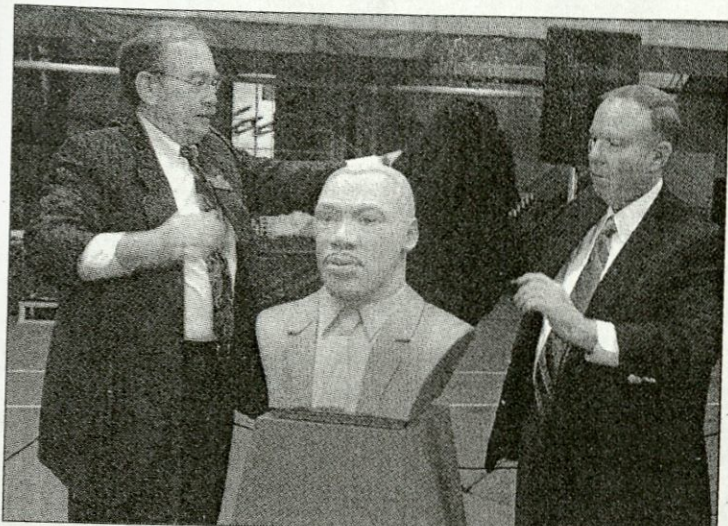


Bust of Martin Luther King Jr. unveiled



Christopher Hanewinkel | COLLEGIAN

Kansas Board of Regents member Dan Lykins, left, and K-State President Jon Wefald unveil a new sculpture of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. The sculpture will be permanently placed outside Ahearn Field House in April.

By Logan C. Adams
KANSAS STATE COLLEGIAN

A bust of Martin Luther King Jr. that will be installed in front of Ahearn Field House this year was unveiled Friday afternoon.

The ceremony occurred during the week that marked the 20th observance of the federal holiday in King's name.

It began with a luncheon in the K-State Alumni Center, after which the attendees marched north on 17th Street through falling snow. Many held hands in groups of two or three, but some walked alone in the long, narrow line that advanced up the hill.

A lectern with a microphone awaited the party inside Ahearn, its heaters creating a strong hum in the background. A row of 13 chairs were set out in a single line for anyone who needed one, but only a few were taken. The rest of the audience of about 80 people chose to stand.

The clay model of King's bust stood

in front of the lectern, surrounded by a thin rope to keep people from getting too close. A dark cloth covered it, a temporary pedestal poking out beneath it.

K-State President Jon Wefald was the first to speak at the ceremony, which marked the end of a week of events centered around King's legacy.

"It's only fitting that Kansas State take very seriously the Martin Luther King week," he said, "because it is a week for all of us here at Kansas State."

Wefald then introduced Dan Lykins, member of the Kansas Board of Regents. Lykins was in the audience of about 7,200 when King presented a convocation lecture on "the future of integration" in Ahearn on Jan. 19, 1968.

"He spoke about equality. He spoke about justice," Lykins said. "I guarantee you, his spirit is in this building, and it will never leave."

Lykins said it was the last time King

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spoke at a university before he was assassinated on April 4, 1968.

Wefald said the late Sen. Robert F. Kennedy, D-N.Y., presented a Landon Lecture in Ahearn on March 18, 1968. It was the first speech he gave after announcing his candidacy for president two days earlier.

He also was assassinated not long after, on June 5 of that year.

When Lykins finished, Myra Gordon, associate provost for diversity and dual career development, delivered a libation, the pouring of a liquid for a religious purpose, to dedicate the site.

"Our purpose is to awaken and hallow this ground, to call down the blessing of

the spirit," Gordon said.

She used water for the ceremony, which she said was a symbol of the continuity of life and of immortality.

The ceremony was originally planned to be outside in front of Ahearn where the libation would be poured on the ground, but inclement weather prevented that.

Instead, earth from the future site of the sculpture was carried inside a large, ornate jar and the libation poured into it. After the ceremony, the earth was put back outside.

After the libation was over, Wefald and Lykins unveiled the clay model of King's bust to applause from the audience.

Several members of Alpha Phi Alpha came forward and surrounded the model,

crossed their arms, joined hands and sang "The Alpha Phi Alpha, Inc., Fraternal Hymn."

Richard Bergen, the bust's sculptor, came forward and spoke briefly. Bergen said he made the bust to be a composite of several pictures of King taken throughout his lifetime.

He is the sculptor who made the Ad Astra bronze sculpture that stands atop the Kansas Capitol.

Bergen said the clay model also would be cast in bronze and would be complete in three to four months.

"That sculptor is great," said Bryon Williams, sophomore in economics and philosophy and member of Alpha Phi Alpha. "He put a lot of detail in it, and I'm really proud of it."

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