

MESSAGE FROM SENATOR HUBERT H. HUMPHREY

HUMAN RIGHTS AWARD

Fourth Annual Public Health Service
Commemoration Ceremony Honoring The
Birthdate Of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Rockville, Maryland

January 13, 1978

I am deeply honored that the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemorative Committee, on behalf of employees of the Public Health Service, has chosen me to receive the award dedicated to the memory of this great man.

This award speaks of commitment to human rights and to equal treatment. For me, these are not just legal issues; rather, they are a matter of absolute moral conviction. Without the strength of that conviction, I could not have carried through the long effort to achieve enactment of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and have pressed for the accomplishment of further milestones in our national laws and policies.

It was Martin Luther King's faith that "unconditional love will have the final word in reality." That love works itself out in the concrete forms of justice that we render to each other. We must have a spiritual conviction about the dignity of each and every human being, endowed by his or her Creator with inalienable rights. We must firmly believe that we will win the battle for human rights. If we lose it, we lose ourselves -- the whole meaning and purpose of our existence and our hope and promise as a human society.

We begin with the demand that all people should experience political freedom. But to make this experience a meaningful reality, we immediately go on to insist that genuine opportunities for self-betterment be provided for all people. Together, we shall overcome the barriers to equal treatment, fulfilling the dream of Martin Luther King for all the children of God.

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