



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Kevin S. Parker

## Senator Parker Commemorates Dr. King's 85th Birthday in Song and Praise

KEVIN S. PARKER January 20, 2014

| ISSUE: **CONSTITUENTS CORNER**



**Brooklyn, NY-** Twelve hundred New York residents packed Central Brooklyn's Walt Whitman Theater on Monday, January 20, 2014, to enjoy a soul-stirring program of musical and spoken word tributes to Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. at the annual '*A Shared Dream*' concert. The concert was founded ten years ago by State Senator Kevin Parker. The 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary concert held this past Monday was presented by A Shared Dream Foundation and the New Hope Christian Fellowship, and is now the second largest King tribute in New York City. The free celebration commemorating Dr. King's 85th birthday was sponsored by Senator Parker and a lengthy list of business, community and not-for-profit sponsors. The evening was headlined by multiple Grammy and Stellar award-winning veteran gospel artist and

producer *Donald Lawrence*, who brought his spirited and inspirational ministry to the packed theater.

“The goal of the ‘A Shared Dream’ community celebration each year is to be a program that embodies how we believe Dr. King would have wanted to celebrate his birthday – in a day of service and praise. This year’s concert, with Donald Lawrence and all of the local performers and program participants, really captured the essence of how our community remembers Dr. King as a champion for justice, peace and equality,” said Sen. Parker. “And what better way to educate our young people and remind adults of the road to righteousness that Dr. King traveled so that we, in 2014, could prosper and see the promised land.” Parker continued.

“Building on the strength of our community, we at the Shared Dream Foundation look to build on this annual event and create programs that connect our community, faith and business leaders throughout the year. We are deeply grateful to Senator Parker for founding this community celebration of Dr. King, and I’m especially looking forward to expanding our partnerships with the numerous stakeholders in this event,” said Tani Chambers, newly appointed chairperson of the A Shared Dream Foundation.

The concert’s emcee was WLIB 1190’s *Sunday Morning & Praise* on-air personality and 2014 Stellar award-nominee Liz Black, who kept the audience engaged throughout the evening’s program. The concert featured a special tribute to South African anti-apartheid revolutionary and global civil rights icon, former President Nelson Mandela, who passed away on December 5, 2013. Special tribute to his life and legacy was paid by the South African *Lesedi Ntsane Quintet* with members of the acclaimed Paul Simon *Graceland* band. Under the direction of Jonathan P. Hicks, the Christian’s men’s ensemble *Manifest* also performed a few selections of their inspirational gospel repertoire. The evening’s program’s opening act was the youth member *Brooklyn United Marching Band* that performed a medley to showcase their pageantry and musicianship. The headliner, Donald Lawrence and his band, the Company, took the stage late in the program and brought the audience to their feet with his popular hits “*The Gift*”, “*Back to Eden*” and “*The Blessing of Abraham*”. Several elected officials also shared their admiration for Dr. King with audience, including United States Senator Charles Schumer and Public Advocate Leticia James.

The production was sponsored in part by the City University of New York (CUNY), Healthfirst, Time Warner Cable, Consolidated Edison and Emblem Health. Community sponsors included All Car Rent A Car, Super Wings, Frank Barone Funeral Home, the Flatbush Junction Business Improvement District (BID), Focus on Divas, and many more of Central Brooklyn's vibrant small business community. WBLS and WLIB served as the program's media partner.

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***About Senator Kevin Parker***

Senator Kevin S. Parker is intimately familiar with the needs of his ethnically diverse Brooklyn community that consists of 318,000 constituents in Flatbush, East Flatbush, Midwood, Ditmas Park, Kensington, Windsor Terrace, and Park Slope. He is the Ranking Member of the Senate Energy and Telecommunications Committee and the Committee on Alcoholism and Substance Abuse, Assistant Democratic Leader for Intergovernmental Affairs, and Chair of the Democratic Task Force on New Americans.