

K-STATE @ DR. KING

the mysterious connection

Discovery to show even greater link between university and civil-rights leader

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*M*yra Gordon is passionate while talking about Kansas State University's connection to Martin Luther King Jr.

K-State was the last university at which he spoke Jan. 19, 1968, fewer than three months before he was shot and killed at a Memphis, Tenn., hotel.

"It's something that's very, very special to us at K-State," said Gordon, associate provost for diversity and dual career development.

And there is a deeper connection Gordon said she couldn't reveal until later in the week.

It is part of the Martin Luther King Jr. Observance Week, an event Gordon said gets bigger each year.

This year's event features a day of volunteer opportunities Monday, several topical lectures throughout the week and a documentary to be screened Thursday, at which Gordon said she would explain new information that showed there was a deeper connection between K-State and King than previously thought.

"The whole thing is just so woven and beautiful," she said.

The title of the documentary, "From the Balcony of Room 306," is also the theme of this week's events.

Part of the revelation is a collection of photos in the K-State archives from King's visit that were recently discovered. Gordon said someone was researching another topic and came across the more than 20 photos that had been misplaced.

The observance week is "always growing its significance and relevance," Gordon said.

Past events have dedicated a bust of King south of the East Stadium and a portion of 17th Street as Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Drive.

However, the week of remembrance is more than just a recognition of King's visit to K-State, Gordon said.

"It's an opportunity for us to come together as a campus community around the ideas for which Dr. King fought and died," Gordon said.

Many of the events, such as Monday's prayer breakfast or the laying of the wreaths Friday afternoon, are powerful remembrances of how things have changed in America and the work that continues "as much as they were when he was actively engaged in that struggle," Gordon said.

"This isn't about 'other,'" Gordon said. "It's about us. It's not just about then. It's about now."

What's the connection?

Long-lost photos. A suspenseful announcement. To find out what Gordon is talking about, attend Thursday's MLK week event. See below for more information.



Photos courtesy Kansas State University Archives

Martin Luther King Jr. waits to speak at K-State's Ahearn Fieldhouse on Jan. 19, 1968. Some previously unpublished photos from that visit, including these, recently were recovered in the university archives.



King and K-State president James McCain speak at the airport after King arrives in Manhattan.



James McCain, Homer Floyd and George Haley listen to King's speech at K-State in 1968. The appearance was King's last at a university; he was killed less than three months later.