

Cassi Davis, Roland Martin, Ambassador Young at Rev. Lowery's 98th Birthday Celebration



Civil rights pioneer, Rev. C.T. Vivian, shares emotional remarks with civil rights icon, Rev. Joseph Lowery during his 98th birthday celebration. Pictured (L-R) Singer, Regina Belle; Rev. Vivian; Journalist, Roland S. Martin; Change Agent, Raquel Thomas; actress, Cassi Davis; and CEO of the Lowery Institute, Cheryl Lowery. Rev. Lowery is seated. Photo Credit: Felicia M. Davis

ATLANTA – As actress, Cassi Davis, and journalist, Roland S. Martin, kept the program moving, civil rights pioneers Christine King Farris and Rev. C. T. Vivian, joined new-school leaders like Atlanta Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms, nearly 100 student Change Agents, and over 500 attendees to celebrate Rev. Dr. Joseph E. Lowery's 98th birthday. Presented recently by the Joseph and Evelyn Lowery Institute for Justice and Human Rights (Lowery Institute), the evening included performances by award-winning vocalists Regina Belle and Y'Anna Crawley.



Lowery Institute Change Agents marched in and lined up to honor Rev. Joseph E. Lowery during his 98th birthday celebration. Photo Credit: Sue Ross/PhotoGriot

"Many of the soldiers in the Civil Rights Movement who traveled with us on our journey to justice are no longer here," Rev. Vivian noted in his moving remarks to Rev. Lowery. "It's truly a privilege for me to be here to celebrate your birthday with you," added the former lieutenant to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

"Joseph Echols Lowery was one of the founding pastors with Dr. King of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference," Ambassador Andrew Young commented. "Dr. King told us, 'we probably won't make it to 40, but if we do, we'll have to live to a hundred to get this country straight.' Well, Dr. King didn't make it but I have felt obligated to keep this country straight and so has Joe Lowery and C.T. Vivian. We might not make it, but we're going out swinging."

Rev. Lowery shared, "I feel blessed to be here to celebrate my birthday with my family, friends and so many chaplains of the common good. I'm proud to see the Lowery Institute Change Agents, who are our future leaders, and alumni of the institute who've graduated and are continuing to be of service to people in need."

Themed "Celebrating the Work and the Man," the biennial birthday bash raises funds to help the Lowery Institute perform its mission to continue the advocacy work of Rev. Dr. Lowery and his late wife, Dr. Evelyn Gibson Lowery. Much of that work is achieved through their Change Agent program which focuses on civil and human rights, social justice, civic engagement and community health. The initiative has grown to over 100 Change Agents each year, spanning five metro Atlanta college campuses.



Lowery Institute Change Agents marched in and lined up to honor Rev. Joseph E. Lowery during his 98th birthday celebration. Photo Credit: Sue Ross/PhotoGriot

The Change Agents were excited to celebrate my dad's birthday," said Cheryl Lowery, president and CEO of the Lowery Institute. "They asked him what he wanted when they interviewed him for their weekly podcast. He said he wanted them to get people registered and make sure they vote. They decided to gather names from people across the country that wanted to sign a birthday card and also pledge to vote. They collected over 200 names from California to Africa."

Known as the "Dean" of the Civil Rights Movement, Rev. Lowery assumed and executed a diverse series of roles over the span of his life: leader, pastor, servant, father, husband, freedom fighter and advocate. The close confidante to Dr. King played an integral role in the passing of the 1965 Voting Rights Act and four decades later proudly delivered the benediction during President Obama's Inauguration. He was also awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President Obama in recognition of his lifelong commitment to the nonviolent struggle for justice, human rights, economic equality, and voting rights.

The Lowery Institute is a non-profit organization dedicated to training, developing, and empowering future leaders to improve their communities for the common good. Sponsors supporting Rev. Lowery's birthday celebration and the institute's year-round programming include: Delta Air Lines, Georgia Power, Georgia Pacific, AT&T, The Coca-Cola Company, William Josep Foundation, and Kroger. The daily digital news show, #RolandMartinUnfiltered, served as media sponsor and streamed live from the event on major social media platforms. For more information or to donate the Lowery Institute visit www.loweryinstitute.org.

Dr. Joseph E. Lowery Statement On The Passing Of Aretha Franklin



Dr. Joseph Lowery Aretha
Franklin

Civil Rights Leader, Rev. Dr. Joseph E. Lowery issued the following statement on the passing of Aretha Franklin:

“I’m saddened to hear about the loss of our Queen of Soul, Aretha Franklin.Â Aretha is a legend.Â She not only provided the soundtrack for the Civil Rights Movement, Aretha’s music transcended race, nationality, and religion and helped people from all backgrounds to recognize what they had in common.Â Â

“In addition to having an extraordinary voice, Aretha was a kind and God-fearing woman who loved her family, friends, and community. My late wife and I were honored to have the icon come to Atlanta to sing for two benefit concerts for the Lowery Institute. IÂ remember her singing her heart out for my 88thÂ birthday celebration. Â We will miss her strong voice and infectious spirit, but songs like RESPECT and Say A Little Prayer will continue to keep our nation focused on achieving the dream her father, Rev.Â C. L. Franklin and others in the movement envisioned.

“On behalf of the Lowery family, we send our deepest condolences to the Franklin family.”

Dr. Joseph E. Lowery

President Obama Among Those Sending Dr. Lowery Birthday Wishes

[youtube id="csWvlu_zdAQ"]

Atlanta, GA – While President Barack Obama and Congresswoman Maxine Waters sent birthday greetings, Ambassador Andrew Young, Martin Luther King III and Dr. Martin L. King Jr's sister, Dr. Christine King Farris were among celebrities and dignitaries on hand in Atlanta to acknowledge the 96th birthday of civil rights leader and former King confidant, Dr. Joseph E. Lowery.



Keith David

The historical evening was made most memorable when OWN's "Greenleaf" star and singer Keith David; Tyler Perry's "House of Payne" star and vocalist, Cassandra "Cassi" Davis; and gospel superstar, Yolanda Adams, mesmerized the audience with a stellar musical tribute that encapsulated the life of the well-loved nonagenarian. The Joseph and Evelyn Lowery Institute (Lowery Institute) hosted the gala which also featured Lowery Institute Change Agents packing the stage to honor the Dr. Lowery with raised fists and taking a knee.

Themed "Grounded in History: Soaring Towards The Future," the Lowery Institute also awarded movie producer, Will Packer, attorney Angela Rye, and activist Rev. William Barber, for continuing the national dialogue in support of justice and human rights, and keeping the Lowery's legacies alive as agents of change in their respective fields.



Dr. Lowery, Will Packer,
Angela Rye

"The evening truly epitomized my dad's life," said Dr. Lowery's daughter and president of the Lowery Institute, Cheryl Lowery. "People from all walks of life made it out to celebrate and producer, Kenneth Green, created an engaging musical experience, masterfully weaving elements of my mother and father's work as agents of change juxtaposed with the Lowery Institute Change Agents who will continue to keep their legacy alive. He was able to tell their stories using all types of music from hip-hop to the Morehouse College Glee Club."



Yolanda Adams

Chronicling Dr. Lowery and his late wife, Dr. Evelyn Gibson's contributions to the Civil Rights Movement as well as the initiatives utilized by the Lowery Institute's Change Agents to carry on the legacy, the tribute featured a medley of musical "moments" spread throughout the night that included topics like "Building A Legacy", "Amazing Grace," "A Change is Gonna Come," "Make Them Hear You," and "Am I Wrong."

The opening "moment" of the homage, "They Will Remember You,"

showcased a hip-hop violence and injustice performed byÂ Salim Bakarison of the same name detailing Rev. Lowery's work to address racism, violence and injustice performed byÂ Salim Bakari, Michael NeroÂ andÂ Sara Davenport. The song's lyrics and music were composed byÂ Jevares MyricÂ andÂ Ronve O'Daniel.

During Dr. Lowery's standing-room-only after party, he commented on the current condition of black America tellingÂ Roland Martin, Â host of TV One's NewsOne Now, "There's never been a time when we should be more united. Never been a time when we should be more together. Â I appreciate the fact that so many Black folks are coming together expressing in their own way their determination to move forward."

Presented by Delta Air Lines and The Coca-Cola Company, the bi-annual birthday celebration raises funds to support the work of the Lowery Institute, a non-profit organization established to ensure the continuity ofÂ Dr. Lowery and his late wife, Dr.Â Evelyn Gibson'sÂ Â lifelong commitment to non-violent advocacy.

Known as the "Dean" of the Civil Rights Movement, Dr. Lowery assumed and executed a diverse series of roles over the span of his seven decades: leader, pastor/preacher, servant, father, husband, freedom fighter and advocate. Two major milestones during his journey came in 2009 when he delivered the benediction during President Obama's Inauguration and later that year when President Obama awarded him the Presidential Medal of Freedom in recognition of his lifelong commitment to the nonviolent struggle for justice, human rights, economic equality, voting rights, peace and human dignity.

For more information on the Lowery Institute visitÂ www.loweryinstitute.org.

**Gospel Great Yolanda Adams
and “Greenleaf” Star Keith
David to Perform at 96th
Birthday Celebration for
Civil Rights Icon Dr. Joseph
Lowery**



Atlanta, GA – Five-time gospel Grammy winner, Yolanda Adams and Emmy Award winning actor, Keith David, the star of OWN's megachurch drama "Greenleaf," will be the featured entertainment on Wednesday, October 4, 2017, when celebrities, dignitaries and activists from around world descend upon Atlanta to pay tribute to the "dean" of the Civil Rights Movement, Dr. Joseph Lowery, for his 96th birthday celebration. "Think Like A Man" producer, Will Packer; pastor and activist, Reverend Dr. William Barber; and attorney, Angela Rye; will be among the honorees for the evening hosted by the Joseph and Evelyn Lowery Institute for Justice & Human Rights (Lowery Institute). A musical extravaganza, the gala begins at 7:00 p.m., with a reception at 6:00 p.m. at The Rialto Center for the Arts at Georgia State University.

"We're excited to have the torchbearer for gospel and inspirational music, Yolanda Adams, perform," expressed Cheryl Lowery, president of the Lowery Institute. "And accomplished actor, Keith David, who plays Bishop James on Oprah Winfrey's "Greenleaf" series, will be lending his amazing vocals in song as well! Back in the day civil rights activists didn't have much more than good intentions and good Godly music to keep them motivated and resilient. These two powerful voices will uplift us with the kind of Godly music that will empower future generations."

The musical tribute, produced by Kenneth Green, will highlight milestones in Dr. Lowery's lifelong commitment to the nonviolent fight for voting rights, economic equality and social justice. Nearly 100 of the Lowery Institute's Change Agents will take part in the program to let Dr. Lowery know that his legacy is secure with them. Change Agents are college students trained at the Lowery Institute then assigned to elementary, middle and high schools to teach the principles of non-violence coupled with conflict management and social and self-awareness.

Lowery says, in their respective areas, the honorees epitomize the theme of the event, *Grounded in History: Soaring Towards the Future*. "They understand the nexus between our past and our future. Will Packer is not only telling our stories, he is committed to employing and uplifting people of color. Rev. Barber is continuing the fight for justice with a focus on morality, and Angela Rye represents a new generation of fierce, educated activists."

Receiving the Civil and Human Rights Award, Rev. Barber is Pastor of Greenleaf Christian Church, Disciples of Christ in Goldsboro, North Carolina and architect of the Forward Together Moral Movement that gained national acclaim with its MoralMonday protests. The actions drew thousands of moral witnesses to the state legislature and resulted in more than 1,050 peaceful protesters being arrested, handcuffed and jailed.

Angela Rye will receive the Social Justice Award. The CNN political commentator and NPR analyst is the CEO of IMPACT Strategies, a nonprofit organization that seeks to encourage young professionals in economic empowerment, civic engagement, and political involvement. Rye served as executive director and general counsel to the Congressional Black Caucus and was senior advisor to the House Committee on Homeland Security under the leadership of Congressman Bennie G. Thompson.

Determined to prove that black films sell, the Servant Leadership honoree, Will Packer, is one of the only African American film producers that has had eight films open number one at the box office. The Emmy-nominated producer's most recent film, "Girls Trip", is the first entirely black-led movie to make more than \$130M. Packer also served as executive producer of "Roots," a remake of one of the most celebrated TV programs of all time.

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For sponsorship opportunities or to purchase tickets to #HonorTheDean on Â #RevLowery96 birthday celebration call 404-524-8406 or online: www.rialtocenter.org or www.loweryinstitute.org.