

Civil Rights Leader Julian Bond-UVU's MLK Commemoration

Every year, Utah Valley University makes it a tradition to celebrate the life and work of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. by inviting one of the influential leaders of the Civil Rights movement to keynote the week long commemoration. This year keynote speaker was the Civil Rights Leader Julian Bond. Julian Bond is a prominent figure and leader of the Civil Rights Movement in the United States. While attending school in the early sixties, he helped found the Student Nonviolating Coordinating Committee (SNCC), which was one of the principal organizations of the American Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s. I was only able to make it to the open-answer part of his presentation. However, through his answers to the many questions of the audience about minority issues, Julian Bond makes me think a lot about this once a year celebration.

It would be foolish, and probably disrespectful, to not give Utah Valley University credit for its every year commemoration of Martin Luther King Junior day. And as a minority student on this campus, I appreciate it when my university dedicates an entire week every year to focus and discuss what me and many other minority students are, probably facing, in terms of discrimination and racism. This long-week talks on how people perceive and treat minorities is very much appreciated by minority student on this campus. It gives us this sense of being visible and present on this campus and more importantly, that the Martin Luther King's dream is becoming a reality. But once the week of celebration is over, the curtains, as like every other year, would be closed. And this campus would go back to forget about minorities' issues and presence, or as we like to put it so well, it would go back on being "color blind."

It has been more than 40 years since Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated for his fight over what most people like me are still struggling with in these days. And that is: “being judged by the content of the character and not by the color of the skin” (Martin Luther King, I have a Dream Speech). Personally, I think this country has come a long way in its fight with discrimination and racism. In 2008, we elected the first African-American president. However, I also feel that we still have a long way to go. I am waiting for the time when Utah Valley University will not only dedicate a week long about the issues of minority, but most of the academic year talking, engaging, and addressing minority issues. I am waiting for this time when, walking by the hall of flags, I can see people of different race talking and engaging in academically productive conversations. Like Julian Bond says while answering one of his questions, it is time for us to mix it up in this campus. Let us celebrate Martin Luther King Jr. Day to that mixture next year.

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