

FOIA MARKER

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OA/ID Number: 5903

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Folder Title:

Intellectual Properties Management King Center Dispute

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AMH

Glynn Key met in Atlanta on 1/23/95 w/
Cong. Lewis
Dexter King plus 2 from MLKC
Mayor Campbell
Jesse Jackson (for part of mtg)
Andy Young
Community and Business reps

The meeting started at 10 and concluded at 4:30p
There was a lot of contention at the beginning
until Andy Young turned the tide and at the end
everyone kissed and made up.

Dexter said he wanted to work with the Park
Service and Park should be in the historic
site. Visitors Dev. should go forward.

Interior said --

- King will play leading role in historic site
- Would not operate any type of museum facility
- Recognize their intellectual property rights.

There are still some minor details to be worked
out. There is a follow-up meeting this Sat.
2/11/95 in Atlanta. Glynn will also be going
to the meeting.

r
2/9/95

Mark

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTIES MANAGEMENT
595 PIEDMONT AVENUE SUITE 712
Atlanta, Georgia 30308
Tel:(404) 815-6108
Fax:(404) 815-6505

FACSIMILE COVER SHEET

Date: 01/19/95
TO: Alexis Hermann
From: Phillip Jones
RE: F.Y.I. The King Center's
Position Regarding The
Dispute With The National
Park Service

Time: 5:50p
Fax No.: 202-456-2983

JAN 23 1995

Special Instructions:

Total number of pages (including this cover page): 4

If you do not receive all of the pages indicated, please call (404) 815-6108.

Facsimile Operator: _____

*Don't send
to
Glen Key
2084123
where the
is*

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THE KING CENTER

OUR POSITION

"RE: THE KING CENTER'S DISPUTE WITH THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE"

The King Center is running this ad because our position regarding the dispute with The National Park Service has not been accurately represented in the media. The dispute between The King Center and the National Park Service arose when the Park Service reneged on its original agreement to serve in a support role to The King Center in its guardianship of the Historic District in Atlanta, Georgia. The National Park Service was invited into the district by Mrs. King to serve as a tour guide of Dr. King's Birth Home. They began as tour guides, and, over time, they have acquired land, displaced residents and have now evolved into landlords. Contrary to what has been incorrectly stated by some of the media, we began to disapprove a little over a year ago, as soon as we were aware of the deviation from our original agreement with the Park Service.

We feel strongly that the heritage of the Civil Rights Movement is too important to be controlled by a government agency that has only superficial familiarity with the internal dynamics of our freedom struggle. The National Park Service has considerable expertise in the preservation, renovation and maintenance of historic structures. But, it is poorly qualified to interpret the "peoples" history. That responsibility is better left to the people who lived it. By its mission and purpose, the National Park Service preserves moments in history that have ended. The King legacy is alive, vital and on-going, and is better served by The King Center and its new generation of leadership.

We maintain that The King Center, and not the federal government, should be the guardian of Dr. King's legacy. What we are witnessing today is classic encroachment and annexation of a people and their history by the federal government, through their agent the National Park Service. They began by offering to purchase the Birth Home and Crypt of Dr. King. Both of which we have refused to sell. If allowed to continue, the Federal Government will gain stewardship over Ebenezer Baptist Church, the Historic Sanctuary where Martin Luther King, Jr., his brother, father and grandfather pastored, and where his mother, Mrs. Alberta Williams King, was assassinated. The National Park Service is engaged in a slow and deliberate attempt to separate a people from their land, legacy and culture. This kind of encroachment is unfamiliar to most Americans, because the last time it occurred was to the Native Americans and their land.

When Congress appropriated a budget of \$550,000 several years ago, The King Center was receiving approximately 300,000 visitors per year. Later, under the Gramm-Rudman Act, the amount was reduced to \$535,000. Today, The King Center is documented as Atlanta's number

Democratic Renewal and Education, Inc., stands firmly behind the King Center and King family in this dispute

Position Paper
Page Three

We deny allegations by the National Park Service and some of the media that our only justification for defending this district against the ambitions of the National Park Service, is that The King Center and the King family wish to profit from the establishment of the interactive museum. We reject the National Park Service in their efforts to annex this community, a community we have been actively involved in most of our lives. The King Center conceived, planned and secured funding for the Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Center and building facility which is now being demolished by the National Park Service to build their "Visitor's Center/Permanent Headquarters". It is a fact that Mrs. King was initially in favor of the National Park Service's involvement. However, after becoming aware of their ambitions to gain dominion over the King Historic District, she reversed her position.

We come with open arms to sit at the table of brotherhood to find the most suitable solution possible to our common dilemma. We are following Dr. King's six principles and six steps for nonviolent social change as practiced by The King Center, and are based on Dr. King's nonviolent campaigns. We are now at the step of "Direct Action", which is only used as a last resort. We continue to hope it will be resolved in this spirit of *Kingian* nonviolence conflict resolution.

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one tourist attraction, receiving 3.5 million visitors per year. Consequently, just the cost for upkeep of clean bathroom facilities and supplies, alone, clearly has risen, not to mention the general costs for upkeep of the entire facility to accommodate the increase in the number of visitors that has more than quadrupled. Therefore, we requested an increase from \$535,000, for 300,000 visitors, to \$1.5 million, for 3.5 million visitors. The National Park Service will spend \$11 million dollars of the taxpayers' money to build what is essentially permanent headquarters in the King Historic District, under the guise of a "Visitor's Center." This is a great irony because The King Center has been a more than satisfactory Visitors Center for the Historic District. The King Center's plan for a nonprofit, interactive museum facility will generate income that will endow The King Center, establish what we are calling "The King 21st Century Fund" to build housing for the homeless, and provide much needed funding for various community programs. Traditionally, historically African American-based, nonprofit, institutions have had to solicit contributions from individuals and the private sector, and, qualify for government grants in an effort to survive. We, at The King Center, are attempting to change this course of dependency.

Our dream is to create a state-of-the art interactive exhibit (tentatively entitled King Park) that will convey Dr. King's legacy to a new generation of young people, and will continue to preserve and perpetuate the King legacy, and present historical facts and events in an educational format. The interactive museum is a nonprofit venture. The National Park Service would like the nation and community to believe otherwise.

We have not received support from many local Atlanta public officials perhaps because they are not aware that this current arrangement is not in keeping with the original agreement. However, The King Center is winning support from a wide array of community and business leaders. In a 3-hr. briefing held for neighborhood, business and community leaders, the controversy was discussed and Dexter Scott King, Chairman, President and Chief Executive Officer, reviewed The King Center's strategic plans for a multimedia, interactive museum. Following the review and discussion, many leaders in attendance vehemently called for the National Park Service to reconsider its plans for property directly across the street from Dr. King's crypt, and pledged their support to the Center and the King family.

Andrew Young, former U.N. Ambassador and Atlanta Mayor, in support of The King Center's position, stated, "In each of our previous successful public-private partnerships, the government role has been to provide a support base to create a private vision that serves the long-term public interest. The National Parks Service, however, has assumed the role of planner, builder and manager of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Center and Historic District. It has thereby attempted to turn this living memorial created by Coretta Scott King and the movement heirs of her husband into a static monument, destined to decline and deterioration, similar to Grant's Tomb in New York, under Parks Department management." Rev. Joseph Lowery, President, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (S.C.L.C.), and Rev. C.T. Vivian, Chairman for The Center for Democratic Renewal and Education, Inc., stand firmly behind The King Center and King family in this dispute.

We deny allegations by the National Park Service and some of the media that our only justification for defending this district against the ambitions of the National Park Service, is that The King Center and the King family wish to profit from the establishment of the interactive museum. We reject the National Park Service in their efforts to annex this community, a community we have been actively involved in most of our lives. The King Center conceived, planned and secured funding for the Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Center and building facility which is now being demolished by the National Park Service to build their "Visitor's Center/Permanent Headquarters". It is a fact that Mrs. King was initially in favor of the National Park Service's involvement. However, after becoming aware of their ambitions to gain dominion over the King Historic District, she reversed her position.

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