University to celebrate MLK’s 1963 visit, talk

The 50th anniversary of a visit to WMU by Martin Luther King Jr. will be marked with a Dec. 2 mid-day celebration of the words he spoke and the ideas he laid out before the Kalamazoo community on a snowy winter night in 1963.

“50 Years Later: Honoring the Legacy of MLK” is the theme of the event that is set for noon Monday, Dec. 2, in the Bernhard Center’s North Ballroom. The King speech will be partially resurrected for the occasion.

Newsman and WMU alumnus Ed Gordon will be the keynote speaker and lead a panel of current and former students and community members—some of whom were in the audience when King originally spoke.

King traveled to WMU to speak in Read Fieldhouse Dec. 18, 1963, just four months after delivering his acclaimed “I Have a Dream” speech and just weeks after the assassination of President John F. Kennedy—an event King addressed in his remarks.

The civil rights leader came to WMU as part of a lecture symposium series sponsored by the Lee Honors College and called “Conscience of America.” His visit came late in a fall semester that also had seen a controversial address by Ross Barnett, the avowed segregationist who was then governor of Mississippi. Barnett had been invited to the campus by the 1963 senior class.

King, in turn, came to present a talk titled “Social Justice” at the behest of the Western Student Association and honors college.

King’s lengthy speech and the question-and-answer session that followed touched on the critical issues of the era—faith, affirm-
Open enrollment period underway for health benefits, FSAs

The open enrollment period for health care benefits and flexible spending accounts began Nov. 11 and will continue through 5 p.m., Friday, Dec. 6.

Open enrollment for health care benefits is available for WMI retirees, benefits-eligible non-bargaining employees, and employees available for WMU retirees. Benefits-eligible new participants must submit an FSA enrollment form to Human Resources no later than the last day of the open-enrollment period.

Employees who wish to participate in an FSA in 2014 must enroll or re-enroll during this year’s open-enrollment period. FSAs offer an opportunity to use pre-tax dollars to pay for dependent-care expenses or qualified medical expenses that are not covered by health care benefits. Current as well as new participants must submit an FSA enrollment form to Human Resources by the deadline.

That form is part of the BASIC Flex enrollment booklet and is available online at wmich.edu/hr/openenrollment and in print from the Human Resources office, 1100 Seiberth Administration Building.
Distinguished Faculty Scholar Award nominations sought

Nominations are due Friday, Jan. 31, 2014, for the Distinguished Faculty Scholar Award, the highest honor Western Michigan University bestows on its faculty members. The award is based on outstanding professional achievements. It recognizes those whose work is widely known beyond campus and constitutes a significant body of achievement, most of which has been accomplished while a WMU faculty member. Widespread recognition beyond WMU is essential.

The recipients will be honored during the 2014 Academic Convocation and receive a $2,000 honorarium that becomes part of their base salaries, a plaque, and an opportunity to present a campus lecture, exhibition or performance.

For more information, visit wmich.edu/research and click the Awards link or contact Ernst A. Breisach, professor emeritus in history and chair of the Distinguished Faculty Scholar Award Committee, at eabreisach@gmail.com or (269) 344-1734.

Science reporter to give talk on global warming

The potential for hidden agendas in the reporting of global warming will be examined later this month when a New York Times reporter speaks as part of the University Center for the Humanities 2013-14 Changing Climates Series.

Kenneth Chang, who has been a Times science reporter since 2000, will speak at 6 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 21, in 2452 Knauss Hall. His presentation, titled “News Judgment vs. Opinion: Do I Have an Agenda When I Write about Global Warming?” is free and open to the public.

Chang, who was a graduate student in physics before he decided to switch to a science writing career, also has written for the Los Angeles Times, the Newark (N.J.) Star-Ledger and ABCNews.com.

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Continued from page 1
University to celebrate MLK’s visit

tive action, discrimination, the importance of the rule of law, nuclear warfare and the segregated nature of America’s churches. Despite the depth and breadth of topics covered, the speech was largely lost to history because no audio recordings of the event were preserved.

Known locally as “The Lost Tape,” an audio recording of it and King’s post-speech remarks surfaced in 1997. A Kalamazoo resident found the recording of WMUK’s original broadcast on a reel-to-reel machine that had been in storage since the 1970s. The recording has since been restored.

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WMU named ‘Best for Vets’ for fourth consecutive year

in statistics commonly used to track student success and academic quality, including student loan default rates, retention rates, graduation rates and student-faculty ratio.

WMU has the largest number of veteran students of any of Michigan’s public universities and has offered in-state tuition status to veterans since 2007.

In 2012, WMU and its two partner community colleges, Kalamazoo Valley Community College and Kellogg Community College, became home to a VetSuccess on Campus program for southwest Michigan. The designation, which was the first Veterans Administration program in Michigan, allows veterans to tap a wide array of services.

Sustainability grants available

Student Sustainability Grant applications for fall are due by 11:59 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 21.

Nearly $75,000 is available to support student research, activities and initiatives related to sustainability. Visit wmich.edu/news/2013/11/10579 for more information.