

Alameda County Supervisor Keith Carson, Fifth District

1221 Oak Street, Suite 536, Oakland, CA 94612

Phone: 510-272-6695 • Fax: 510-271-5151

Contact: Hannah Greene

Office: (510) 272-6768

Cell: (510) 220-3866

Email: hannah.greene@acgov.org

Press Release

For Immediate Release June 20, 2014

Commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the 1964 Civil Rights Act

1800 gather in Oakland to honor Howard Moore, Jr., and other Civil Rights Luminaries



Photographers@Large-2014

Caption: Supervisor Keith Carson, Elaine Brown, D'Wayne Wiggins, a student from Strings of Soul, Stanley Burrell, Tarika Lewis, Angela Davis, honoree Howard Moore, Jr., Pastor Charley Hames and Ceyphus "Uncle Bobby" Johnson after the Commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the 1964 Civil Rights Act on Wednesday, June 18, 2014 at Beebe Memorial Cathedral in Oakland. (Photo credit: Photographers@Large).

Oakland, CA—An historic piece of civil rights legislation and the leaders who fought to change the nation's laws were commemorated Wednesday night at a moving community event at Oakland's Beebe Memorial Cathedral.

The *Commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Civil Rights Act of 1964: The Struggle Continues* provided an opportunity for the whole community to reflect on the road to passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the gains and setbacks of the last 50 years and the ongoing struggle for full human rights in the United States.

The program honored iconic civil rights attorney Howard Moore, Jr., general counsel for the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and attorney for Angela Davis from 1971 to 1977.

With the passage of the Civil Rights Act, discrimination in public accommodations, voter registration and employment based on race, religion and gender was finally outlawed.

“We must never, never forget what preceded the historic signing of the Act,” declared Alameda County Supervisor Keith Carson, an organizer of the event. “I clearly remember restaurants in Jack London Square that wouldn’t permit people of color to be patrons of those facilities.”

“The goal of the bloody struggle for the right to vote was to bring about political power to strengthen the ongoing freedom struggle,” proclaimed Elaine Brown, former Black Panther Party chairman and emcee for the event.

Mr. Moore was heralded for supporting and defending some of the most prominent names in that struggle for freedom.

“The Civil Rights Act would have been absolutely inconceivable without Howard’s contributions,” Ms. Davis declared. She recited the long list of prominent civil rights leaders represented by Mr. Moore, including Julian Bond, H. Rap Brown, Stokely Carmichael and Martin Luther King, Jr.

Noting that Mr. Moore moved his family from Atlanta to Berkeley to join her legal team, Ms. Davis said, “I can tell you that he was truly the heart and soul of my defense. I still have not figured out how to adequately thank him for saving my life.”

Supervisor Carson presented Mr. Moore with a *Freedom Warrior* Medal “for his unwavering commitment to the pursuit of liberty and justice for all and for dedicating his life to the unending struggle for freedom and equality.”

While the speakers commemorated what Mr. Moore called the “marvelous accomplishment” of the Civil Rights Act, they also cautioned of ongoing discrimination and struggle for African Americans.

“When we look through the longer framework of history, we see that all over the world, peasants are still trying to become citizens,” said Clayborne Carson, who wrote the definitive work on SNCC and has been entrusted with editing and publishing the Martin Luther King, Jr., papers.

“One of the perils we face today is a profound question of whether or not there is any real perceived need for African Americans in this country,” Mr. Moore declared.

“What’s the grand plan for us?” he asked, when African Americans face sub-standard schools for their children, high levels of incarceration and barriers to employment in an increasingly automatized economy.

During the program, excerpts were shown of the film *Freedom Summer*, which documents the summer of 1964 when hundreds of students, civil rights workers and organizers joined with Mississippi residents and risked their lives to register African Americans to vote. The film was directed by award-winning filmmaker and MacArthur Fellow Stanley Nelson and will air on PBS on June 24, 2014.

Platinum Grammy-Award-winning recording artist D’Wayne Wiggins and Tarika Lewis with Strings of Soul contributed musical selections.

As attendees joined hands, the Beebe Memorial Cathedral Choir closed out the night by leading the audience in an emotional rendering of “We Shall Overcome,” a call to action to continue the struggle.

###

Alameda County Supervisor Keith Carson represents the Fifth District, which includes Albany, Berkeley, Emeryville, Piedmont, and parts of Oakland (North Oakland, Rockridge, Grand Lake, Fruitvale, and Dimond District neighborhoods). For more information about District 5 and Supervisor Keith Carson, please call (510) 272-6695 or visit <http://www.acgov.org/board/district5>