

DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

Title: Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Artist: Ed Dwight

Date: 2007

Type: Sculpture

Medium: Bronze

Location: Hermann Park



Facing the statue of Mahatma Gandhi across the lawn at the Houston Garden Center, the statue of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., has been part of the art scene in Hermann Park since its December 9, 2007, unveiling. The bronze is the work of well-known Denver artist Ed Dwight. He received the commission for the statue from Houston City Council Member Ada Edwards and the Hermann Park Conservancy based largely on the many nationally significant memorials he has produced.

Dr. King was born in Atlanta, GA, in 1929. He graduated from Morehouse College at the top of his class and received a PhD in systematic theology from Boston University. He served as pastor of the Drexel Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, AL.

His importance to American culture is as the leader of the non-violent movement that swept the nation in the 1950's and 1960's to bring equality to minorities. Under his leadership, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference organized sit-ins and boycotts that brought attention to the equal rights movement, and Dr. King spoke eloquently on the subject through his writings and speeches, especially the "I Have a Dream" speech given during the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom on August 28, 1963.

Dr. King received the Springarn Medal, the most prestigious award given by the National Association of Colored People, in 1957, and the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964. As a direct result of the movement led by Dr. King, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the National Voting Rights Act of 1965 were passed and signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson. He was assassinated in Memphis, TN, on April 4, 1968, but his memory is kept alive through the ongoing movement for racial equality and in monuments such as the statue in Hermann Park.

[Ed Dwight](#) was born in Kansas City, Kansas, and joined the Air Force in 1953. He served as a fighter pilot and test pilot, and is known as the first African-American astronaut candidate. He was a marketing representative for IBM and an aviation consultant for many years. His love of art led to the creation of many commissions across America and a Masters of Fine Art Degree in sculpture from the University of Denver. He maintains a studio in Denver.

