

Cherry trees bloom around the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial.

A Leader for Civil Rights



Towering over onlookers near the Potomac River in Washington, D.C., is the Martin Luther King,

Jr. Memorial. It is located at 1964 Independence Avenue SW. The address is important. In 1964, the U.S. government passed the **Civil Rights** Act. This ended **segregation** and other forms of unfair treatment. Today, the **monument** honors a man who fought for the equality not only of fellow African Americans, but of all people.



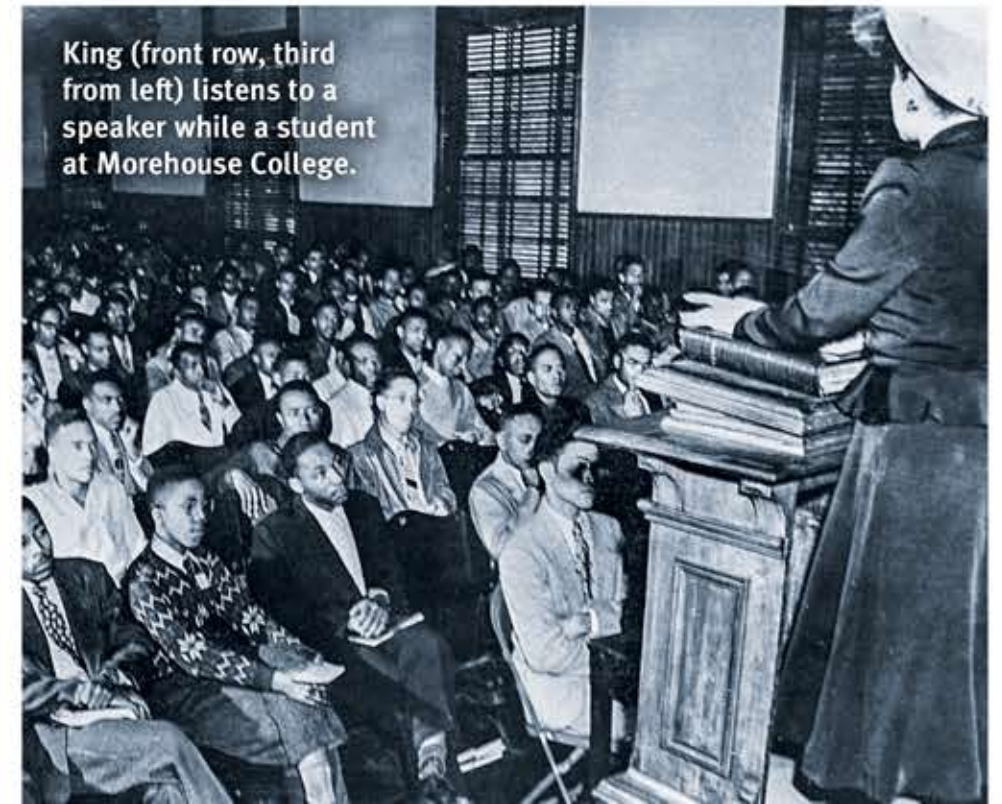
Martin Jr. (front row, right) poses for a photo with his siblings, parents, and grandmother (back row, right).

Becoming Dr. King

Martin Luther King Jr. was born Michael King Jr. in 1929 in Atlanta, Georgia. He and his father both changed their names to Martin Luther King

when Michael Jr. was little. Young Martin grew up listening to his father preach against segregation. Many years later, after becoming a minister himself, Dr. King preached that peaceful protests were a good way to fight for equal rights.

At first, however, King did not plan to be a minister. A gifted student, he entered Morehouse College in Atlanta at the age of 15. There, he studied sociology, the study of society and culture. Dr. Benjamin Mays, president of the college, asked Morehouse students to pay attention to society's problems. He told them it was their job to correct the sufferings and injustices they found.



King (front row, third from left) listens to a speaker while a student at Morehouse College.

THE **BIG** TRUTH!

National Mall Monuments

As the National Mall's first monument to honor an African American, the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial is a must-see on any trip to Washington D.C. If you ever get to visit, make sure to check out some of the other nearby memorials to people and events that have left a mark on U.S. history.

Lincoln Memorial

Completed: 1922

Honors: President Abraham Lincoln, who worked to keep the country together during the Civil War (1861–1865)

Fact: This monument is shown on the back of the penny and the \$5 bill.



World War II Memorial

Completed: 2004

Honors: The millions of Americans who served during World War II

Fact: One wall of the memorial has 4,048 stars fastened onto it. Each star represents 100 of the more than 400,000 Americans who died in the war.



Korean War Veterans Memorial

Completed: 1995

Honors: Americans who fought for a democratic government in Korea between 1950 and 1953

Fact: The artist who sculpted the 19 statues of soldiers, sailors, and airmen for the memorial fought in World War II.



Vietnam Veterans Memorial

Completed: 1982

Honors: The Americans who died or went missing in the Vietnam War (1954–1975)

Fact: While most war memorials list names in order of rank, the more than 58,000 names on this memorial's giant wall are in order of death or disappearance.



Washington Monument

Completed: 1884

Honors: The United States' first president, George Washington

Fact: Builders were forced to halt the construction of this monument for several years because of the Civil War (1861–1865).

