

On August the 28th, 1963, Dr. Martin Luther King stood on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial and told America, he had a dream.

“I have a dream that one day, down in Alabama, with its vicious racists, with its governor having his lips dripping with the words of interposition and nullification; one day right there in Alabama little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands together with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers.”

On March 25th, 1965, at the conclusion of the Selma to Montgomery march, while standing in front of the Alabama State Capitol he said, “the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice.”

Fifty years later, as thousands of Americans marched toward the Alabama Capitol in memory and in honor of those who marched along the blacktop roads from Selma to Montgomery in 1965, Dr. Kings daughter, Bernice and Governor Wallace’s daughter, Peggy stood together, holding hands as they watched a sea of marchers approach.

For that moment in time, Bernice and I became the embodiment of that little little black girl and that little white girl, holding hands together right there down in Alabama.

Dr. King’s dream had come true.

I sometimes wonder if the arc of the moral universe, during those Alabama days and nights of the 1960's, would have bent fartherand faster toward the promise land of JUSTICE and FREEDOM for all, if our fathers had only known that there would come a day, when that little black girl and that little white girl, down there in Alabama would be, their own daughters.

Dr. King taught us that there is power in all of us to reach out, to step up, to stand firm in the belief that each of our lives count for something.

Let us lead the way, on the road to a better not bitter America, by holding hands, rather than holding down the inherent rights of the common man. For, no one can measure the true worth of a mended heart that beats again, because someone cared.

Today we look over the shoulder of history as we reflect upon the past, be reminded of where we started, how far we went and the sacrifices we made.

But in the sunrise of the coming tomorrows, we must rise up and stand shoulder to shoulder to face the challenges that lay ahead. For, how can our sons and daughters reach the higher ground, if we do not teach them how to climb.

I hope there will be moments in all of your lives, where the future can become more important than the past, when "I shall overcome" becomes "I have overcome" when you can stand firm for freedom when all others pass away, be courageous and proclaim

victories of your own, rise up for your dignity so that one day your daughters and sons will have the courage to stand up and speak out for you, because of you and in honor of you

For too many Americans, there are no fair winds or flowing seas to carry them to the shores of a better world, where there is life without fear and a heart of purpose.

So, for them and in memory of Dr. King, let us refuse to give in to self-doubt and the opinions of others, let us listen to our hearts in the quietness of a moment and be constant in our faith and fortitude.

Let us rise to lead others, to stand on mountaintops of opportunity, to think of others before ourselves and to answer the call of destiny.

Let our hearts be filled with the joy of loving one another and stand up when honor calls. Walk on and claim victories of our own.

And believe and live the words of Dr. Martin Luther King.

“Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.”