

For Immediate Release: Monday, January 8th, 2018

Contact:

Kelsey Frantz, Ashland Chamber of Commerce (Lead Event Sponsor and Committee Member)

30th annual Ashland Martin Luther King, Jr. Day – City Celebration being held Monday, January 15th, 2018



Ashland, Oregon — The 30th annual Ashland Martin Luther King, Jr. Day - City Celebration will be held at 12:00 p.m. on Monday, January 15th at the Historic Ashland Armory

(208 Oak Street) in downtown Ashland, lasting roughly 90 minutes in duration. The celebration is FREE and open to the public. Attendees are invited to celebrate Dr. King's legacy and our diverse and vibrant community. Seating is always limited and available on a first-come basis. Doors will open at 11:30 a.m. This is a family event and all ages are welcome. Donations are welcomed at the event and commemorative t-shirts will be available for purchase to assist in event fundraising.

For overflow attendees, a simulcast live stream will be presented at the Varsity Theatre (166 E. Main Street – seating is limited and on a first-come basis), on RVTV Prime TV and online at www.somlk.org. Attendees are encouraged to bring non-perishable food items to donate to ACCESS. Please bring a reusable water bottle to limit disposable cup usage and trash. TIP: Many folks begin lining up over an hour before the doors open at 11:30 a.m. to grab a seat closer to the stage or a comfy seat at the Varsity Theatre.

This year, the Celebration's theme is **“The fierce urgency of now: tomorrow is today,”** from Dr. King's 1967 speech “Beyond Vietnam: A Time to Break Silence.” The complete quote is: *“We are now faced with the fact that tomorrow is today. We are confronted with the fierce urgency of now. In this unfolding conundrum of life and history, there is such a thing as being too late... There is an invisible book of life that faithfully records our vigilance or our neglect.”*

Dr. Roy Hirofumi Saigo will deliver the keynote presentation at the event. Dr. Saigo was born in Sacramento, California and grew up in rural Vacaville and Elk Grove, except for three years during World War II when his family was sent to a War Relocation Center in Gila Bend, Arizona. He earned a Bachelor of Science in Biological Sciences from University of California Davis, where he also played baseball. He received a PhD in Botany and Plant Pathology from Oregon State University, where he met his wife-to-be Barbara, who he has been married to for 50 years. Together, they have a wonderful family of three children and three grandchildren.

Dr. Saigo (sigh-go) has always operated with a strong ethical and moral sense, influenced in part by the injustices his family experienced both during and after the war years. As a University Administrator, most recently at SOU, he has used his positions to consistently and powerfully advocate for fair and equitable policies and actions at local and national levels, and has spoken out forcefully on issues and situations of fairness, racism, prejudice, and bullying – sometimes at personal and professional peril. As Dr. Saigo says, *“I speak for those who have no voice.”*

Tributes to Martin Luther King, Jr.'s enduring legacy will be performed by a diversity of live performers including students from Ashland Middle School and Scenic Middle School, the Bishop Mayfield Band, Phoenix Sigalove, David Young and the Shabbat Shirah Ensemble, and our returning Master of Ceremonies, D.L. Richardson. Local Historian, Dr. Richardson, taught journalism at SOU and has emceed the Ashland MLK Celebration for more than a decade.

The entire event and online simulcast will be American Sign Language interpreted.

From Cassie Fetty of Oregon Shakespeare Festival - Director/Curator of the 2018 MLK Jr. Day Celebration: *"I am honored to assist with this long standing and heartfelt community program honoring the legacy of Dr. King. This year's theme is "The fierce urgency of now – tomorrow is today." In this turbulent political and social climate, King's words still ring true. With a diversity of live performances, our program seeks to highlight the importance of action versus complacency, especially when it comes to our youth. We thank all the community members and organizations that have helped make this program possible for 30 years!"*

After the Celebration in the Armory, the AHS and SOU Black Student Unions will lead participants in a march to the Ashland Plaza to listen to a recording of Dr. King's "I Have a Dream" speech. People are encouraged to attend the march even if they are unable to make the variety show in the Armory. The march and gathering at the Plaza will be from about 1:30 to 2:30 p.m.

This annual celebration is produced by a group of community volunteers. Lead Sponsors: Ashland Chamber of Commerce, Coming Attractions Theatres, Historic Ashland Armory, Oregon Shakespeare Festival and SOU Digital Media Center / RVTV. Community Partners: Ashland School District, City of Ashland, Racial Equity Coalition, Southern Oregon University and Vision Quilt. The planning committee also wishes to thank longtime Producer/Director/Curator of this event, Claudia Alick, for her service to the Ashland community as she embarks on new adventures.

On MLK Jr. Day, in the evening, the Ashland Interfaith Clergy Circle will host an event, "The People's Supper: Healing in the Now (30th MLK Day edition)," from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. at Ashland's Trinity Episcopal Church (44 N 2nd Street). Join members and friends of the Ashland Interfaith Clergy Circle in a potluck dinner conversation around healing and resilience and nourishment in this fiercely urgent "now." Interfaith Clergy Circle members and friends will host the tables, using "The People's Supper" template. Guests are invited to bring bread, cheese, fruit or spreads for bread to add to the soup supper meal. Gluten-free and vegan options will be available. For more information visit, www.facebook.com/events/399006483853704.

For information about other local MLK Celebrations, visit www.somlk.org.

Dr. King's leadership inspired a transformation in society toward greater dignity, compassion and justice for all people. The observance of the slain civil rights leader's Birthday invites reflection and offers the community an opportunity to be a part of further transformation, moving closer to Dr. King's dream for the world.

Follow the event on Facebook/Twitter/Instagram - @AshlandMLKDay

www.somlk.org/ashland

#TomorrowisTODAY #SOMLK #AshlandMLKDay

Artwork Attached: 2018 Theme Design - Artwork designed by Committee Member, Amanda Denbeck

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