

## News

### **Mesa remembers Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. with several special events**

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The City of Mesa will remember the leadership and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. with several celebrations. The events are organized by the Mesa Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration Committee and will be held Saturday, Jan. 16 and Monday, Jan. 18, which is Martin Luther King (MLK) Day.

The celebration begins with the MLK Community Gala Saturday, Jan. 16 at 6 p.m. at the Mesa Community College Arts Center, 1833 W. Southern Ave. Mesa Mayor John Giles will be one of the speakers. Dr. Jennifer Welter, the first female to coach in the National Football League when she was the Arizona Cardinals linebackers coach during their summer training camp and 2015 preseason, will give the keynote address. Howard Hewett, an American rhythm and blues and gospel singer and former lead singer of the group Shalamar, will be the featured performer. Local artists will also be featured as part of the gala entertainment.

The gala begins with a red carpet walk and reception at 5 p.m. followed by the awards program at 6 p.m. to recognize local community organizers and leaders working to build a better community. Winners of the Veora E. Johnson Spirit of Unity Awards include Jacque Starks, Co-Founder of the Multicultural Education Conference; Nancy Marion, Executive Director of House of Refuge; Dr. Shouan Pan, President of Mesa Community College and Lauren Dasse, Executive Director of Florence Immigrant and Refugee Rights Project. The Arizona Legends Award will be presented to former Phoenix Councilmember Calvin Goode. The MLK Business Award will be presented to the Arizona Informant newspaper while the Philanthropist and Business Award will be presented to Al Hegg, General Manager of Superstition Springs Chrysler Jeep.

Scholarships will be presented to five college students. For ticket information, visit. [www.mesamlk.org](http://www.mesamlk.org).

The MLK Parade will be held Monday, Jan. 18 from 11 a.m. to noon. The parade route has been changed due to the light rail. The parade will begin at the intersection of Center Street and MLK Way and will travel south on Center Street and turn west on First Street. The parade will continue on First Street to Robson where it will end. This route offers wide, tree-lined streets for the entire length of the parade and will be easily accessible for all. The parade will include Mesa Police, Mesa Fire, Mesa Councilmembers, marching bands and community leaders and organizations.

This year's grand marshal is Everett Woods Senior, a charter member of the Mesa Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Mr. Woods has served as vice president, treasurer, breakfast chair and co-chair of the parade committee. He currently serves as a retired board member.

The following streets are scheduled to be closed for the parade:

8 a.m.

- 3rd Place – Drew to Center Street
- MLK Way – Centennial Way to Center Street

8:30 a.m.

- 2nd Street – Drew to Center Street
- 2nd Street – Robson to Morris
- Macdonald – Pepper Place to 2nd Street
- Robson – Pepper Place to 2nd Street
- Morris – 1st Street to 2nd Street

10 a.m.

- Center Street – University Drive to Pepper Place
- 1st Street – Centennial Way to Country Club Drive

All streets should reopen by 1:30 p.m. Traffic can detour around the parade route by using Main Street, Mesa Drive, Country Club Drive and University Drive.

Following the parade, the MLK Festival will be held from noon to 4 p.m. at the Mesa Arts Center, 1 E. Main St. The free program includes music, dance, a reading of Dr. King's "I Have a Dream" speech, a creative arts awards presentation and a candlelight and interfaith service. There will be information on job and volunteer opportunities as well as health and community outreach programs. There will also be a youth area with games, bounce houses and other activities.

This year's celebrations are using the theme "Many Faces, One Community Working to End Childhood Hunger." The Mesa MLK Celebration Committee is partnering with United Food Bank to collect jars of peanut butter and jelly at all of the events. Donation bins will be located along the parade route.

The City of Mesa will be closed Monday, Jan. 18 in observance of MLK Day. The closures include libraries and recreation centers. Trash and recycle service will be on the normal collection schedule but residents should have barrels on the curb by 6 a.m. The Dobson Ranch Golf Course will be open. All bus and light rail routes will operate on a Sunday/holiday schedule.

Mesa's annual MLK celebrations were created after residents, in 1996, voted to establish a citywide holiday recognizing the leadership of Dr. King. For more information on the various MLK celebrations, visit [www.mesamlk.org](http://www.mesamlk.org).

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