

DUKE UNIVERSITY'S 2025  
THE REV. DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.  
SERVICE OF COMMEMORATION

*Sunday, January 19, 2025  
Three o'clock in the afternoon  
Duke University Chapel, Durham, NC*

## Hope Powered by Community:

*Protecting King's Dream Through Determination and Unity*



As we approach the fifth anniversary of the death of George Floyd, it is an opportune moment for reflection on the diverse voices and perspectives within our community. The theme of hope, central to the 2025 MLK Commemoration Celebration, offers a unifying principle that resonates across all experiences and viewpoints. This year's keynote speaker, Judge Jerry Blackwell, exemplifies the theme ***Hope Powered by Community: Protecting King's Dream through Determination and Unity***. His message invites us to consider how the principles of hope and justice can guide the Duke community—and society at large—toward a future that honors the enduring legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.



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**PRELUDE** John Brown Quintet

**PROCESSIONAL** John Brown Quintet

**"SIM SHALOM"** Elana Friedman  
(Grant Peace) *Campus Rabbi, Jewish Life at Duke*

**INVOCATION** Luke A. Powery  
*Dean, Duke University Chapel*

**GREETINGS** Vincent E. Price  
*President, Duke University*

Leonardo Williams  
*Mayor, Durham, North Carolina*

Rhonda Brandon  
*Senior Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer,  
Duke University Health System*

Joe Asamoah-Boadu  
*President, Black Student Alliance; Trinity '26*

**MUSIC SELECTION** United in Praise Gospel Choir, Duke University

Great God, Great Vision, Great Accomplishments COGIC International  
Music Department

**INTRODUCTION OF KEYNOTE SPEAKER** Kerry L. Haynie  
*Professor and Chair of Political Science,  
Professor of African and African American Studies*

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS** Jerry W. Blackwell  
*United States District Court Judge, District of Minnesota*

**MUSIC SELECTION** United in Praise Gospel Choir, Duke University

Lift Every Voice and Sing John Rosamond Johnson (1873–1954)  
James Weldon Johnson (1871–1938)



**CONGREGATIONAL SONG** | Please Rise as Able

United Methodist Hymnal #533: We Shall Overcome

**RECESSIONAL AND POSTLUDE**

John Brown Quintet

**USHERS**  
Christian Dunbar, Trinity '26, Natnael Worku, Pratt '26 ..... *Members of Alpha Phi and Hakeem Shitta-Bey, Pratt '26*  
*Alpha Fraternity*

**MUSICAL LEADERSHIP**  
John Brown ..... *Vice Provost for the Arts, Duke University*  
Nicholas Venable..... *Music Director for United in Praise*  
Mitchell Eithun..... *Chapel Carillonneur, Duke University Chapel*

MEMBERS OF THE DUKE UNIVERSITY DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.  
COMMEMORATION AND CELEBRATION COMMITTEE

- Kimberly Hewitt, Chair: *Vice President for Institutional Equity and Chief Diversity Officer*

Sarah Cline: *Senior Program Coordinator, Campus Engagement Office of Durham and Community Affairs*

Jasmine Cobb: *Associate Chair of the Department of African & African American Studies and Professor of African & African American Studies and of Art, Art History and Visual Studies*

Pamela Gibbs-Smith: *Assistant Vice President, Communication Strategy and Operations, Duke Communications and Marketing*

Amanda Gonzalez: *Program Director for Special Events*
- Alexis Harp: *Assistant Director of Student Involvement and Leadership*

Dawna Jones: *Assistant Vice President for Identity Centers & Community Development, Duke Student Affairs*

Paul Kartcheske: *Production Manager, Duke Arts*

Taren Moore: *Senior Associate Director of Athletic People, Culture, and Community/ Chief Diversity Officer*

Bruce Puckett: *Assistant Dean, Duke University Chapel*

Ashley Turnbull: *Assistant Director of Training and Assessment, Mary Lou Williams Center*



## JERRY W. BLACKWELL

Judge Jerry W. Blackwell was appointed as a United States District Court Judge by President Joe Biden and took the oath of office on December 22, 2022. Judge Blackwell previously served as the founding partner at the law firm of Blackwell Burke P.A. in Minneapolis.

Judge Blackwell was formerly a trial attorney with thirty-five years of experience in complex litigation matters around the country. His recognitions include being named Minnesota Attorney of the Year six times, named to Best Lawyers in America for over a decade, he was the recipient of the National Law Journal 2022 “Winning Litigator” of the year recognition, and he received lifetime achievement awards from Benchmark Litigation and the National Bar Association in 2022. He is a founding member of the Minnesota Association of Black Lawyers (1995).

Judge Blackwell served pro bono as a lead Special Assistant Attorney General in the prosecution of former Minneapolis Police Officer Derek Chauvin for the death of George Floyd. Additionally, in 2020, in tandem with the Clayton Jackson McGhie Memorial Committee of Duluth, he helped pro bono to secure the first posthumous pardon in Minnesota history for Max Mason, a black traveling circus worker wrongfully convicted of raping a white woman in 1920. Three of his black circus co-workers were lynched by a mob of 10,000 whites in Duluth for the fabricated rape charge.

Judge Blackwell attended UNC-Chapel Hill for his undergraduate and law school education and is a distinguished alumnus at both institutions. He attended UNC as a Morehead-Cain Scholar.



*The Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemoration and Celebration Committee acknowledges the support of the Duke University Office of the President, the Office of the Provost, the Duke University Health System, the Office of the Executive Vice President for Health Affairs and Dean of the Duke University School of Medicine, Duke Divinity School, the Office for Institutional Equity, University Communications and Marketing, Trinity College of Arts and Sciences, The Graduate School, the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs, the Mary Lou Williams Center for Black Culture, Duke Student Government, and Duke Chapel.*

*For a full schedule of upcoming events and additional information,  
please visit [mlk.duke.edu](http://mlk.duke.edu).*