

## Remarks on MIFA's 50th anniversary

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Delivered at MIFA's Legacy Day event on September 14, 2018



About 52 years ago a group of garbage men—that's what they were called then—were struggling for their livelihood, for their safety, and especially for their dignity.

Black ministers led by such luminaries as Reverend Jim Lawson, James Jordan, Jim Netters, Billy Kyle, Ezekiel Bell, and many others participated in the struggle.

They were joined by a very small group of white ministers. We have to remember that segregation was still rearing its ugly head. The white ministers were led by Rabbis James Wax and Harry Danziger, Reverend Frank McRae, Father Leopard, Dr. Brooks Ramsey, Dean Demmick. A Greek priest was one of them serving as VP under Wax and as chair of their race relations committee.

But they were not enough. They needed a stronger voice and so they sent for Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to join them, to lead them.

As we all know, this issue was finally resolved but not before that dreadful Thursday in April of 1968—a day that tore the hearts out of God-loving people all over the world. It was like the day John Kennedy was assassinated. Like the day FDR proclaimed the day of infamy.

But this April day in 1968 was to affect the very fiber of our country. For one of us, a man of peace, of non-violence gave his life – a ransom for many.

However, from that tragedy sprung a new birth. A child was born. Its name would be MIFA.

Thus, the words of the poet would ring out that we would meet with Triumph and Disaster and treat those two imposters just the same. That we would walk with royalty, yet not lose the common touch. That we would dream, but not make dreams our master. And if we see the things we've given our lives to broken, we would stoop and build them up with worn out tools.

The child of MIFA would grow tall and strong and serve all its people, whether they worshiped in the Shadow of the Cross or near the Star of David or by some other symbol—a truth inscribed in our hearts in black and white—it would be the kind of world Dr. King envisioned.

People from all across America would come to see how it was done and imitate our MIFA. I served on the MIFA board. I share this with you not to tell you what I contributed. I contributed nothing, but I became one of the greatest cheerleaders for one of the great philanthropic organizations of America. I would look forward to our monthly meetings to hear the reports from various committees. For MIFA is more than just meals on wheels, as important as that is.

I look forward to the next milestone celebration of MIFA. All of us will be here. Some only in spirit and in thought, in prayer and in love.

In the meantime, let us cry out “Happy 50th Anniversary beloved MIFA!”  
You may applaud to that.

