

Jan 7, 2003

A dream which can't be destroyed

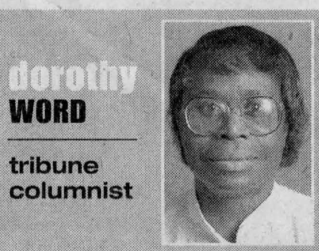
Dreamers! There have always been dreamers. It seems like they have been around forever – from way back in time and history, up to and including our 21st Century. Dreamers are not always appreciated, understood or popular. But many people have benefited from their dreams.

In Biblical times there was a dreamer named Joseph. He irritated his family members with his dreams. "Here comes this dreamer ... we shall see what will become of his dreams," said his angry brothers. In the long run, Joseph the Dreamer rescued his whole family from extinction. (Genesis Chap. 37, 42-50).

In the 20th Century, Aug. 28, 1963, Martin Luther King made his famous "I Have A Dream" speech; the Speech of the Century. Part of what he said was: "I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: 'We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men are created equal.'"

"I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.

"I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi ... will be transformed into an oas-



sis of freedom and justice.

"I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character ...

"And when this happens ... we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual: Free at last, free at last, Thank God Almighty, we're free at last."

Like most dreamers, Martin Luther King was not fully appreciated, understood or popular while he was alive. On April 9, 1968, he was assassinated. The dreamer died but the dream lived on to benefit untold thousands, maybe millions.

After King's death, widow Coretta Scott King and her supporters said ... in their actions if not in actual words, "I have a dream". Their dream was to get a Martin Luther King Holiday

established, recognized, honored.

That bold dream had to confront tremendous opposition. Trent Lott was only one small drop in the huge wave of opposition. But against all odds, that dream came true in the form of a bill signed by then-President Ronald Reagan on Nov. 2, 1983, declaring that the King Holiday would begin on the third Monday in January 1986.

Last year, Jan. 21, 2002, Helen Bradshaw and I were in the crowd that enjoyed the Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration Day held at the Union Building on Hoffer Street, sponsored by UAW locals 685 and 1166.

Helen and I were so proud of the Carver Community Center's Fine Arts Academy, especially the Drill Team led by Mickey Jackson and the Fine Arts Choir directed by Rev. Phil Carroll. Some of Helen's relatives took part in that great performance we witnessed that morning.

To make it a "full day," Helen and I then motored over to Ivy Tech where another Martin Luther King Celebration was in progress. This community-wide effort included participants from WIOU/WZWZ radio, students and adults from Kokomo Center Schools, Ivy Tech Region 5 representatives, Mt. Pisgah Missionary Baptist Church praise dancers, and again, Carver Center's Drill Team.

Also, one of the many children's activities that day was the Indiana Reading Corps "I Have a Dream" wall mural for children to write down their dreams!

That "full day" of celebrating in so many ways with so many diverse peoples was truly honoring the Man, his Message and his Memory.

Undoubtedly, we are all dreamers. Our dreams may not "rock the world" but they may make a difference "where we're planted."

Loretta J. Wall had a dream – a dream of being "a voice for the voiceless" in the criminal justice system. In spite of being "an older student" with limited eyesight and limited finances, Loretta graduated from the IU/PU Fort Wayne campus with the degree of Associate of Science in Criminal Justice.

Then suddenly, out of nowhere, there was a fast-growing cancer and chemotherapy to deal with. "Just a bump in the road," Loretta said about the cancer. She enrolled at Fort Wayne's Taylor University to continue her studies this past fall. But on Sunday, Sept. 29, 2002, Loretta died. And the dream died.

Loretta was a very special person. Loretta was my niece. And although the dream died, I choose to believe that the dreamer lives on.

Dorothy Word of Kokomo is a retired teacher