## Federal Legal Holiday Honoring Martin Luther King, Jr.

January 20, 1986 marks the first observance of the Federal legal holiday honoring Martin Luther King, Jr. The Act creating the holiday was passed after more than 16 years of effort by the King family, The Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change, Inc., and the countless friends and supporters of Martin Luther King, Jr.

Support for the legislation came from all walks of life--from select members of Congress, the White House, business and labor, from civil rights and religious groups--and, most important, from those individuals who have worked continuously to make his dream a reality.

The Act sets aside the third Monday of January as the official Federal holiday. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s actual birthday is January 15. According to the Act, "the holiday should serve as a time for Americans to reflect on the principles of racial equality and nonviolent social change espoused by Martin Luther King,

Once the Federal legal holiday was enacted, Mrs. Coretta Scott King, President of The King Center, asked Congress to establish a Federal commission to assist in the first observance of the holiday.

Congresswoman Katie Hall of Indiana was asked to introduce the legislation and the bipartisan leadership of the Congress honored Mrs. King's request by expediting passage of the Act creating the Martin Luther King, Jr. Federal Holiday Commission. President Ronald Reagan signed the legislation on August 27,

The Act calls for "the Federal Government to coordinate efforts with Americans and diverse backgrounds and with private organizations in the first observance of the Federal legal holiday honoring Martin Luther King, Jr." The Commission's purpose is to encourage appropriate ceremonies and activities throughout the U.S. and provide advice and assistance to Federal, State and local govern-



In 1983, President Reagan signed a bill establishing a legal holiday to honor Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Looking on are VP George Bush, Mrs. Coretta Scott King, President Reagan, and directly behind him, Cong. Katie Hall, who was instrumental in getting the legislation passed.

ments and to private organizations in planning and conducting their activities.

Mrs. King has asked that Dr. King's birthday celebration focus on encouraging improved race relations as a means of unifying America in the spirit of Dr. King's dream. The holiday must be a time to remind America and the world of those ideals for which Dr. King marched, preached, and finally died.

It is a time for the nation to renew its commitment to achieve positive social change through the use of nonviolent means. It must be an opportunity to address Dr. King's unfinished agenda--a time for serious study and reflection on his life and work.

It must be a day of national unity--a day in which Americans of every race, religion, class and political persuasion are involved in the celebration of Dr. King's legacy, life and dream. Americans are encouraged to fly the nation's flag on Monday, January 20, 1986 to honor the memory of Dr. King, truly an American hero and patriot.

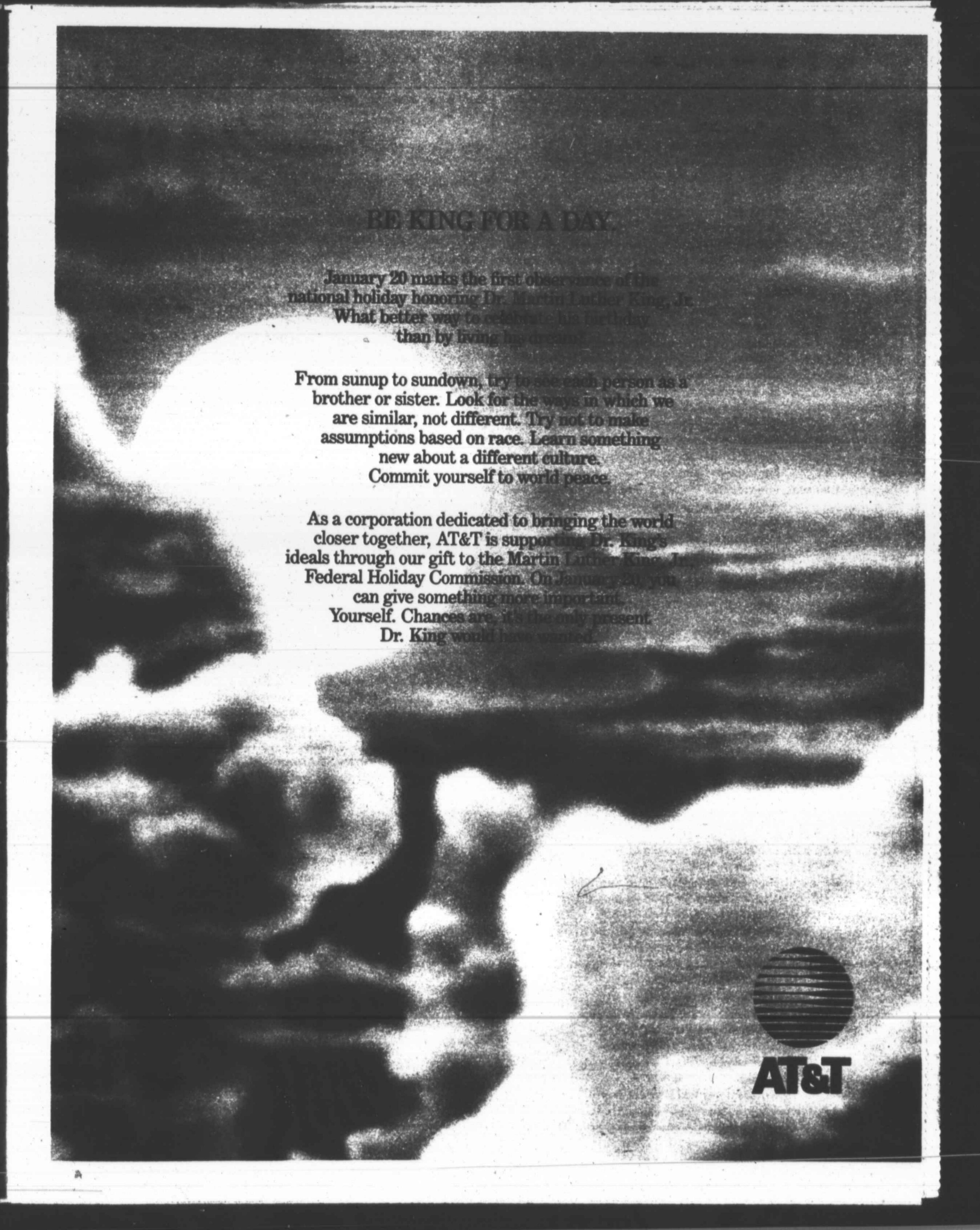
The holiday should be a day for coming together, sharing and caring for one another in the tradition of Martin Luther King, Jr. This holiday will ignite a spirit that will continue for years to come.

Wednesday, January 15

Focus for Day: "Peace and Justice Day" 9:00 a.m.- 5:00 p.m. Exhibit: "King, Images of the Drum Major" **Exhibition Hall** Tours: King Center's Freedom Hall Complex Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site

> Georgia State Capitol, Gov. Joe Frank Harris (Georgia State Holiday Commission)

11:30 a.m.-12:00 Noon 1986 Atlanta Sub - 40 Running Club "Selma to Atlanta Relay" Ceremony Martin Luther King Jr., Community Center Plaza



## Schedule of Events

(Continued from page 2)

Tours: King Center's Freedom Hall Complex Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site, Slide Presentations 2:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. Youth, Student and Young Adult Motivation

Rallies (Individual College Campuses) 7:00 p.m.- 9:00 p.m. Community Services Awards and

Recognition Rally Freedom Hall Auditorium

9:00 p.m.-10:30 p.m. Reception Grand Foyer, Freedom Hall