, etc. that refute those reports. They say that what Coretta Scott King accepted was actually an honorary membership from Prince Hall Freemasonry for her late husband.

However, what is clear, is that it does seem to have been Dr. King's intention to become a Mason. Both his father and his grandfather were Prince Hall Masons, and Prince Hall documents indicate that Grand Master X. L. Neal had arranged for Dr. King to become a Freemason upon his return from Atlanta in 1968. Unfortunately, his assassination in Memphis on April 4th, 1968 prevented that from happening.

So was Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. a Freemason?

No--Martin Luther King Jr. was never raised a Master Mason. But without question, Dr. King would have made a fine Mason. He was, after all, a builder, and his legacy has forever changed the world.

~TEC

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