



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Malcolm Smith

Senate Democratic Leader Malcolm A. Smith Remembers Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

MALCOLM A. SMITH April 2, 2008

ALBANY, NY – April 3, 2008 – Forty years ago, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was struck down by an assassins' bullet at the prime of his life. He was age 39. Senate Democratic Leader Malcolm A. Smith (D–St. Albans) remembers the shock and sadness in his family when the word came that Dr. King was shot and killed.

"For those of us around at the time, the tragedy that occurred 40 years ago is still seared in our minds today," Smith said. "For those younger than 40 the teachings of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., are more than just a passage in the history books. His words, his symbol as a man, the ideals he stood for are a great testament to a life that ended too early."

Senator Smith said Dr. King's death was not in vain. He said King's legacy provides all of us a blueprint for the future.

"I gave a number of speeches that basically challenged people to take a step forward," Smith said. "Where's the Martin in each and every one of you? And once you look inside of yourself you have to start asking yourself that question.

Well, now that I am free, as Martin said 'free at last', and we're all together, why are you here and what is your purpose in life?"

Senator Smith says he still gets choked up when he listens to Dr. King's famous 'I Have a Dream' speech.

"The chills are there," Smith says. "It's a day to remember and I ask all those to reflect on an incredible human being that has had an extraordinary impact on so many lives."

"I think that's the next Martin frontier we need to conquer, is for everyone to know why they're here and to try to complete that purpose of their life."

One portion of Dr. King's famous 'I Have a Dream' speech resonated with Senator Smith:

"To paraphrase Dr. King, my dream is that our children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character," Smith said. "I concur with Dr. King when he said: Let freedom ring from the mighty mountains of New York. And when this happens, when we allow freedom ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, we will be able to speed up that day when all of G-d's children, black men and white men, Jews and gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual: Free at last! Free at last! Thank G-d Almighty, we are free at last!"