

# Reclaim The Dream March honors anniversary of 1963 March On Washington

Cover Story  
by Maxine Session

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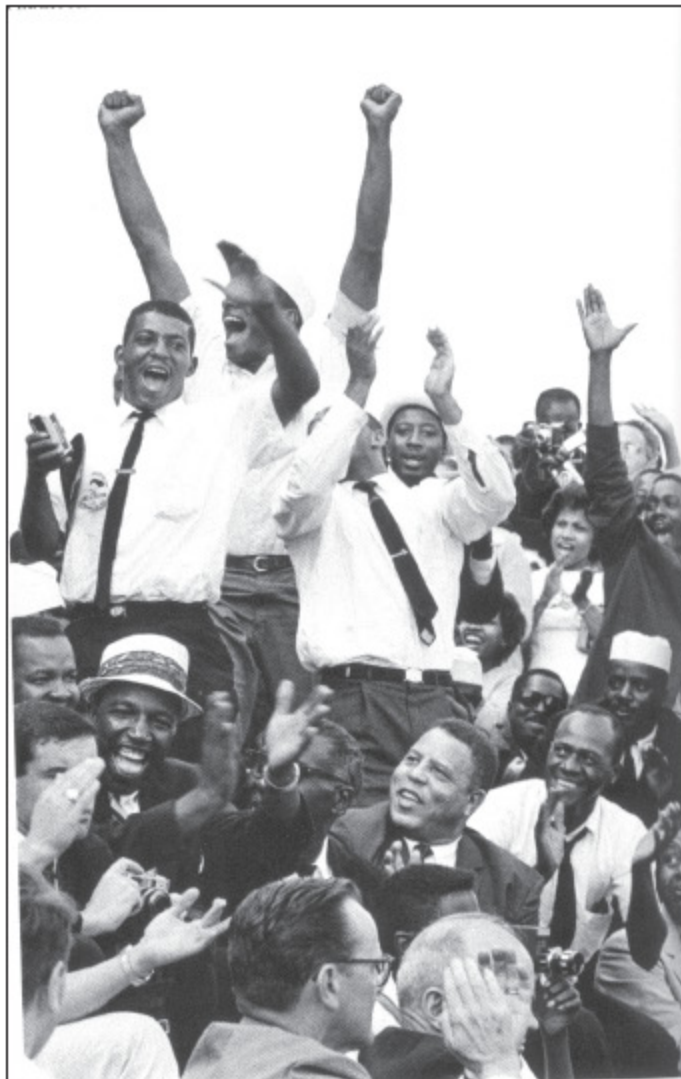
A Red and green flag waved in the hot afternoon breeze expressed the whole point of the march in one word, "JUSTICE". The chanting and singing of the group could be heard blocks away. "What do we want? JUSTICE! When do we want it? Now!

The event could easily have been mistaken for the event that took place forty-seven years earlier around the reflecting pool in front of the Lincoln memorial, only the characters were different. This march obviously rekindled the movement to refocus the nation on the plight of the historically oppressed black people still facing racial disparities that are as clear to those who drive the wheels of disparities in jobs, economic power and unfair law enforcement as to those who watch it happen.

The 1963 march on Washington changed the United States of America when a coalition of several civil rights organizations, all having a different approach and addressing a different part of the civil rights agenda came together and carried out the largest demonstration ever held on American soil and the first to gain national news coverage.

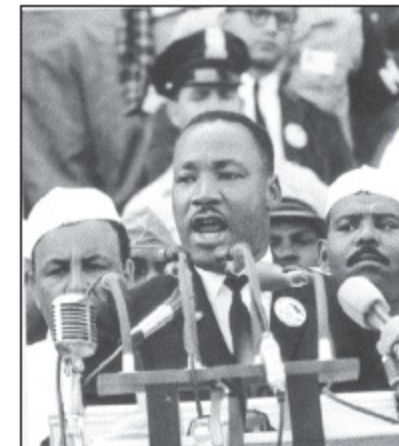
The "Big Six" organizers were James Farmer (of Wiley College Marshall, Texas) of the Congress of Racial Equality, Martin Luther King, Jr. of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, John Lewis of the Student Nonviolent Coordination Committee, A. Phillip Randolph of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, Roy Wilkins of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and Whitney Young, Jr. of the National Urban League.

The stated demands in 1963 centered around racial disparities in every aspect of American life for black people. They demanded civil rights legislation to eliminate racial segregation in public schools; protection for demonstrators against police brutality; a major public works program to provide jobs; the passage of a law prohibiting racial discrimination in public and private hiring a \$2.00 an hour minimum wage; and self government for the District of Columbia which had a black majority. In an interview after the march Martin Luther



250,000 people of various races, creeds and nationalities came together from all parts of the nation for jobs and freedom. The historical demonstration did build the momentum that led to the passing of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. This scene was replayed August 28, 2010 in Washington D. C., Detroit, and New Orleans, Louisiana.

King, Jr., III said, "You may remember my father, in 1967 and early 1968 was focused on economic empowerment, bringing together poor Blacks and poor Whites and poor Native Americans and Americans from all walks of life. Today we are here talking about economic empowerment for all. And so I hope that we understand in love that this is not about a left side or a right side. This is about God's side in terms of doing that which is good, just and right for all of America. Not for a republican, or a Democrat or an Independent, but for every American. That's what Dr. King's Dream was about." The March was named "Reclaim the Dream" because of a rally held the same day, led by FOX News host Glenn Beck, leader of the conservative Tea Party movement, widely known for its anti-President Barack Obama and perceptually anti-Black perspective. The Beck crowd stood on the



DR. King addresses the crowd with his famous "I Have A Dream" speech.

Washington Mall in a "Restoring Honor" rally which drew a near solid white crowd in the same spot, the Lincoln Memorial, where Dr. King gave his speech. Beck had said the date was a coincidence, but many saw it as disrespectful to the legacy of the civil rights leader.

Rev. Sharpton made the statement at the beginning of the march that "They may have the mall, but we have the message. They may have the platform, but we have the dream. If you understand dreaming, you can dream anywhere."

Saturday's march to the King Memorial, another in Detroit with the Rev. Jessie Jackson and another on Sunday in the lower 9th Ward in New Orleans, reinforces Rev. Sharpton's point that people around the nation, wherever they are, are daring to mobilize. Many are preparing to vote in mid-term elections November 2nd. Others are simply feeling the need to do something. As they come to the realization the racial disparities in just about every category are as outrageous today as they were forty years ago.

A "One Nation" march on Washington, led by the NAACP and some 200 other organizations around the nation will be held October 2nd, illustrating the passion of this moment in history. "We need you back here on 10-2010," shouted Ben Jealous, National President NAACP, citing the aim to pull our country back together again!

Despite the focus on the key issues of disparities by the Reclaim The Dream crowd, lurking in the background was the perceived insult by the Beck crowd

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