

## Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Born in 1929 in Atlanta, Georgia, Dr. King was educated in Atlanta's public schools and attended Morehouse College, Crozer Theological Seminary and Boston University.

In 1954, King began work at Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama, and was elected president of the Montgomery Improvement Association and leader of the Montgomery Bus Boycott. He introduced Ghandi's technique of nonviolent direct action into the struggle for human rights during the boycott and as president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

King was a principal leader of the 1963 March on Washington where he delivered his "I Have a Dream" speech. In 1964, he received the Nobel Peace Prize. He led nonviolent protests throughout the South and, in 1966, began demonstrating in northern cities. In 1967, he started the Poor People's Campaign calling for unity across racial and class lines against poverty.

While in Memphis for the 1968 sanitation workers' strike, he was shot and killed. In 1986, in recognition of his role as leader of the civil rights movement and the articulator of a vision that embodied the democratic creed, Congress established Dr. King's birthday as a national holiday.



**Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial**  
**Artist: Barbara Grygutis**

In the 1980s, Columbia citizens began discussing how to honor Dr. King. This site, owned by the city, was chosen. Citizens helped select the artist's design, and the community-funded memorial was dedicated on August 28, 1993, 30 years to the day of King's "I Have a Dream" speech.

The memorial symbolizes King's beliefs and the timelessness of his message. Each stone in the spiral represents one year in King's life, with the last one partial to signify his untimely death. Quotes from King's writings adorn the columns.

After years of damage due to water runoff, the memorial needed restoration. Private donations and a Save America's Treasures grant from the National Park Service funded the work, completed in 2006. The surrounding area was renamed Battle Garden to honor local civic leaders Eliot and Muriel Battle.