



## EDITORIALS

# Echoes of '63 Still Heard

Our thoughts today should be on King's sacrifice

As President Barack Obama raises his right hand today to take the oath of office for his second term, his other hand will rest upon a black leather Bible that slain civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. once owned. The invocation will come from Myrlie Evers-Williams, the widow of civil rights activist Medgar Evers.

Fifty years ago, Evers was gunned down in the driveway of his Mississippi home, and King was jailed during protests in Alabama, leading him to pen his poignant "Letter from Birmingham Jail."

Fifty years ago, four young girls attending Sunday school at the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham died in a bomb blast.

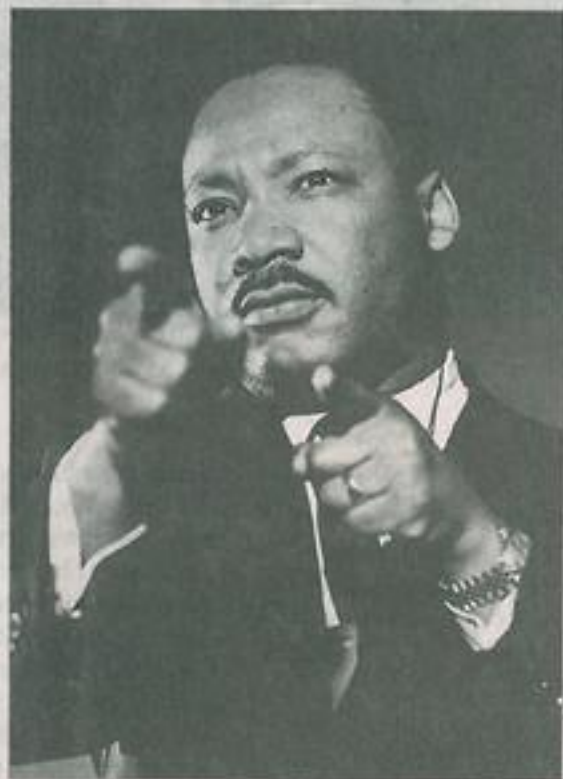
Fifty years ago, 200,000 people gathered at the Lincoln Memorial to hear King deliver his towering "I Have a Dream" speech.

Half a century ago, in the pivotal year of 1963, bold and courageous men, women and children reinvigorated the civil rights movement.

Within walking distance from where Obama will take the oath today is the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial, dedicated just two years ago by the nation's first black president. At that ceremony, Obama acknowledged the wearying path that others had trod and the blood they had shed, especially the "black preacher with no official rank or title who somehow gave voice to our deepest dreams."

Obama honored not just King that day but the many whose names aren't found in history books. Inspired by the civil rights leader, they contributed equally courageous achievements.

The president is well aware of the sacrifices that link the events of 1963 to his seat in the Oval Office today. The same is true for



File/The Associated Press

The Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. wrote his "Letter from Birmingham Jail" and delivered his "I Have a Dream" speech in 1963.

seismic changes in America in 1963 grows smaller with each passing year. And while the travails become more distant, the accomplishments as affirmations of conscience remain ever-so relevant. Indeed, they demonstrated that common men and women can act uncommonly.

The King-led civil rights movement was foremost a moral campaign to remind Americans of this great nation's promise and the need to rid itself of the shackles of discrimination, a liberation that transcends