

**Aurora Forum at Stanford University  
15 April 2007**

**Martin Luther King and Economic Justice:  
The Fortieth Anniversary Commemoration  
of  
Dr. King's "The Other America" Speech at Stanford**

**Allen Willis  
Bernard LaFayette  
Thomas Jackson  
Mark Gonnerman**

**Mark Gonnerman:** Good afternoon, and welcome to the Aurora Forum at Stanford University. I'm Mark Gonnerman, the Forum's director.

We're grateful to everyone here for joining us this Sunday afternoon for "Martin Luther King and Economic Justice: The Fortieth Anniversary Commemoration of Dr. King's 'The Other America' Speech at Stanford."

This is an Aurora Forum special event for Community Day. Community Day celebrates the on- and off-campus breadth and depth of the Stanford community. So I want to take a moment here at the start of our program to acknowledge some of the many people who have helped make our time together this afternoon possible. Elaine Enos, the executive director of Stanford Events, who has oversight of all Community Day events, and has been particularly helpful with regard to making possible this Aurora Forum Special Event, is to be thanked along with her excellent staff. We owe a debt of gratitude to Stanford's Martin Luther King, Jr., Research and Education Institute. I want to single out two members of the King Institute staff, Lewis Jackson and Brandon Smith, who researched and assembled the materials on display in the lobby—materials that help us better understand the circumstances of Dr. King's 1964 and 1967 visits to Stanford Memorial Auditorium. (When you leave today, you'll notice on the right-hand side as you go out the door that there's a plaque on the wall that also commemorates those visits by Dr. King.) And I'm grateful to Ray McKee, Darin Evans, and the Events and Labor Services crew at Stanford. Also, thanks to Bill Starr, our house manager, and the ushers from Stanford Lively Arts, and to Christine Patenaude of the Aurora Forum staff. The Aurora Forum is sponsored by Stanford Continuing Studies and the Office of Public Affairs.

Today's event was set in motion by Mr. William Hubert. He contacted Stanford's LaDoris Cordell, and she shared Mr. Hubert's idea for this commemoration with me. I soon had the pleasure of working then with Mr. Mel Vapour of the East Bay Media

Center and his dedicated staff. The East Bay Media Center in Berkeley houses the archive of Mr. Allen Willis's films. Allen Willis is the documentary filmmaker whose film we are about to see. Mr. Willis will be with us here today, and after screening his film, we'll have a chance to meet him.

So our program today is as follows: We'll begin by screening Allen Willis's film of Dr. King's 14 April 1967 "The Other America" speech that was delivered right from this stage. We will then address our attention to Mr. Willis and then we'll enter into a public conversation with two guests whom I'll introduce in more detail later, Dr. Bernard LaFayette and Professor Thomas Jackson.

I am mindful of the fact that a woman is not part of our discussion panel this afternoon. None of the women we invited who were and are part of the movement to end poverty in America were able to join us today. Both Marian Wright Edelman of the Children's Defense Fund and Angela Glover Blackwell of PolicyLink in Oakland send their regrets and their regards. It is hoped that they'll be able to join us for a future Aurora Forum conference on ending poverty that we will host on Saturday, April 5, 2008, as a way to remember the fortieth anniversary of the assassination of Dr. King.

So the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., came to Stanford and delivered "The Other America" speech from this stage forty years ago this weekend. Let's now watch and listen to what he had to say [roll film]:

**THE OTHER AMERICA**  
**A Speech by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.**  
**14 April 1967**  
**Stanford University**

Dean Napier, Mr. Bell; members of the faculty and members of the student body of this great institution of learning; ladies and gentlemen.

Now there are several things that one could talk about before such a large, concerned, and enlightened audience. There are so many problems facing our nation and our world, that one could just take off anywhere. But today I would like to talk mainly about the race problems since I'll have to rush right out and go to New York to talk about Vietnam tomorrow, and I've been talking about it a great deal this week and weeks before that.

But I'd like to use as a subject from which to speak this afternoon, the Other America. And I use this subject because there are literally two Americas. One America is beautiful for situation. And, in a sense, this America is overflowing with the milk of prosperity and the honey of opportunity. This America is the habitat of millions of people who have food and material necessities for their bodies; and culture and education for their minds; and freedom and human dignity for their spirits. In this

America, millions of people experience every day the opportunity of having life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness in all of their dimensions. And in this America millions of young people grow up in the sunlight of opportunity.

But tragically and unfortunately, there is another America. This other America has a daily ugliness about it that constantly transforms the ebullieny of hope into the fatigue of despair. In this America millions of work-starved men walk the streets daily in search for jobs that do not exist. In this America millions of people find themselves living in rat-infested, vermin-filled slums. In this America people are poor by the millions. They find themselves perishing on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity.

In a sense, the greatest tragedy of this other America is what it does to little children. Little children in this other America are forced to grow up with clouds of inferiority forming every day in their little mental skies. And as we look at this other America, we see it as an arena of blasted hopes and shattered dreams. Many people of various backgrounds live in this other America. Some are Mexican-Americans, some are Puerto Ricans, some are Indians, some happen to be from other groups. Millions of them are Appalachian whites. But probably the largest group in this other America in proportion to its size in the population is the American Negro.

The American Negro finds himself living in a triple ghetto. A ghetto of race, a ghetto of poverty, a ghetto of human misery. So what we are seeking to do in the Civil Rights Movement is to deal with this problem. To deal with this problem of the two Americas. We are seeking to make America one nation, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

Now let me say that the struggle for Civil Rights and the struggle to make these two Americas one America, is much more difficult today than it was five or ten years ago. For about a decade or maybe twelve years, we've struggled all across the South in glorious struggles to get rid of legal, overt segregation and all of the humiliation that surrounded that system of segregation.

In a sense this was a struggle for decency; we could not go to a lunch counter in so many instances and get a hamburger or a cup of coffee. We could not make use of public accommodations. Public transportation was segregated, and often we had to sit in the back and within transportation-- transportation within cities -- we often had to stand over empty seats because sections were reserved for whites only. We did not have the right to vote in so many areas of the South. And the struggle was to deal with these problems.

And certainly they were difficult problems, they were humiliating conditions. By the thousands we protested these conditions. We made it clear that it was ultimately more honorable to accept jail cell experiences than to accept segregation and humiliation. By the thousands students and adults decided to sit in at segregated lunch counters to protest conditions there. When they were sitting at those lunch

counters they were in reality standing up for the best in the American dream and seeking to take the whole nation back to those great wells of democracy which were dug deep by the Founding Fathers in the formulation of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence.

Many things were gained as a result of these years of struggle. In 1964 the Civil Rights Bill came into being after the Birmingham movement which did a great deal to subpoena the conscience of a large segment of the nation to appear before the judgment seat of morality on the whole question of Civil Rights. After the Selma movement in 1965 we were able to get a Voting Rights Bill. And all of these things represented strides.

But we must see that the struggle today is much more difficult. It's more difficult today because we are struggling now for genuine equality. And it's much easier to integrate a lunch counter than it is to guarantee a livable income and a good solid job. It's much easier to guarantee the right to vote than it is to guarantee the right to live in sanitary, decent housing conditions. It is much easier to integrate a public park than it is to make genuine, quality, integrated education a reality. And so today we are struggling for something which says we demand genuine equality.

It's not merely a struggle against extremist behavior toward Negroes. And I'm convinced that many of the very people who supported us in the struggle in the South are not willing to go all the way now. I came to see this in a very difficult and painful way in Chicago the last year where I've lived and worked. Some of the people who came quickly to march with us in Selma and Birmingham weren't active around Chicago. And I came to see that so many people who supported morally and even financially what we were doing in Birmingham and Selma, were really outraged against the extremist behavior of Bull Connor and Jim Clark toward Negroes, rather than believing in genuine equality for Negroes. And I think this is what we've gotta see now, and this is what makes the struggle much more difficult.

And so as a result of all of this, we see many problems existing today that are growing more difficult. It's something that is often overlooked, but Negroes generally live in worse slums today than 20 or 25 years ago. In the North schools are more segregated today than they were in 1954 when the Supreme Court's decision on desegregation was rendered. Economically the Negro is worse off today than he was 15 and 20 years ago. And so the unemployment rate among Whites at one time was about the same as the unemployment rate among Negroes. But today the unemployment rate among Negroes is twice that of Whites. And the average income of the Negro is today 50% less than Whites.

As we look at these problems we see them growing and developing every day. And we see the fact that the Negro economically is facing a depression in his everyday life that is more staggering than the depression of the 30's. The unemployment rate of the nation as a whole is about 4%. Statistics would say from the Labor Department that among Negroes it's about 8.4%. But these are the persons who are in the labor

market, who still go to employment agencies to seek jobs, and so they can be calculated. The statistics can be gotten because they are still somehow in the labor market.

But there are hundreds of thousands of Negroes who have given up. They've lost hope. They've come to feel that life is a long and desolate corridor for them with no Exit sign, and so they no longer go to look for a job. There are those who would estimate that these persons, who are called the Discouraged Persons, these 6 or 7% in the Negro community, that means that unemployment among Negroes may well be 16%. Among Negro youth in some of our larger urban areas it goes to 30 and 40%. So you can see what I mean when I say that, in the Negro community, that is a major, tragic and staggering depression that we face in our everyday lives.

Now the other thing that we've gotta come to see now that many of us didn't see too well during the last ten years -- that is that racism is still alive in American society, and much more wide-spread than we realized. And we must see racism for what it is. It is a myth of the superior and the inferior race. It is the false and tragic notion that one particular group, one particular race is responsible for all of the progress, all of the insights in the total flow of history. And the theory that another group or another race is totally depraved, innately impure, and innately inferior.

In the final analysis, racism is evil because its ultimate logic is genocide. Hitler was a sick and tragic man who carried racism to its logical conclusion. And he ended up leading a nation to the point of killing about 6 million Jews. This is the tragedy of racism because its ultimate logic is genocide. If one says that I am not good enough to live next door to him, if one says that I am not good enough to eat at a lunch counter, or to have a good, decent job, or to go to school with him merely because of my race, he is saying consciously or unconsciously that I do not deserve to exist.

To use a philosophical analogy here, racism is not based on some empirical generalization; it is based rather on an ontological affirmation. It is not the assertion that certain people are behind culturally or otherwise because of environmental conditions. It is the affirmation that the very being of a people is inferior. And this is the great tragedy of it.

I submit that however unpleasant it is we must honestly see and admit that racism is still deeply rooted all over America. It is still deeply rooted in the North, and it's still deeply rooted in the South.

And this leads me to say something about another discussion that we hear a great deal, and that is the so-called "white backlash." I would like to honestly say to you that the white backlash is merely a new name for an old phenomenon. It's not something that just came into being because shouts of Black Power, or because Negroes engaged in riots in Watts, for instance. The fact is that the state of California voted a Fair Housing bill out of existence before anybody shouted Black Power, or before anybody rioted in Watts.

It may well be that shouts of Black Power and riots in Watts and the Harlems and the other areas, are the consequences of the white backlash rather than the cause of them. What it is necessary to see is that there has never been a single solid monistic determined commitment on the part of the vast majority of white Americans on the whole question of Civil Rights and on the whole question of racial equality. This is something that truth impels all men of good will to admit.

It is said on the Statue of Liberty that America is a home of exiles. It doesn't take us long to realize that America has been the home of its white exiles from Europe. But it has not evinced the same kind of maternal care and concern for its black exiles from Africa. It is no wonder that in one of his sorrow songs, the Negro could sing out "Sometimes I feel like a motherless child." What great estrangement, what great sense of rejection caused a people to emerge with such a metaphor as they looked over their lives.

What I'm trying to get across is that our nation has constantly taken a positive step forward on the question of racial justice and racial equality. But over and over again at the same time, it made certain backward steps. And this has been the persistence of the so-called white backlash. In 1863 the Negro was freed from the bondage of physical slavery. But at the same time, the nation refused to give him land to make that freedom meaningful. And at that same period America was giving millions of acres of land in the West and the Midwest, which meant that America was willing to undergird its white peasants from Europe with an economic floor that would make it possible to grow and develop, and refused to give that economic floor to its black peasants, so to speak.

This is why Frederick Douglas could say that emancipation for the Negro was freedom to hunger, freedom to the winds and rains of heaven, freedom without roofs to cover their heads. He went on to say that it was freedom without bread to eat, freedom without land to cultivate. It was freedom and famine at the same time. But it does not stop there.

In 1875 the nation passed a Civil Rights Bill and refused to enforce it. In 1964 the nation passed a weaker Civil Rights Bill and even to this day, that bill has not been totally enforced in all of its dimensions. The nation heralded a new day of concern for the poor, for the poverty stricken, for the disadvantaged. And brought into being a Poverty Bill and at the same time it put such little money into the program that it was hardly, and still remains hardly, a good skirmish against poverty. White politicians in suburbs talk eloquently against open housing, and in the same breath contend that they are not racist. And all of this, and all of these things tell us that America has been backlashing on the whole question of basic constitutional and God-given rights for Negroes and other disadvantaged groups for more than 300 years.

So these conditions, existence of widespread poverty, of slums, and of tragic conditions in schools and other areas of life, all of these things have brought about a

great deal of despair, and a great deal of desperation. A great deal of disappointment and even bitterness in the Negro communities. And today all of our cities confront huge problems. All of our cities are potentially powder kegs as a result of the continued existence of these conditions. Many in moments of anger, many in moments of deep bitterness engage in riots.

Let me say as I've always said, and I will always continue to say, that riots are socially destructive and self-defeating. I'm still convinced that nonviolence is the most potent weapon available to oppressed people in their struggle for freedom and justice. I feel that violence will only create more social problems than they will solve. That in a real sense it is impractical for the Negro to even think of mounting a violent revolution in the United States. So I will continue to condemn riots, and continue to say to my brothers and sisters that this is not the way. And continue to affirm that there is another way.

But at the same time, it is as necessary for me to be as vigorous in condemning the conditions which cause persons to feel that they must engage in riotous activities as it is for me to condemn riots. I think America must see that riots do not develop out of thin air. Certain conditions continue to exist in our society which must be condemned as vigorously as we condemn riots. But in the final analysis, a riot is the language of the unheard.

And what is it that America has failed to hear? It has failed to hear that the plight of the Negro poor has worsened over the last few years. It has failed to hear that the promises of freedom and justice have not been met. And it has failed to hear that large segments of white society are more concerned about tranquility and the status quo than about justice, equality, and humanity. And so in a real sense our nation's summers of riots are caused by our nation's winters of delay. And as long as America postpones justice, we stand in the position of having these recurrences of violence and riots over and over again. Social justice and progress are the absolute guarantors of riot prevention.

Now let me go on to say that if we are to deal with all of the problems that I've talked about, and if we are to bring America to the point that we have one nation, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all, there are certain things that we must do. The job ahead must be massive and positive. We must develop massive action programs all over the United States of America in order to deal with the problems that I have mentioned.

Now in order to develop these massive action programs we've got to get rid of one or two false notions that continue to exist in our society. One is the notion that only time can solve the problem of racial injustice. I'm sure you've heard this idea. It is the notion almost that there is something in the very flow of time that will miraculously cure all evils. And I've heard this over and over again. There are those, and they are often sincere people, who say to Negroes and their allies in the white community, that we should slow up and just be nice and patient and continue to pray,

and in a hundred or two hundred years the problem will work itself out because only time can solve the problem.

I think there is an answer to that myth. And it is that time is neutral. It can be used either constructively or destructively. And I'm absolutely convinced that the forces of ill-will in our nation, the extreme rightists in our nation, have often used time much more effectively than the forces of good will. And it may well be that we will have to repent in this generation not merely for the vitriolic words of the bad people and the violent actions of the bad people, but for the appalling silence and indifference of the good people who sit around and say wait on time. Somewhere we must come to see that social progress never rolls in on the wheels of inevitability. It comes through the tireless efforts and the persistent work of dedicated individuals. And without this hard work time itself becomes an ally of the primitive forces of social stagnation. And so we must help time, and we must realize that the time is always ripe to do right.

Now there is another notion that gets out, it's around everywhere. It's in the South, it's in the North, it's in California, and all over our nation. It's the notion that legislation can't solve the problem; it can't do anything in this area. And those who project this argument contend that you've got to change the heart and that you can't change the heart through legislation.

Now I would be the first one to say that there is real need for a lot of heart-changing in our country. And I believe in changing the heart. I preach about it. I believe in the need for conversion in many instances, and regeneration, to use theological terms. And I would be the first to say that if the race problem in America is to be solved, the white person must treat the Negro right, not merely because the law says it, but because it's natural, because it's right, and because the Negro is his brother. And so I realize that if we are to have a truly integrated society, men and women will have to rise to the majestic heights of being obedient to the unenforceable.

But after saying this, let me say another thing which gives the other side, and that is that although it may be true that morality cannot be legislated, behavior can be regulated. Even though it may be true that the law cannot change the heart, it can restrain the heartless. Even though it may be true that the law cannot make a man love me, it can restrain him from lynching me. And I think that's pretty important also. And so while the law may not change the hearts of men, it can and it does change the habits of men. And when you begin to change the habits of men, pretty soon the attitudes will be changed; pretty soon the hearts will be changed. And I'm convinced that we still need strong civil rights legislation. And there is a bill before Congress right now to have a national or federal Open Housing Bill. A federal law declaring discrimination in housing unconstitutional.

And also a bill to made the administration of justice real all over our country. Now nobody can doubt the need for this. Nobody can doubt the need if he thinks about the fact that since 1963 some 50 Negroes and white civil rights workers have been



brutally murdered in the state of Mississippi alone, and not a single person has been convicted for these dastardly crimes. There have been some indictments but no one has been convicted. And so there is a need for a federal law dealing with the whole question of the administration of justice.

There is a need for fair housing laws all over our country. And it is tragic indeed that Congress last year allowed this bill to die. And when that bill died in Congress, a bit of democracy died, a bit of our commitment to justice died. If it happens again in this session of Congress, a greater degree of our commitment to democratic principles will die. And I can see no more dangerous trend in our country than the constant developing of predominantly Negro central cities ringed by white suburbs. This is only inviting social disaster. And the only way this problem will be solved is by the nation taking a strong stand, and by state governments taking a strong stand against housing segregation and against discrimination in all of these areas.

Now there's another thing that I'd like to mention as I talk about the massive action program and time will not permit me to go into specific programmatic action to any great degree. But it must be realized now that the Negro cannot solve the problems by himself. There again, there are those who always say to Negroes, "Why don't you do something for yourself? Why don't you lift yourselves by your own bootstraps?" And we hear this over and over again.

Now certainly there are many things that we must do for ourselves and that only we can do for ourselves. Certainly we must develop within a sense of dignity and self-respect that nobody else can give us. A sense of manhood, a sense of personhood, a sense of not being ashamed of our heritage, not being ashamed of our color. It was wrong and tragic of the Negro ever to allow himself to be ashamed of the fact that he was black, or ashamed of the fact that his home, ancestral home was Africa. And so there is a great deal that the Negro can do to develop self-respect. There is a great deal that the Negro must do and can do to amass political and economic power within his own community and by using his own resources. And so we must do certain things for ourselves but this must not negate the fact, and cause the nation to overlook the fact, that the Negro cannot solve the problem himself.

A man was on the plane with me some weeks ago and he came and talked with me and he said, "The problem, Dr. King, that I see with what you all are doing is that every time I see you and other Negroes, you're protesting and you aren't doing anything for yourselves." And he went on to tell me that he was very poor at one time, and he was able to make it by doing something for himself. "Why don't you teach your people," he said, "to lift themselves by their own bootstraps?" And then he went on to say other groups faced disadvantages, the Irish, the Italians, and he went down the line.

And I said to him that it does not help the Negro, it only deepens his frustration, upon feeling insensitive people to say to him that other ethnic groups who migrated or were immigrants to this country less than a hundred years ago or so, have gotten beyond

him and he came here some 344 years ago. And I went on to remind him that the Negro came to this country involuntarily in chains, while others came voluntarily. I went on to remind him that no other racial group has been a slave on American soil. I went on to remind him that the other problem that we have faced over the years is that this society placed a stigma on the color of the Negro, on the color of his skin because he was black. Doors were closed to him that were not closed to other groups.

And I finally said to him that it's a nice thing to say to people that you oughta lift yourself by your own bootstraps, but it is a cruel jest to say to a bootless man that he oughta lift himself by his own bootstraps. And the fact is that millions of Negroes, as a result of centuries of denial and neglect, have been left bootless. And they find themselves impoverished aliens in this affluent society. And there is a great deal that the society can and must do if the Negro is to gain the economic security that he needs.

Now one of the answers it seems to me, is a guaranteed annual income, a guaranteed minimum income for all people, and for all families of our country. It seems to me that the Civil Rights Movement must now begin to organize for the guaranteed annual income. Begin to organize people all over our country, and mobilize forces so that we can bring to the attention of our nation this need, and this something which I believe will go a long long way toward dealing with the Negro's economic problem and the economic problem which many other poor people confront in our nation.

Now I said I wasn't gonna talk about Vietnam, but I can't make a speech without mentioning some of the problems that we face there because I think this war has diverted attention from civil rights. It has strengthened the forces of reaction in our country and has brought to the forefront the military industrial complex that even President Eisenhower warned us against at one time. And above all, it is destroying human lives. It's destroying the lives of thousands of the young promising men of our nation. It's destroying the lives of little boys and little girls in Vietnam.

But one of the greatest things that this war is doing to us in civil rights is that it is allowing the Great Society to be shot down on the battlefields of Vietnam every day. And I submit this afternoon that we can end poverty in the United States. Our nation has the resources to do it. The National Gross Product of America will rise to the astounding figure of some \$780 billion this year. We have the resources. The question is whether our nation has the will, and I submit that if we can spend \$35 billion a year to fight an ill-considered war in Vietnam, and \$20 billion to put a man on the moon, our nation can spend billions of dollars to put God's children on their own two feet right here on earth.

Let me say another thing that's more in the realm of the spirit I guess, that is that if we are to go on in the days ahead and make true brotherhood a reality, it is necessary for us to realize more than ever before, that the destinies of the Negro and the white man are tied together. Now there are still a lot of people who don't realize this. The racists still don't realize this. But it is a fact now that Negroes and whites are tied

together, and we need each other. The Negro needs the white man to save him from his fear. The white man needs the Negro to save him from his guilt. We are tied together in so many ways; our language, our music, our cultural patterns, our material prosperity, and even our food are an amalgam of black and white.

And so there can be no separate black path to power and fulfillment that does not intersect white groups. There can be no separate white path to power and fulfillment short of social disaster. It does not recognize the need of sharing that power with black aspirations for freedom and justice. We must come to see now that integration is not merely a romantic or aesthetic something where you merely add color to a still predominantly white power structure. Integration must be seen also in political terms where there is shared power, where black men and white men share power together to build a new and a great nation.

In a real sense, we're all caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. John Donne placed it years ago in graphic terms, "No man is an island entire of itself. Every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main." And he goes on toward the end to say, "Any man's death diminishes me because I'm involved in mankind. Therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls. It tolls for thee." And so we are all in the same situation: the salvation of the Negro will mean the salvation of the white man. And the destruction of the life and of the ongoing progress of the Negro will be the destruction of the ongoing progress of the nation.

Now let me say finally that we have difficulties ahead but I haven't despaired. Somehow I maintain hope in spite of hope. And I've talked about the difficulties and how hard the problems will be as we tackle them. But I want to close by saying this afternoon, that I still have faith in the future. And I still believe that these problems can be solved. And so I will not join anyone who will say that we still can't develop a coalition of conscience.

I realize and understand the discontent and the agony and the disappointment and even the bitterness of those who feel that whites in America cannot be trusted. And I would be the first to say that there are all too many who are still guided by the racist ethos. And I am still convinced that there are still many white persons of good will. And I'm happy to say that I see them every day in the student generation who cherish democratic principles and justice above principle, and who will stick with the cause of justice and the cause of civil rights and the cause of peace throughout the days ahead. And so I refuse to despair. I think we're gonna achieve our freedom because however much America strays away from the ideals of justice, the goal of America is freedom.

Abused and scorned though we may be, our destiny is tied up in the destiny of America. Before the pilgrim fathers landed at Plymouth we were here. Before Jefferson etched across the pages of history the majestic words of the Declaration of Independence, we were here. Before the beautiful words of the Star Spangled Banner

were written, we were here. For more than two centuries, our forebearers labored here without wages. They made cotton king. They built the homes of their masters in the midst of the most humiliating and oppressive conditions. And yet out of a bottomless vitality, they continued to grow and develop.

And I say that if the inexpressible cruelties of slavery couldn't stop us, the opposition that we now face, including the so-called white backlash, will surely fail. We're gonna win our freedom because both the sacred heritage of our nation and the eternal will of the Almighty God are embodied in our echoing demands.

And so I can still sing "We Shall Overcome." We shall overcome because the arc of the moral universe is long but it bends toward justice. We shall overcome because Carlyle is right, "no lie can live forever." We shall overcome because William Cullen Bryant is right, "truth crushed to earth will rise again." We shall overcome because James Russell Lowell is right, "Truth forever on the scaffold, Wrong forever on the throne - Yet that scaffold sways the future."

With this faith, we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope. With this faith, we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. With this faith, we will be able to speed up the day when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and live together as brothers and sisters, all over this great nation. That will be a great day, that will be a great tomorrow. In the words of the Scripture, to speak symbolically, that will be the day when the morning stars will sing together and the sons of God will shout for joy.

Thank you.

[End of film.]

**Mel Vapour:** Good afternoon. My name is Mel Vapour. I'm with the East Bay Media Center. Welcome. That's a hard act to follow. What a great inspirational speech. I'd like to thank LaDoris Cordell of Stanford University, the Aurora Forum, and Mark Gonnerman, our distinguished guests today, Dr. Bernard LaFayette, Thomas Jackson, William Hubert, and Paul Kealoha for making this event a reality.

Forty years ago, documentary filmmaker Allen Willis set up his 16 millimeter camera in this very room and captured this historic speech. We all owe Allen Willis a debt of gratitude for his foresight for documenting this piece of history of the greatest American statesman of the twentieth century. We also owe Allen Willis a further debt of gratitude for rescuing this historic piece of cinema from a dumpster in 1981 when KQED was throwing out most of their old film archives from the '60s and the '70s.

Born in 1916, Allen Willis spent his formative years in the Washington, D.C., area formulating his political and cultural roots with the likes of Langston Hughes and the many D.C. intellectuals and artists of the '30s. He moved to the Chicago area in the '40s

and gave service in the armed forces during World War II. He came to the Bay Area early in the '50s with his wife Lillian. He has received degrees from Bowie Normal College and the California School of Fine Arts in San Francisco, and he studied with the great photographer Ansel Adams. In the early 1950s, he made his first experimental films with Melvin Van Peebles. In 1957, he founded the Bay Area Photographers Association. In 1959, he produced *Have You Sold Your Dozen Roses?*, a film collaboration with San Francisco poet Lawrence Ferlinghetti. In '63, he was the director of KQED's film department in San Francisco, and he has the distinction of being the first African American in broadcast journalism in the state of California. In 1965, he won the prestigious Zellerbach Award at the San Francisco International Film Festival for his great film *The Psychedelic Experience*. In '67, he received the National Educational Television Award for *Drugs in the Tenderloin*. From 1970 to 1975, he developed KQED's newsroom as its chief cameraman and film editor. In 1973, he received the Peabody Award for his documentary *The Great California Land Grab*. In '74 and '75, he was nominated for two Emmy Awards for his documentaries *Para-Psychology* and *Can You Hear Me?*, and won the Emmy for his documentary *1001 Days*. He has received tributes from the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art for his important contributions to Bay Area filmmaking in 1980, the Black Filmmaker's Hall of Fame tribute in 1980, and East Bay Media Center's tribute at Pacific Film Archives in 1989. Since his retirement in the '80s, Allen Willis has produced three short films and continues to write his monthly essay *Black/Red View* in *News & Letters* under the nom de plume John Alan. *NewsReel* has said of Allen Willis, "He is one of the unknown geniuses of the documentary film." The late Ralph Gleason characterized Willis and his film of Bobby Seale, *Stagger Lee*, as "a remarkable interview worthy of national awards and remarkable for its sheer humanity. King historian Paul Lee has written, "Allen Willis is the most significant American Marxist humanist writer of the twentieth century." In the Bay Area film community, Allen Willis has the distinction of being known as the dean of African-American filmmakers. Ladies and gentlemen, we'd like to present an award to Allen Willis—the dean, Allen Willis. Will LaDoris Cordell please come and assist in presenting the award.

**LaDoris Cordell:** Thank you. Before I do this, there is a plaque on the wall of this building. When you leave here today, before you go down the steps, look on the right and you'll see a plaque on the wall of Memorial Auditorium. That plaque commemorates the very speech that you have seen here today. That plaque didn't just come to be. It is there because of the efforts of a man named Henry Organ, and Henry is here. [Applause] Henry Organ is now a retired Stanford employee. He's my dear friend, and he is also a pioneer for civil rights. It was his idea to have that plaque put here in Memorial Auditorium, and it was placed there in 2004. It wasn't easy for him to get that done, as some of you know about the bureaucracy here at Stanford. But Henry was persistent, and with the help of Charles Ogletree, a noted Stanford alumnus, it happened. So, thank you, Henry.

A few weeks ago, I received an e-mail from a man named William Hubert. I did not know this man, but I do now. And here, in part, is what he wrote to me:

I am writing to you in the hope that I may enlist your help in scheduling the showing of the speech ‘The Other America’ at Stanford University. April 14, 2007, will mark the fortieth anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s visit to Stanford University to deliver the aforementioned speech. The speech was filmed by Mr. Allen Willis, who has the distinction of being the dean of African-American filmmakers in the San Francisco Bay Area. I implore you to do all that is in your power to make this event come to fruition.

P.S. I am a fifth-generation Georgian. My great-great-great-grandfather was born into slavery 220 years ago. I have stood at his grave in Powelton, Georgia. I have stood on the ground where my ancestors were held in bondage—who were taken from the Kingdom of Dahomey (now du Bénin). It was my grandfather, Dr. Charles B. Hubert, who persuaded Dr. Benjamin E. Mays to become president of Morehouse College while he was the acting president of the college.

That was some P.S.!

Now enter Mark Gonnerman of the Aurora Forum. I contacted Mark and, well, here we are. And Mark didn’t stop there. He was able to get Allen Willis—the Allen Willis—to join us today. Thank you, Mark.

Allen Willis, as you’ve heard, is a pioneering filmmaker and a civil rights pioneer. He is a hero. Maya Angelou once said, “Activism is my rent for living on this planet.” Mr. Willis has lived for 90 years on this planet and has paid his rent many times over. Allen Willis, thank you for this film. Thank you for being a champion of civil rights. Thank you for returning to Stanford. And thank you for always taking the time to do right. On behalf of the Aurora Forum and all of us here at Stanford, we present you now with this plaque. [Applause]

**Allen Willis:** I actually don’t know what to say. I’m surprised that I’m getting all of this recognition, and I don’t know what to say, really. I thank everybody. I’m 91 years of age, really. [Applause]

**Mark Gonnerman:** Thank you, Mr. Vapour, and thank you, LaDoris Cordell. I see, too, that William Hubert is wearing today a Dodgers number 42 Jackie Robinson jersey. Today is the 50th anniversary of the first day that Jackie Robinson played major league baseball, and I have one good Jackie Robinson quote. He said, “A life is not important except in the impact it has on other lives.” We’re very privileged to be here today surrounded by so many people who have lived lives in service to others and in service to the cause of social justice and creating a better world.

I have with me two other such people. To my immediate right, Thomas Jackson, Professor of American History at the University of North Carolina in Greensboro. He earned his doctorate in American History here at Stanford under the guidance of Professor Clayborne Carson, director of the Martin Luther King, Jr., Research and Education Institute. He has turned his dissertation into an excellent book, just out, I

believe, in December, entitled *From Civil Rights to Human Rights: Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Struggle for Economic Justice*. This book came out from the University of Pennsylvania Press and is a model of fine scholarship in service to the project of creating a more just world.

We also have with us Dr. Bernard LaFayette, who is currently Distinguished Scholar in Residence and director of the Center for Nonviolence and Peace Studies at the University of Rhode Island. The mission of the Center for Nonviolence and Peace Studies is to help build a world of mutual understanding among people in which nonviolent processes are used to reconcile conflicts and build community. He was one of the cofounders of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, known as SNCC, in 1960, an outgrowth of the lunch counter sit-ins that begin in Greensboro, North Carolina. Because of Dr. LaFayette's effectiveness as a strategist and community organizer in Chicago, Dr. King appointed him the national coordinator of the mobilization committee to end the war in Vietnam in 1967, and the national coordinator of the Poor People's Campaign in 1968. This is quite remarkable, for he was just 27 years old at that time. In their last face-to-face meeting, Dr. King asked Dr. LaFayette how one might better institutionalize nonviolence training. Bernard LaFayette took this question to Harvard University, where he earned his doctorate with a dissertation in nonviolence education, and he has been putting his ideas into practice by creating a range of education programs in schools, prisons, and with members of military and police forces around the world. Dr. LaFayette is exactly the kind of person we like to feature at the Aurora Forum—someone who is adept at turning vision into action for positive social change.

You worked closely with Dr. King, and I think this is the first time you've seen Mr. Willis's film of this speech. I'm wondering what your impressions are immediately following.

**Bernard LaFayette:** First, I want to congratulate Mr. Willis for that fine piece of art work that was done, and I'm privileged to be in the presence of a person who has made such an important contribution, not only with the film but in other areas—to be the dean of African-American West Coast filmmaking. And I'd like to also say to all of those who have been involved in the struggle in whatever small way: your support has made a difference in bringing about the changes and the opportunities that we share today.

As I reflect on the film, I sort of smile because when Martin Luther King mentioned the fact that he would be going to New York from here, he was going to be joining the march that we had planned from Central Park to the UN, where he would also make a very important speech about the war in Vietnam on the steps of the United Nations. So we were waiting for him to come to New York when he left here making this speech. And when we had this march in New York, there were untold numbers of people. It bordered near almost a million because even the march out of Central Park ... the rally was over at the UN before some people were able to leave the park. So the march continued after the speech was made, and that's the feeling I have and that's my reaction—that our march must continue after the speech is made.

**Gonnerman:** Tom, I wonder if you could help us understand better the overall context of the speech—the circumstances leading up to it.

**Thomas Jackson:** Sure. I wanted to first point out that King was a coalition builder. We've been talking a lot about this: a number of coalitions, but especially a coalition with the privileged and powerful, which is one of the reasons, I'm sure, that he accepted the invitation to come to Stanford University to talk about class, privilege, and power and their relationship to these dilemmas of race and poverty that still bedevil us.

The historical context was pretty desperate. He talked a lot about shattered dreams in that year. In the mid-term elections of 1966, congressional conservatives had made great ground. There were movements across the country to resist open housing successfully. Governor Reagan was elected in California on a platform of opposition to welfare, opposition to big government, and to civil rights. Congress had rejected that 1966 civil rights act that had made housing discrimination illegal and protected civil rights workers in the South. Congress would reject that again in 1967, and it was not until his assassination the month after that Congress found the will to pass that legislation. So there had been some defeats and discouragement. Principally, the promises of the war on poverty—initially \$1.7 billion in 1965—and by 1967 scarcely over \$2 billion—and he had watched the promises and had hoped that that program would grow into the tens of billions. Instead, he's quite accurate that \$30 billion a year was being squandered in a war he, and increasing numbers of Americans, thought had been a mistake. So I think the general context is one in which he felt—and a lot of others felt—that the dream was slipping and that it needed to be recaptured and reinvigorated. He mentioned also this awful trend of joblessness among urban and especially young black men. Poverty among black people was reduced from 55 percent to 33 percent during the '60s, but by 1969, there were over 50,000 more jobless black men than there had been in 1959. There was backsliding, not perhaps among all black people, but among this crucial neglected and marginalized population. And he was concerned about the relationship between right-wing political power and militarism. So he's taking a break from the furor over the Vietnam stance that he took in February and then in April.

**Gonnerman:** And ten days before this, the Riverside speech ["Beyond Vietnam"]....

**Jackson:** Yes, coming out here to talk about race and poverty in relation to these large economic trends and these large political trends, a backlash that indeed had been going on against open housing since the 1920s but had been gathering steam very recently.

**Gonnerman:** He's also just coming off the experience of Chicago, and that's where you, Dr. LaFayette, were working with him. Could you talk about what was happening in Chicago, especially around housing issues? That seemed to be the focus.

**LaFayette:** The most expensive purchase that the average family will make in its life is a house. The second-most expensive purchase the average family makes is an automobile. So housing becomes the basis for some kind of economic security and wherewithal. But housing also provides primary shelter. When a large number of blacks



moved from, say, for example, the South to northern cities, they were looking for new opportunities; they were looking for jobs. Many of them had family homes that they left. Many of them, of course, were sharecroppers and didn't have ownership of their own homes. But during the earlier period in our history, blacks were able to move north. Those from Texas and Louisiana moved to California. Those from Mississippi moved straight up to Chicago and St. Louis, and some of those who could afford it went on to Canada. Those from Alabama moved to Detroit, and those from places like Florida and Georgia and the Carolinas moved on up to Philadelphia and to New York, New Jersey, and those places north. So there was a migration, which had an important impact on the housing market in the area.

So in Chicago, we did a study and we found out that the Urban League had produced a report that during this period when Martin Luther King came to Chicago, 42 percent of the blacks in Chicago were either first- or second-generation Mississippians, not to mention the other southern states, but Mississippi alone was 42 percent. So what we're talking about here is looking at the deprivation and the poverty and the housing situation in Chicago at a period when people began to experience unemployment. These people who moved had skills; they knew how to live, but they could not grow corn and plant sweet potatoes on concrete. Had people moved out to the rural areas of Illinois, they would have survived without any problem, but they were trapped in the ghettos of Chicago, and this was the thing that caused them to really suffer in terms of housing.

Now, there was a conspiracy against black people when it came to housing because the real estate agents controlled housing; 90 percent of the people who moved or bought a house did so through real estate agents, not by putting a sign on the house saying "For Sale by Owner." And there was a pattern that they used that they called "block busting." As long as they could control the movement of blacks, then they could control real estate and the economics in housing. So what they would do is open up one block at a time and never allow blacks to go beyond the imaginary line. What's not said about this—and I'll conclude my remarks on that particular issue now; later we'll talk about some other things in Chicago—is that the whites were exploited in the Chicago housing market, because they would take, block by block, white people who had worked all their lives and saved their money, and they owned their homes. Some of them were widows who had lost their husbands, but they had a home; they had a base of economy. And they would force these white people to leave their homes by telling them that the property values were going to go down because the blacks were moving in, and each month that they waited, the property values were going to plummet. These people had paid something like about \$38,000 for their homes, which doesn't seem like much now, but the houses were worth at least \$50,000 or \$60,000 by now. When the blacks moved in, the houses went up even to \$80,000, but they would force white people to sell below the value. So it was a myth that the housing values went down because blacks paid more and the whites were forced to sell for less. It was exploitation of the market, and they called it doing good business. This is what we were addressing when we had the marches there in Gage Park in Chicago. That was jumping over the color line and giving people opportunity so that they would be able to purchase a home at a decent price and also being able to convince white people that we could have communities where we could all live together.

**Gonnerman:** You just touched upon one of the key issues that seems to be woven throughout Dr. King's "The Other America" speech, and that's the intersection of race and class. He says at one point in the speech, "Racism just doesn't seem to be going away." He talks about the ways in which different people have mutually interdependent destinies and need to learn how to work together. Were you able to get people to work together in Chicago? What were the barriers to that?

**LaFayette:** In some instances, we were able to build coalitions among whites and blacks: labor unions, teachers' unions, churches, for example. Initially, there was some resistance and Martin Luther King pointed that out in his speech. There were middle-class whites who saw the segregation problems in the North and the South and they felt sympathy for the way blacks were being treated: the violent behavior on the part of the local sheriffs like Jim Clark and police commissioner Bull Conner, that kind of thing, and what they would do with the water hoses and tear gas and running over people with horses and that sort of business, etcetera, beating people in the street and lynchings. They were opposed to the brutality, but they did not stress the issue of the poverty that resulted in racism. So Martin Luther King was addressing that in Chicago, and he was able to get some people to see the point and they began to rally behind the movement. And they marched with us in Gage Park and Marquette Park to address these kinds of issues. Unfortunately, there was some resistance on the part of the church communities because many of the leaders were already comfortable with their particular patronage jobs. In other words, the Daley machine operated pretty effectively. Some people, particularly students, would not know that Mayor Daley ran Republicans—machine Republicans. It was not just the Democratic machine, but it was a machine. They ran independent candidates in certain communities where they thought they would be able to win over, and these places where they had won elections, Mayor Daley would give patronage jobs based on the number of votes that you could produce from your different ethnic communities. So the very fact that we were talking about moving ahead of the color line meant that we were disturbing the machine and the patronage jobs that were in place, because it then becomes unpredictable in terms of the outcome of the vote if you haven't controlled this movement of people in housing. So this is one of the things that made the difference, and many whites came to see what was happening and they did join in the struggle with us and we marched together, and that was the thing that helped bring about the agreement.

**Gonnerman:** At the same time, Tom, you began saying that Dr. King was a coalition builder, yet the frustration and the slowness of really getting momentum seems to come through very much in this speech.

**Jackson:** He talks about the effort to really push for genuine equality—a solid job, a guaranteed income, decent, safe, sanitary integrated housing—and even before the marches, he says, We are coming up against privilege. And he talked a lot about low wages as well, and he talked about not just the culture of poverty but what he called a prison of poverty, and low wages. He was trying to explain in that campaign (there was a drive to organize hospital workers in Chicago): Low wages, he said, they're part of a

profit system in this apartheid situation. A lot of the wealth of the ghetto left—rent and low wages—he explained. He called it a system of domestic colonialism, of slum exploitation. So that while housing was the defining issue and the issue around which you all mobilized, there were lots of other coalition efforts: one of them a signal victory actually of tenant unions; one a Supreme Court decision supporting their right to bargain collectively with landlords to reduce their rent. So it was a multi-pronged campaign, but the center became these confrontations, these marches, in white suburbs. And by the time of this speech, the agreement that came from that with the Chicago real estate board and the state real estate board didn't seem as though it was being implemented, and they were always suspicious that perhaps the realtors, the bankers, the home owners, were just part of what they called the power structure, and that really city hall was sort of at the center. And I think at this point, King is sort of learning what kind of allies the northern liberals who had supported southern justice were. Mayor Daley had endorsed and celebrated it, but when the War on Poverty money came to Chicago, it didn't go to neighborhood groups, and that was a grievance in these neighborhoods.

After the Watts riot in August of 1965, what he mentioned was not the grievance about open housing and California's repeal of its open housing ordinance, Proposition 14. What he mentioned as an explanation was that Mayor Yorty had been sitting on \$29 million worth of federal anti-poverty money, and there was a coalition of neighborhood groups—black, Latino, poor whites—that has organized and is ready to implement, and Mayor Yorty is sort of keeping it within his machine and not spending it. King goes to Los Angeles six days before the riot and tries to be an advocate for this coalition, but, of course, that is one of the reasons he had this frustration not only over the desperate conditions, but at the exclusion from decision making and participation and power. He comes out of Chicago saying the problem of the ghetto is the problem of powerlessness. We don't hear it in this speech because he mixes up explanations for violence—bad housing, unemployment, low wages, violence—but also what he called “plantation politics” of Chicago and Los Angeles.

So the aspirations of those migrants for the sweet land of liberty—a better life, a better income—some of their fathers had found that during World War II, but they also hoped that the vote, which they had in the North, would bring them actual power, shared power. That was not what they were experiencing in the War on Poverty. Not only was it a small program—a skirmish—but King repeatedly said that this was not a very democratic program. We don't need a hand-out or a hand out; we need a hand in partnership, and that was not coming.

I'll end with this. The Southern Christian Leadership Conference had an adult education program funded by the Health, Education, and Welfare Department in the summer shortly after this speech. And Daley's folks found about it and he axed it, cut its funding in half and shortened it by several months. So this is a confrontation with organized political power—Democratic Party power—and he's talking about, Are those old allies going to stay with us? What new coalitions do we need to build?

**Gonnerman:** And then out of this comes the Poor People's Campaign.

**LaFayette:** Yes. Just a footnote on the Chicago thing: one of the most frightening things that happened to me, and I've been arrested 27 times and been beaten in the movement, and stuff like that from the sit-ins, freedom rides, and all that. I've been in all of those movements: Selma movement, etcetera. First of all, it was what you called the Annual Baby Roast in Chicago—the fires that took place. Hot weather, and so many babies were burned up in the inner city in homes and that sort of thing. Most of it was smoke inhalation; that was the common cause of death. That was one thing. I was concerned about the children—what was happening to the lives of the children.

**Jackson:** No enforcement of fire codes.

**LaFayette:** Right. Because landlords were simply using their property to make investments, and they were taking all the money out of it and making no repairs.

**Jackson:** No blacks were working in the fire department, either.

**LaFayette:** Absolutely. So here's what happened. We called and asked the tenant's union and we had a meeting. The secretary didn't show up. The secretary was always very faithful and dutiful and that sort of thing; she wasn't a college graduate, but she could write and take minutes and was doing that. These were local people. She didn't show up. The next week she came and apologized and she said that her children got sick. I asked what happened. She said, "Well, they were vomiting and they had to take them to St. Luke's Presbyterian Hospital." I said, "What's happening here? We're all so sorry about the kids." She said, "Oh, they got lead poisoning." "How did they get lead poisoning?" "Well, they say the paint on the wall peels." Here are the children in their crib with the paint falling off the ceiling into their crib. They eat the lead chips, and by the way, I studied it completely. It has a little glucose in it, the lead-based paint, so it tastes sweet, so the babies love it. That's why they eat a lot of it. It causes paralysis in different joints and affects the liver and kidneys and all kinds of organs, blindness, and the most devastating is brain damage. So what's educational opportunity going to do for this kid? He already lost half his brain just being a baby in the slums. So I was outraged. So what do you do about this? Well, you go to the health department, right? Let's do a screening on the babies in Chicago in slum areas. The health director looked at me and he said, "Well, if we did that, the hospitals would be full." I said, "Do you want the cemeteries to be full or do you want the hospitals to be full? The funeral homes or the hospitals?" I'm a nonviolent person, but I remember the rage I had. So what we're talking about here is systematic, clear neglect, carelessness. They couldn't care less. In a white community, that wouldn't happen. The landlords were getting away with this thing. And there was a law against using lead-based paint in housing. You could use it on ships, decks, and so on, but not in housing because of that very problem. So, that was just deplorable.

The riots happened when they did because the black people had moved from the South and had their expectations dashed, as you were talking about. They had come to the point where they had overcome the fear of the policemen and law enforcement but not the

hatred that they had experienced in Mississippi and places in the South. They had lived in the North long enough to overcome that fear, but the hatred was there. And that's why the outburst was not just about gangs; they were rebelling against the system. They called them race riots. No, they were police riots. They did not go to the white community and burn houses; they burned in their own communities. There was outrage, senseless outrage against the power structure. And the closest thing that represented the power structure was the policeman on the streets, and that's what the rage was all about.

**Jackson:** King did not mention that in his speech, but it's an entire dimension of the urban crisis and the dilemma of race and poverty. These are generally white working-class policemen just like the construction and building trade unions—a monopoly—that are part of this political structure, and when a rebellion occurs, people are not just outraged at poor housing but at the way in which power is distributed. I have a quote from July 15, 1966—you were there—in the middle of the two days of Chicago rioting in which two African Americans were killed. Gang members met with King and Andrew Young. I suppose you were there. Andrew Young said, "These young men talk mainly about a desperate need for jobs, but more than ever about political power." By early morning, they agreed to use nonviolence—to join the marches as marshals—but as a tactic. But they called Daley's machine oppressive and his black politicians pawns, and they called for power to the people, and Young writes that this resulted directly from "police intimidation and harassment," and he calls for a civilian review board. One vice lord, a local gang member, says, "It wasn't just the gangs; it was everybody. The people didn't want to riot; they wanted their rights." And King comes out and makes the statement that law and order have rationalized some of the most brutal forms of aggression, and he says police-state conditions are abhorrent to our democratic traditions. Most of the lethal violence was not property violence or looting from the black community but from the forces of law and order in this respect. So I think a lot of that rage of the unheard has to do with, yes, economic conditions, but also this sense of disempowerment and especially police abuses. King would say over and over again that 99 percent of them are triggered by police confrontations.

**Gonnerman:** And then, as he says in the speech, I'm going to stand by nonviolent direct action. Could you talk about Kingian nonviolence and how you employed that as a strategy in reaction to these very desperate situations?

**LaFayette:** Well, first of all, the thing that made Martin Luther King's staff effective in dealing with these situations on the streets and otherwise was the training. Some of you probably remember seeing the Selma March, and there's a person who is carrying the American flag—you've seen it many times—and he has a beret turned backwards on his head. That's Lamar McCoy from Chicago, who was a vice lord. He was trained as a marshal in the Chicago movement, and he went down to the march in Selma as well. So the thing that we came to understand in our studies ... we looked at the riots—even the most recent one like Rodney King, for example ... we looked at what was the thing that caused the riots. In Miami, for example, they used to have three riots a summer—plenty of riots in Miami. They stopped having riots in Miami. What happened? Well, there was the Rodney King incident; there was a riot in Miami and riots other places as well.

We went in (when I say “we,” it’s a team of people we have trained in nonviolence who are nonviolent trainers) and we got the attention of the police department in Miami Dade, which is a county. And we trained them because we discovered that it was the way policemen approached incidents that can either diffuse the situation or create a riot. That’s why I call them “police riots.” When the verdict came out regarding the individuals—the policemen—who were involved in the Rodney King incident. There were riots all over the place—new places that had never had riots, small towns. There were no riots in Miami because we had trained the policemen how to respond. Trainers trained the red dogs (the ones that do drug busts; they have all kind of heavy equipment)—even those people. So my point is that people in those positions can be trained in a way to resolve conflict that can prevent an explosion and the death of many people, etcetera. Nonviolence training is what we do—Kingian nonviolence. We teach that at the University of Rhode Island.

My last words with Martin Luther King had to do with institutionalizing and internationalizing nonviolence. As you pointed out, that was my pursuit in terms of my higher education. The day that Martin Luther King was killed, I talked to him four hours before he was killed. I was at the Lorraine Hotel in Memphis. He was sending me to Washington, D.C. He was killed while I was in flight to Washington, D.C. to open up the campaign office at 14th and U in Washington, D.C. I only discovered that he had been killed when I arrived.

Now, we had to finish the Poor People’s Campaign so I had to finish the Memphis march and the funeral and all those other things. Then I decided what I would do was go back to school because I had dropped out for two years. (It turned out to be eleven. Be careful when you drop out of school. Also joining the army; you know, you might have to go back two or three times. You have to be careful with that.) What we did was study how institutions can be developed to train people. It’s embarrassing to me that in our school system, when people act up we expel them and put them out of school. When they need more education, we deny them. And we’re intelligent, brilliant scholars trained in education, so what we do is send the kids to jail instead of preparing them to go to college.

Let me tell you something: I work in prisons. In Rhode Island, we have nonviolent courses in every penal institution. Some of the smartest students I’ve run into—graduate-level material—are in there. If only they had been caught at an early age and people would have been able to give them some new direction and give them attention instead of punishment. And you see, the problem is we don’t know how to talk to children. Violence is the language of the inarticulate. Yes, we’re very intelligent, but we don’t know how to talk with children. And we don’t know how to talk to people in other countries as well because we treat them like children. It’s called “child-ism.” And the same way we treat our children, we treat other nations. It’s like Nigeria. In their backyard they have all of this oil, and they’re in poverty and everybody around the world is getting wealthy over the oil in their backyard. We treat them like children. In developing countries (or, as Bill Moyer used to say, never-to-be-developed countries), the intent of some people in the power structure is that, as black people, we’re never to be

developed; we're never to have economic development and equity. And this is what Martin Luther King was talking about.

**Jackson:** I think he was talking about it in the 1950s as well when he was calling for a global war on poverty and he goes to India and learns from the Gandhians and comes back not only talking about negotiation and nonviolent resistance but about Gandhi's adoption of a daughter who was an untouchable.

Where does violence come from? Principally, it comes from abuse and inequality and exploitation, which is inherently violent. But he admired Gandhi's vow of poverty, his identification with common people, and the fact that he fasted until the Congress Party agreed to pass some laws against untouchability. He comes back to the United States and starts talking about the idea that, well, perhaps the United States can imitate that: affirmative action, a war on poverty, some commitment to equality. He wanted to live a simple, nonmaterial life. He donated most of his speaking honoraria. But I think that's an aspect of nonviolence that a lot of people miss: that it's aspiring to a world in which people treat each other as God's children, as equals, where racism doesn't create this false sense of superiority and this sense of inferiority. He says at the end of the Montgomery bus boycott—perhaps the most celebrated nonviolent campaign in 1956—that we have the duty to go back and reconcile on the busses with what rights? But we have the right to level this thing off, to exalt the low valleys of poverty and pull down the high mountains of privilege. I think that's a key aspect of what you're ending up with. The way people treat each other, not just in confrontation. And no change can happen without the confrontation of power, he says. To engage in physical violence is destructive, but there's also kind of a deeper, social, and even spiritual violence we do to each other that creates physical violence.

**LaFayette:** And the whole purpose of being that violent was to get people to not think very much of themselves. That's why it's violent: the psychological violence, the things we say to people, can destroy their very sense of worthiness. That's what we're talking about. It can happen in the home, in the family, at the workplace. Some people don't like to go to work. That's why they try to find as many sick days as possible and come in late and leave as early as they can. They like the job they're doing, but they don't like the people who treat them like they are nothing—who don't value them. The whole purpose is for people not to value themselves. That was the whole issue of segregation: to say that you are inferior. Don't you believe you're inferior? Wait a minute! You're inferior. We're going to put you in a tree and lynch you so that you will understand you have no power. You are nothing, you don't count, you can't do anything. Be hopeless, be fearful.

Let me tell you something: I was called to Colombia, Latin America, and I was doing nonviolence training in the community because they wanted to deal with some of these communities where they didn't have enough law enforcement to try to protect the people. So I was called by the inmates in Bellavista, which is one of the most notorious prisons there. You have to kill at least five people because they just don't have room for people who are not serious about killing. So if you prove that you really believe in killing folks,

then they'll make room for you. But it was overcrowded, anyway. They asked me to come into the prison to teach them nonviolence. These were the inmates, the leaders of all these different rivalry groups. You know why? They were killing six a day; they were killing each other. And I don't care how bad you were or how tough you were; you could not save your buddy, because if you killed one of the other leaders' buddies, they were going to get your buddy. That was the punishment. Not you, they didn't get you; they got your buddy. That really hurts. Your partner in crime, the one you grew up with, you protected each other's back, you killed for each other. That's the one you can't save. *Six a day*. Now, you don't have anymore killing because we went in and we trained them to be trainers. My feeling is this: I'm not going to train you to be nonviolent; I'll only train you to be a trainer in nonviolence, and then you have to take it from there because otherwise, how do I know I have so long to live? If I was going to live forever, I'd do a one-on-one thing. But, hey, I don't have time. So if you want training to be a trainer, I can help you.

So right now, every inmate who goes into Bellavista gets nonviolence training. And I told them, "I'm going to do this, but here's the deal: you have got to train those in the barrios" (because the gang leaders were killing about 500 a month, so those are the ones who got me into the prisons because there's lots of material there). So they said, "OK, we'll be willing to train the gang members, but the problem is, when are we going to do it? We have work schedules in the prison." They had a Saturday, which was visitors' day. And do you know who their visitors were? Their conjugal visits. And they said, "We can't do it on Saturday." I said, "Yes, you can. The way you do that is you rotate. Zero conjugal visits one week; train the gang leaders the next week." They did that, and today they bring school children from the city to the prison to be trained in nonviolence. That's what Martin Luther King was talking about. We can institutionalize nonviolence and transform the institution.

**Gonnerman:** We're getting to the point where we will want to open up the mikes. There are mikes in each aisle if you have a question or comment to make. I know we're scheduled to end at 4 o'clock, but I don't mind going a little longer. Feel free to leave if you have to, but we will open up the mikes and continue the conversation for a while.

What do people find when they discover the power of nonviolence? What happens? You've seen that happen to people.

**LaFayette:** Right now, we're training people in Nigeria—those who have been called the militants, who have been kidnapping people and also killing people. Some of you have seen them on television recently. Those are the people we are training in Nigeria. What happens is that they come to the conclusion ... and see, they know it. It's a big secret. We don't know it, but they, the people who are violent, know it. They know that violence is bankrupt. They know that they can't achieve their goals with violence. They've been trying and they've been losing, so they've been putting up a front. But they know it doesn't work. They know that if you're going to bring about peace, you can't blow up everybody. It doesn't work. So the main thing we do is deal with the logic of violence: What have you achieved? How are things going? You have a lot of AK-



47s, but, hey, are you safe? Can you protect yourself? Are you secure? Are you unafraid? Then, when you finished shooting people, did you get any more oil? You closed down some oil pumps, but did you open up any economy for your community? My point is that the first thing you have to deal with is the logic. Then you have to say, What is the alternative? Then, obviously, the alternative is nonviolence. But it's not just about protests and demonstrations; they've got to understand how to take a systematic approach, because you're dealing with a system so you have to understand how systems work and how to un-work systems and how to replace systems that don't work.

**Jackson:** If I could take us back to the South in the 60s, there was a lot of nonviolent organizing in the North. The level of violence in the South was not quite as bad as the Colombian civil war, but the nonviolence movement was about more than simple dramatic protests: democratic voter registration schools all over the South, a form of nonviolence building from the ground up, involving hundreds if not thousands of people, especially women. This doesn't get as heralded as a march in Chicago or Birmingham or in Washington, D.C., but it's the same idea of educators educating educators: Septima Clark on John's Island in 1956 in South Carolina, starts a citizenship school so people can register to vote by becoming literate. They had to pass a literacy test. Those schools spread across the South in the next eight years by people who are learning the tools of working with other people on what they feel their needs are to get out of poverty or to alleviate racism. And what to they do? They move to more and more issues: literacy, some people aren't getting job training because some of the local state-run vocational education offices exclude black people; they start working on campaigns for getting disability benefits for black kids locked out from that system; Social Security, welfare.... There's a way in which you see on a local level, if you look closely enough, this model of people working with other local people to develop their own leadership and to become leaders and to seize very practical rights to try to win the vote so they can get street lights in their neighborhood or sewers dug. And that's a dimension of the southern movement that not a lot of people remember that actually brought significant change in the inclusion of black neighborhoods in the twentieth century infrastructure. And it was by this sort of person-to-person learning and training and bringing another version of nonviolence education aimed at empowerment and at organizing people. They organized farmers' cooperatives, they organized relief for people who were fired from their jobs for trying to vote. This was one of the hidden nonviolent movements, and I think King learned a lot from Mrs. Clark and celebrated her for this more quiet effort, but it had to do with political organizing, not just mobilizing for protest. Political organizing for the long-term to get people active locally and aware of what their rights are, and how perhaps they ought to be that clerk in the courthouse who registers and certifies voters. It pays and it also opens up the vote to your neighbors.

**Gonnerman:** Professor Jackson, this is why your scholarship is important. You're telling these stories; you're researching and finding out about things that have actually worked. So what are we going to do with this knowledge? Where are we going to find the people to enact the next wave on the SNCC model, for example, or on the model of Kingian nonviolence so that we can learn from the past and go forward in a constructive manner?

**LaFayette:** The first thing you need to do is look at what exists and what's not working, because unless you understand what's not working and why it's not working, it would be difficult for you to put in a system that works. You would have to start by looking at the middle schools. What happens when a kid finishes the third grade, he starts having to make some choices and he becomes much more—there are set classes and that kind of thing. You have a different kind of model of education up to the third grade where you have more of a community with kids. One of the ways that we are approaching this is that we're working with eighth graders. At the end of this month, we're going to have in Atlanta about 70 people well selected—college students as well as high-school students, eleventh and twelfth graders, freshmen, sophomores—and they will be trained and prepared to go to Atlanta. And then their training will focus on how to make presentations of about three hours (that's about as much as you can get for an eighth grader; any more than that and you've lost them). We're going to integrate it with music and a lot of interactive stuff. Our goal is to get them to get excited about school. One of the reasons why kids drop out of school in middle school, in ninth grade (that's one of the highest drop-out areas), is because they don't belong to any social groups in the school. Kids who don't drop out are those who belong to the band, those who play sports, those who belong to clubs, and that kind of thing. It's the ones who are marginalized, who are not part of the community. What we have to do is train the eighth graders to create communities, and communities means that you include those who ordinarily would be left out, and you make a conscious effort. The fact is that it's a security issue, because if kids don't feel comfortable and a part of your community, they will become antisocial.

**Gonnerman:** Consider Columbine.

**LaFayette:** Exactly. In each of those cases, they were students who felt left out and not part of the community, so they felt alienated from the community. So whose responsibility is it? Of course, there are teachers and administrators, but we have to train the students (the eighth-grade community, etcetera) not to exclude folk. So this is an experiment, but it's based on some actual situations that we've looked at and all these facts. So what we do is train these high-school and college students to provide the training, because we're got to have an army of nonviolent folk to make this happen, so we're going to draw from the high school students and the college students and create this. They are closer in age to those other students and they can relate to them. All of them like the same kind of music and things like that. So what we do is employ them and get them to work. There aren't enough people working; that's the problem—working on the problem. They stand around looking like a country cow looking at a choo-choo train. And everybody has to go to work to make a more nonviolent community—the beloved community. And they can start while they're children. I'm saying that this is just one idea—one project—but the problem is we don't have enough people working.

**Gonnerman:** That's great. I want to stay in touch with you on this and hope that through the Aurora Forum and other institutions at Stanford we can start to build some coalitions, because I know that young people here care about this but maybe just don't know how to take the next step.

**Comment by Professor Marc Pauly:** Thank you. This was the very first time I had seen this speech and I was very moved by it. I guess one of the things that's so moving is how much a speech like that is still applicable in very many ways today. So I just came here from an event that some of the students organized at this university who are not so much concerned, maybe, with the other America but rather with the other Stanford, you might say, which is a Stanford that has a whole population of workers who are casual workers, temporary workers, contract workers, who are not paid a living wage. That also came up in the talk when Gandhi's fast came up. They are on a hunger strike to get the university to consider the cause of a living wage being paid to these kinds of workers. I was very struck in seeing this film by how much of this actually applies to this situation. In fact, the minimum wage Dr. King mentioned in the speech as being an issue and some of the quotes you could just transfer to the Stanford situation such as, "This nation has the resources." Well, Stanford certainly should seem to have the resources to do something about that situation. So another thing that I found striking and that also came up in the speech was that Dr. King said the thing that gives you hope is the new generation, the student generation, which is open in ways that maybe older generations are not. And as a faculty member, I am certainly humbled by the fact that it is again students who are taking on this cause, whereas my colleagues and I are waiting to be educated by them about what the issues are. I just wanted to throw this in. If people are interested in this, the students are camping out—at least two hours before I came here there were still tents in front of President Hennessy's office on the Main Quad. Maybe they're been removed by now, but if you feel like walking by there and showing your support, that would certainly be appreciated.

**Gonnerman:** Thank you very much for bringing that up. Any comments?

**Jackson:** I think you can hear in the speech—it's not necessarily an optimistic speech, but it's a hopeful speech—that he does look to the students. He's no longer celebrating the kind of sclerotic labor unions he was looking to or even the Democratic Party. Now, I think we can look around. I just did a program on King with the Greensboro living wage campaign; we have the same issues on our campus. King directly spoke to the ways in which low wages ... what did he say? "Jobs are harder to create than voting rules; someone has been profiting from the low wages of Negroes. Certain industries are based on a supply of low-wage, underskilled and immobile non-white work, etcetera—hospitals, university cafeterias, service industries, housework. " It's a confrontation with economic power that can happen on a number of local levels. I look around the country now and I see these kinds of confrontations—the living wage campaign comes to mind, the environmental justice movements—they are confrontations about who makes the decisions and who has the economic power and who gets to protect their communities.

And I think what we need to think about as well as educating and inspiring new generations is what kind of institutions are going to connect these local democratic movements that we know are there to what King called a "coalition of conscience" that might be capable of exerting power over militarism, war-making. Social policy: who

gets to reform health care and how? I think our biggest dilemma is to create these local energetic democratic movements to connect them through institutions, through electoral strategies and representation to reinvigorate that structure that connects the local to the national. But also, I remind us that King was assassinated protecting the right of garbage workers to organize in a union, and it might not be the same unions that got so conservative and self-protective in the 50s; new forms of organizations are coming to the fore like the bus riders' union in Los Angeles. But I think we need to think, too, about what the connective tissue is between these local movements and the issue-specific campaign. And think, really, about an ongoing political party or set of institutions that can hold the national government accountable as well, because the resources available to local schools, the resources available to make wage policies that work for people, earned income tax credit, whatever—a lot of that decision making happens at the state or national government level, and movements need to connect with governing power. I think that was part of the nonviolent vision of the movement that King was talking about: connect the energies of the local with the overwhelming power centers at the national level.

**Comment from the Audience:** I just wanted to add on to Professor Pauly's comments. I'm a student who has also been involved with the recent campaign for a living wage. And I'm also currently a research assistant at the Martin Luther King Papers Project on campus, so it's really astounding to me a lot of the time how currently relevant a lot of his words are. I think it's important to think about our own community, our own locality, in which these struggles still exist. I have more specific information if anyone is interested in the history of labor policy on this campus. I think what's really important to remember is that what these students are demanding, as well as the faculty and workers who are involved, is just trying to hold Stanford up to its own word of academic excellence and being an institution of excellence that gives back to its own community, which is really a part of Leland Stanford's original founding vision. And I think that's particularly relevant on a day like today, which is Community Day, to think about who we include and who we consider a part of this community—who really counts. Thank you.

**Comment by LaDoris Cordell:** I have an observation that is purely process; it has nothing to do with substance at all. I was struck by, when King was speaking, it looked like he had some notes, but he didn't look at his notes. Maybe he looked down twice, but never once did he say the word "Uh." There was nothing. The only other person in a position of leadership that I've seen do that is Bill Clinton, who would get up with a few notes and then just talk. And King was absolutely eloquent. Again, just an observation; I don't need a response back. But I just wondered if others were struck by the fact that he was able to do that. I guess that's what he did so well. I should say that's, of course, in contrast to George Bush. [Laughter]

**Gonnerman:** I saw someone the other day and I said, at the start of this speech, Dr. King looks tired. And as it goes on, he is so incredibly, amazingly, eloquent as a speaker. As she said, it's good for people to see Dr. King looking tired, because he was out there

doing the work every single day. He *was* tired, but he just kept on going and going and going and going and going.

**LaFayette:** Let me say this. I was the national program administrator. So my job was to supervise the staff people like Jesse Jackson, Hosea Williams, and all those people, etcetera. One time during this period we're talking about (it was in early '68, around February), Martin Luther King used to make about seven speeches a day. He had someone traveling with him, Bernard Lee, and the person who would travel with Martin Luther King would be so worn down we had to send a replacement for him. He would pick up the suitcase with the dirty clothes and come back and spend two or three days resting. And we'd send another person to continue with Martin Luther King. I was with him when we were in New York during the Poor People's Campaign, and I'd stay up pretty late and get up early, but Martin Luther King was the last one to go to sleep at night. He'd be walking around in his socks and pajamas talking to whoever was around listening. He'd put everybody to sleep and be the first one up in the morning. He worked harder than anyone else. And I think the adrenaline came from his passion and what he got from the work that he was doing. Now, I know better; you shouldn't work like that. No one should. You need your rest. People get burned out. But Martin Luther King had a sense that his time was short, and he wanted to make the best use of it. I'd never seen him at a period like that before—the energy that he had and the tirelessness. You saw the Memphis speech; you saw the tiredness in him. They call it the “Mountaintop Speech.”

**Jackson:** And the energy he gets from the people at Masonic Temple, the 1,800 people.

**LaFayette:** I was with him that night. He did not want to go and make that speech. He was in his pajamas.

**Gonnerman:** He wasn't feeling well.

**LaFayette:** He was supposed to be resting. It was pouring down rain; like they say, cats and dogs. I was in the room with him and we were talking about the Poor People's Campaign and the next things that we had to do, etcetera, because I was the national coordinator. So he was briefing me on what he wanted to see happen and the different staff people, and that kind of thing. He gets this phone call from Ralph Abernathy. He said, “I walked into the Mason Temple...” (not the Masonic Temple; Mason Temple—it was the name of a man. I'm saying this because there was an error in a book. Mason Temple, Church of God in Christ). And Abernathy said, “Martin, I think you have to come. I walked in and the people just went wild, and there were people standing outside and it was raining and everything, but they thought you were right behind me, and their feathers just fell when they found out you were not there.” In preacher talk, he said, “This is your crowd. I can't pull it. This is your crowd.” And Martin said, “Now, Ralph, if *you* are telling me that I need to take off my pajamas [because he was getting ready to get into bed] and put on my suit and a tie and come out in the rain to come and speak at this meeting—if *you* are telling me that, then I'm going to come.” Abernathy said, “Well, Martin, I think that this would be good for you. You need to come.” So that same night—I knew he was tired—but you could see the passion on his face in the film. So

yes, he was tired then, not only physically. He was tired of the system continuously wiping people out.

**Jackson:** It was a very difficult and almost desperate time to try to reverse this tide of reaction. I wanted to pick up on something you said. As much as he inspired people, he was inspired by them, and a lot of these speeches ... he had a very flexible speech repertoire ... a lot of this speech material comes from people in the movement who are saying things, expressing themselves, summing up the lessons of the local movements, and he would incorporate that material, just as during the Poor People's Campaign, people like you and a whole group of other leaders picked up those same messages and kept them going. So in many ways, he was inspired by the local democratic movement. I want to plug another book now in addition to mine: Michael Honey, *Going Down Jericho Road: Martin Luther King and the Memphis Strike*. That makes it so clear how inspired he was by this labor union, working class, plus black middle-class ministers, businessmen. The level of unity and coalition within Memphis's black community really did energize him, and ultimately that's where he was assassinated. It was a circular process whereby he is giving to the movement but he is also ... a lot of that speech material comes from elsewhere back in through his voice.

**LaFayette:** Absolutely. But the reason he was assassinated was not because of the sanitation workers in Memphis. In fact, he didn't want to go to Memphis. They had been stalking Martin Luther King much earlier than Memphis. They had planned to kill him. We were having a staff meeting at CLC in Atlanta, and the folks in Memphis kept calling him. Memphis was not on his schedule. Martin Luther King wanted to stick with his schedule. They said, "Can you just come for one day? Lead us in a march and have a press conference. That would give a boost to the movement because these people have been on strike for a long time, so give them a little shot in the arm, so to speak." We were in the middle of our staff meeting planning for the Poor People's Campaign. Martin said, "OK, I'll go." When he got on the plane in Atlanta, there was a bomb threat. Everybody had to get off the plane; the dogs had to search to look for the bomb. There was no bomb, but there were other people who said, "I will not get back on the plane with Martin Luther King." He was getting around eleven death threats a day. To cut it short, we all know what happened in terms of history in terms of his being shot and killed. But the reason he was killed is because they were trying to stop his ideas. We didn't find out until years later that there were seventeen Poor People's marches to capitols all over the world that we didn't even know about. Martin Luther King was the only person who could call an international or global strike. And you see what that does to the system and power. So they had offered him everything they could to try to get him to cool out, but he would not respond at all to anything, even to the threats that they made on him. They wouldn't work. But that's the same thing that you're talking about—the political, economic stuff—because, you see, the Poor People's Campaign was clearly economic rights. Now, it's not low volume; it's high volume.

**Jackson:** Jobs, democratic empowerment, treaty rights for Indians...

**LaFayette:** Exactly. So now, it's not so much of his influence in the U.S. as civil rights, but it's the global influence that Martin Luther King was acquiring at that point. What I'm saying is that's what they were trying to kill, but they missed. Yeah, we're making sure that they missed, and that's why we've got to continue to work.

**Jackson:** That tradition preceded him. He learned from that tradition. You can kill the charismatic leader who is inspiring, but it was much bigger, and he recognized that. Even as early as Montgomery, he said, "I'm just one." And this is bigger than any leader.

**Gonnerman:** With that reminder of our responsibility to continue the movement begun by Dr. King and others, we will conclude this Aurora Forum commemoration of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "The Other America" speech at Stanford. Thank you Bernard LaFayette and Thomas Jackson. And thanks to everyone here for taking time to join us here in Memorial Auditorium for Community Day at Stanford.

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### **Allen Willis**

Considered the dean of African American filmmakers in the San Francisco Bay Area, Allen Willis worked for KQED-TV from 1963 to 1983 and chronicled Bay Area history as a documentary cinematographer. He appears courtesy of the East Bay Media Center, which houses the Allen Willis Archive.

### **Bernard LaFayette**

Dr. Bernard LaFayette, Jr. has been a Civil Rights Movement activist, minister, educator, lecturer, and is an authority on the strategy on nonviolent social change. He co-founded the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) in 1960 and was appointed National Program Administrator for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) and National Coordinator of the 1968 Poor Peoples' Campaign by Martin Luther King, Jr. He is a former President of the American Baptist College of ABT Seminary in Nashville; Scholar in Residence at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change in Atlanta; and Pastor emeritus of the Progressive Baptist Church in Nashville.

### **Thomas F. Jackson**

Professor Thomas Jackson authored *From Civil Rights to Human Rights: Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Struggle for Economic Justice* (2006), an award-winning book from the University of Pennsylvania Press that examines King's lifelong commitments to economic equality, racial justice, and international peace. Drawing widely on published and unpublished archival sources at Stanford and elsewhere, Jackson, who earned a Stanford Ph.D. in American history, explains the contexts and meanings of King's increasingly open call for "a radical redistribution of political and economic power" in American cities, the nation, and the world.

### **Mark Gonnerman**

Dr. Mark Gonnerman is founding director of the Aurora Forum at Stanford University.

**Comments?**

We welcome your comments and suggestions via email to [auroraforum@stanford.edu](mailto:auroraforum@stanford.edu)  
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