



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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‘TRUTH, LIGHT AND HOPE’ UNITES SARASOTA COMMUNITY AT THE 2023 REV. DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. MEMORIAL BREAKFAST AND COMMUNITY AWARDS

The Sarasota MLK Celebration Committee is hosting the annual commemorative breakfast and community awards on Monday, January 16, 2023, inside the Robert L. Taylor Community Complex.

SARASOTA, FL – (January 6, 2023) The Sarasota MLK Celebration Committee is hosting the **2023 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Breakfast and Community Awards** at **7:30 a.m. on Monday, January 16th**, inside the **Robert L. Taylor Community Complex** at **1845 34th Street in Sarasota**. Advance tickets are available for purchase on [Eventbrite](https://2023mlksrqbreakfast.eventbrite.com/) (<https://2023mlksrqbreakfast.eventbrite.com/>). **Individual tickets are \$30**, an **eight-person table is \$240** and a **ten-person table is \$300**. Seating is limited, and ticket purchases are unavailable on the day of the event.

“The Committee is always excited to celebrate Dr. King’s life and legacy with the Sarasota community,” states Sarasota MLK Celebration Committee President Jetson Grimes. “Each year, we pay homage to his dream when we gather together in honor of his great works and recognize the achievements accomplished by people and businesses in our community.”

In addition to honoring Rev. Dr. King’s life and legacy, the Committee also recognizes the Sarasota community’s trailblazing individuals and organizations. The 2023 honorees are **Sarasota Police Department Chief Rex Troché** (public service and safety), **Booker High School Assistant Principal Greg Rumph** (education), **Booker Middle School Teacher Sandra Kay Daniels** (education), **ABC 7’s “Empowering Voices” Host Reneé Gilmore** and **News Anchor James Hill** (media), **Riverview High School Senior** and **Athletic Scholar Jaida Cunningham** (youth) and **Bay First Bank** (community service).

This year’s keynote speaker is Associate Rabbi Michael Shefrin of Temple Emanu-EL in Sarasota. In addition to Temple Emanu-EL, Associate Rabbi Shefrin leads various missions and efforts to eradicate hate against communities based on their color and spiritual beliefs. As president of the Sarasota-Manatee Rabbinic Association in February 2022, he was one of the influential community leaders who engaged in a Sarasota community rally to unite against hate after homeowners found antisemitic fliers on their lawns. In May 2016, the Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion ordained the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion ordained the Los Angeles, California native.

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Additional community and celebratory events are:

Sunday, January 15, 2023 – Tribute to Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr at Temple Emanu-El, located at 151 McIntosh Road in Sarasota. The tribute starts at 2 p.m. and features music by the Soul Sensations. Program participants include Rev. Charles McKenzie and Lonnetta Gaines. There will also be a memorial service to remember the victims of the 2015 shooting at Emanuel African Methodist Church in Charleston, South Carolina, and 2018 shooting at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Register for this free event online at sarasotatemples.org. Donations are gratefully accepted. For additional information, contact Don Malawsky at 941-359-2890.

Monday, January 16, 2023

- **Unity and Historical Walk** to immediately follow the **Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Breakfast and Community Awards** at 11 a.m. The walk will start at the Robert L. Taylor Community Complex and travel south on Osprey Avenue to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Way. It will continue to travel west on Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Way and end at Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Park at 2523 Cocoanut Avenue. Transportation will be available.
- **The MLK Music Fest** will be hosted at Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Park from 12 noon to 4 p.m. Guests will enjoy live music performances, assorted merchandise and soulful cuisine prepared by local vendors.

Saturday, January 21, 2023

- Community Health Care at the Manasota Job Connection, located at 1781 Dr. Martin Luther King Way in Sarasota, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Prostate testing, blood pressure, etc.
- Alpha Phi Alpha Foundation of Manasota, Inc.'s 20th Annual Martin Luther King Jr. Benefit Dinner / Dance at 7 p.m. inside the Lakewood Ranch Golf and Country Club, located at 7650 Legacy Blvd in Lakewood Ranch.

About the 2023 Honorees

Sarasota Police Department Chief Rex Troché

Chief Rex Troché is the first Hispanic to be appointed the Sarasota Police Department's Chief of Police in April 2022. He leads a department of 190 sworn law enforcement officers and 61 civilian support personnel. Since joining the department, he has been assigned to the professional standards, criminal investigations, patrol and support services divisions as either an officer or supervisor. Chief Troché rank promotions include Sergeant (2013), Lieutenant (2017), Captain (2022) and Deputy Chief (2021).

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Booker High School Assistant Principal Greg Rumph

Gregory Rumph is an assistant principal at Booker High School, where he oversees the Visual and Performing Arts program under Principal Dr. Rachel Shelley. In 200, Greg began his educational career as a Booker Middle School ("BMS") visual arts teacher for the Visual Performing Arts Magnet program (VPA). While in the classroom at BMS, he became a National and Board-Certified Teacher. After being a classroom teacher for 15 years, Greg worked as an administrative dean at Southeast High School in Bradenton for two years. He has also served as an assistant principal at Sarasota and Riverview High Schools. Greg is a prolific artist who graduated from the prestigious Ringling College of Art and Design, where he studied illustration. His artwork is on display in the permanent collection of the National Civil Rights Museum in Memphis, Tennessee, and in various private collections.

Booker Middle School Teacher Kay Daniels

Sandra Kay Daniels has taught at Booker Middle School since 2004. She has also served as the school's college and career coordinator, reading and language arts teacher, summer enrichment program director, and the Sarasota Housing Authority's after-school reading teacher. Kay was named BMS's 2010 - 2011 Teacher of the Year. On September 11, 2001, she was the host teacher for former President George W. Bush when he visited Emma E. Booker Elementary School.

ABC 7 "Empowering Voices" Host Renée James-Gilmore

Renée James Gilmore is the producer and host of WWSB-TV ABC7's "Empowering Voices." A Sarasota native, Renée began her journalism career at ABC 7 immediately after earning a communications degree at Florida A & M University in Tallahassee, Florida. She earned an MBA from Clark Atlanta University in Atlanta, Georgia, and transitioned from broadcasting to leading national multibillion-dollar business and government initiatives. Today, Renée is the advisory committee chair for the Department of Veterans Affairs's Sarasota National Cemetery. She is also the president of The Saja Group, a marketing and business consulting firm that helps nonprofits increase their impact.

ABC 7 News Anchor James Hill

James Hill joined WWSB-TV ABC 7 in March 2022 as the weekend news anchor/MMJ. James is an award-winning journalist who has earned national recognition for his work as The Black News Channel Network's ("BNC") first-ever weekend sports anchor and digital sports editor. The former BNC 24-hour cable television network broadcasted Black America news coverage into 52 million US homes. James has covered the NFL Super Bowl and Pro Bowl games, NBA Finals and Playoffs, NCAA Final 4, and HBCU football and basketball games. He brings over 20 years of experience as a sports and news journalist.

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Riverview High School Senior and Athletic Scholar Jaida Cunningham

Riverview High School Senior Jaida Cunningham is active in several school, community and church-related activities. Jaida is a National Career Association and Future Business Leaders of America member and president of her church's young people division. She also plays on the Riverview girls' varsity basketball team. She has volunteered at the SOAR Center in her free time, working with children K-3 and the Safe Children Coalition's Achievers Program since 2016. Jaida plans to attend college and major in Sports Medicine.

Bay First Bank

BayFirst opened in January of 2022 as the first bank to operate in the heart of the Newtown community, aiming to catalyze economic development and serve as a financial resource for area residents and businesses. In just 12 short months, it has become a trusted financial institution, having helped more than 60 residents and business owners set and surpass their goals. During that time, BayFirst became a true community member through its outreach and partnerships. Today, the bank provides more than a dozen nonprofits support through free meeting space, volunteer hours, financial literacy courses and financial counseling. It has also provided more than \$800,000 in funding to build affordable housing in Newtown. Now in its second year of operations in the MLK Way business corridor, the bank is more than ever committed to improving the lives of all who call Newtown home. It is doing its part to ensure the community's continued development and success in the years to come.

About the Sarasota MLK Celebration Committee

Founded in 1987, the Sarasota MLK Celebration Committee is dedicated to honoring the life and legacy of Rev. Dr. Martin L. King Jr. Funds generated through its mission are allocated toward awarding scholarships to low-income minority students in pursuit of higher education. Currently, over 50 scholarships have been awarded.

About Associate Rabbi Michael Shefrin

Amid an exciting career in the entertainment industry, Associate Rabbi Michael Shefrin experienced a life-changing shift in his goals after volunteering in the Jewish community. Today, he finds fulfillment in helping people of all ages and backgrounds connect to their spirituality and elevate their lives and the world through Judaism.

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