

For Immediate Release
JANUARY 13, 2009



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News Release

Scholarly Access Now Available to the Martin Luther King Jr. Collection *Clayborne Carson Joins Morehouse as Distinguished Professor and Executive Director*

ATLANTA- Historian Clayborne Carson has had a love affair with everything “King” for most of his life. For the past quarter century, he’s been able to mesh that love with his professional passion. Now, Carson will expand that passion even more as he joins the Morehouse faculty as the Martin Luther King Jr. Distinguished Professor and executive director of the Morehouse College Martin Luther King Jr. Collection.

As executive director of the more than 10,000-piece Collection, Carson will be responsible for mapping the vision and direction for the Collection, including developing programming for scholarly access and public education. One of his most important roles, however, will be to mentor future King scholars.

Though Carson's new responsibilities will be largely administrative, he also will teach a seminar at Morehouse on the "Life and Thought of Martin Luther King, Jr."

"When the College began looking for someone to manage oversight of the Morehouse College Martin Luther King Jr. Collection, we knew that the ideal candidate would be able to develop and implement a strategic plan for the Collection and raise the visibility in the local and national community," said **Robert M. Franklin, president of Morehouse**. "We are thrilled to welcome Dr. Carson to the Morehouse College faculty. He is a preeminent King scholar and brings to Morehouse time-proven expertise and vitality around this project," he said.

For Carson, coming to Morehouse to head the Collection is serendipitous. He has been working with King’s personal writings since 1985, when the late Coretta Scott King asked him to direct a long-term project to edit and publish the papers of King, a 1948 graduate of Morehouse College.

"I’m honored by the opportunity to direct this historic project, which marks a new stage in my decades-long effort to ensure that all of King’s visionary ideas will be available for future generations," **Carson said**.

Morehouse has been the steward of the Collection since 2006. It is the most comprehensive collection of King’s personal writings and books spanning from 1946 to 1968 and includes thousands of King’s personal documents, notes, speeches and books from his personal library. Approximately 7,000 pieces of the Collection are handwritten items, including an early draft of the famous “I Have a Dream” speech, the 1964 Nobel Peace Prize speech and nearly 100 handwritten sermons from the 1950s and 1960s, some of which have never been published or studied before.

Scholarly Access Now Available

After nearly two years of dedicated work, the Robert W. Woodruff Library (RWWL) has organized and digitized 75 percent of the world-class Collection. The RWWL has served as archival custodian of the Collection since September 2006.

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“Preserving and providing access to this Collection has been an honor for the Woodruff Library staff,” said **Loretta Parham, RWWL CEO & Director**. “Bringing this portion of Dr. King’s legacy to the world was a task staff approached with much reverence and the utmost professionalism. I believe the results of their efforts reflect well on Morehouse College, the Atlanta University Center and the library and archival professions.”

The Woodruff archival staff has created a state-of-the art Finding Aid and Digital Collection using the Archivists’ Toolkit and OCLC Contentdm©. By using the new Finding Aid and Digital Collection, the serious researcher and casual scholar will have the ability to view descriptions of every manuscript item in the Morehouse King Collection from anywhere in the world.

“The sheer volume and detail within the finding aid entries far surpass the norm for a collection of comparable size and will be invaluable to the scholarly community and community at-large,” Parham said.

Further, the quality, quantity and detail of the images within the Morehouse Digital Collection available for on-site review at the Woodruff Library are unmatched by any other King collection, Parham said.

Central to the development of the Morehouse King Collection Finding Aid and Digital Collection was the creation of the MLK Jr. Archival Collaborative, a partnership between the RWWL, Howard Gotlieb Archival Research Center (HGARC) at Boston University and Stanford University’s Martin Luther King Jr., Research & Education Institute. With funding from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the three institutions focused on the collaborative development of digital finding aids that could cross-reference related, similar or even identical items in the King collections housed at Woodruff and the HGARC.

Descriptions and terminology created through Stanford’s King Papers Project were instrumental in the completion of the Morehouse King Collection Finding Aid and a similar one in development at HGARC. Once both finding aids are complete, the Collaborative will move toward creating a one-of-a-kind Web interface to support the simultaneous, electronic search of multiple King collections.

History of the Collection

A group of Atlanta business and civic leaders, led by Mayor Shirley Franklin, raised \$32 million to purchase the Collection just before it was to have gone up for auction at Sotheby’s in 2006. The deal brought the Collection home to Atlanta, the cradle of the civil rights movement and King’s birthplace. It was the wishes of the King Estate that the Collection be donated to Morehouse, from which King graduated in 1948.

More About Clayborne Carson

Carson received his doctorate from UCLA in 1975. He has taught at Stanford University, where he is now professor of history and founding director of the Martin Luther King, Jr., Research and Education Institute. He also has been a visiting professor at American University, the University of California, Berkeley, and Emory University, as well as a Fellow at the Center for the Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford. He will retain his position as a professor in Stanford's History Department and as director of Stanford's King Research and Education Institute during his tenure at Morehouse.

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About the Robert W. Woodruff Library

The RWWL is an independent entity organized and operating to provide an academic library for the exclusive benefit of its member institutions: Clark Atlanta University, the Interdenominational Theological Center, Morehouse College and Spelman College.

Covering more than 220,000 square feet with seating for more than 1,200, the RWWL AUC features a learning environment that caters to the research and study needs of an academically diverse population of more than 10,000 enrolled students and nearly a thousand faculty. All users have access to staff expertise, group study and meeting spaces, and library holdings of more than 1.6 million print and electronic resources.

About Morehouse College

Recognized as one of the top feeder schools to the 15 most prominent graduate and professional programs in the nation by The Wall Street Journal, called "One of the best Southeastern colleges" by The Princeton Review and ranked "America's Hottest College for Men" by Kaplan-Newsweek, Morehouse College is the nation's largest, private liberal arts college for men. The College offers 26 majors in three academic divisions: Humanities and Social Sciences, Science and Mathematics, and Business Administration and Economics. Morehouse offers a number of programs and activities to enhance its challenging liberal arts curriculum through the Leadership Center at Morehouse College, Morehouse Research Institute, Andrew Young Center for International Affairs and the Martin Luther King Jr. International Chapel. In 2007, Morehouse launched a new Journalism and Sports concentration, which will one day grow into a major course of study.

Prominent alumni include Martin Luther King Jr., Nobel Peace Prize winner and civil and human rights non-violent leader; Dr. David Satcher, former U.S. Surgeon General and director of the National Center for Primary Care of Morehouse School of Medicine; Shelton "Spike" Lee, filmmaker and president of 40 Acres & A Mule Productions; Samuel L. Jackson, Academy Award-nominated actor; Maynard H. Jackson, founder of Jackson Securities and the first African American mayor of Atlanta; and Nima A. Warfield, the first African American Rhodes Scholar from a HBCU.

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