

38TH YEAR OF PUBLICATION

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Professor invites dialogue, respect

By Marijke Fakasiieiki

In teaching classes, speaking at symposia and publishing insights, Scott Finnie, professor in Africana studies at Eastern Washington University (EWU), feels called to create Martin Luther King Jr.'s beloved community.

His approach is to validate students and others, to draw them into interaction and dialogue in which they ask and answer questions.

"I want to help people discover not just what they think but why they think what they think. How did they reach their conclusion on Black Lives Matter and how do they justify it," said Scott.

"Most people change their dynamic if they see where they are and where they want to be," he said. "Unless there's self-reflection in an education setting, there won't be much education."

Educate comes from "educare," which means "to draw out."

For Scott, that happens by engaging students' thought processes and critical thinking to find out how they think, reflect on and judge their own thinking before they assess a subject.

To have students reflect on affirmative action, the death penalty



For Scott Finnie, "education" means "to draw out," invite self-reflection.

or the Black Panthers, critical thinking is key, he said.

Through his company, Engaging Teen Concepts, he offers diversity training and presentations that show the power of communication and mutuality at high schools, community colleges, police departments, universities, courts, medical groups and more.

EWU's Africana Studies Program and Scott's teaching have evolved over the years. In 1991, he began a master's in American history on civil rights history at EWU. That challenged him to consider teaching. In 1992, he started teaching in the Black Studies Program, which later became African Studies, then African-American Studies and now is Africana Studies.

"Africana" refers to African Americans, and the 54 nations of Africa and people of African descent transplanted to the Caribbean and Latin America.

After Scott earned a doctoral degree in 2000 on the U.S. civil rights movement in Gonzaga University's leadership studies program, he became a full-time faculty member at EWU.

In 2007, he earned tenure as
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Martin Luther King Day goes online bringing words of challenge, dreaming

By Mary Stamp

For Martin Luther King Jr. Day 2022, Gonzaga, Eastern Washington, and Whitworth universities and the Martin Luther King Community Center collaborated to present "A Dream Remembered: The Past, Present and Future of Black Excellence" Jan. 17.

About 80 gathered on Zoom to celebrate King's life, legacy and leadership, guided through words, songs and dance by Tere Graham, Gonzaga's program manager for social justice programming at Unity Multicultural Education Center.

Jackie Lee, GU Black Student Union president read a poem, "Soldier for Civil Rights," describing exhaustion in the fight: "I get up and I'm shot down. I get up again and I'm shot down." When black leaders are not heard, she said, "I'm only toughened by my scars that turn to steel. I wonder what it would be like to not always have to be a soldier."

Robin Kelley, Gonzaga's new chief diversity officer, said King challenged racism, poverty and militarism, seeking to end them with nonviolence and civil disobedience.

"Civil disobedience is resisting obedience to unjust government demands with nonviolent means," she said, quoting King: "Civil disobedience is not lawlessness, but a higher form of lawfulness that brings about obedience to bring human laws to conform with divine laws."

While the global pandemic, Jan. 6 insurrection, voter suppression laws and 7,759 hate crimes in 2021 highlighted inequities, Robin sees changes: The FBI warns about white supremacist groups. Shifting demographics will make America multicultural by 2042.

King, the Nobel Peace Prize winner, who was arrested 29 times, saw nonviolent response as crucial and twice as effective as violence in changing lives, relationships and communities.

Robin said nonviolence is not passivity or acceptance. It's about working in solidarity and inclusion despite being knocked down.

Janese Howard, a Shadle Park High School student, admires MLK for standing for
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Speakers offer an overview of issues before legislature

At the Eastern Washington Legislative Conference, gathering about 140 people from faith communities in the region, Kristin Ang of the Faith Action Network (FAN), Mario Villeneuve and Donna Christensen of the Washington State Catholic Conference (WSCC), and Jessica Zimmerle of Earth Ministry/Interfaith Power and Light gave an overview of issues coming before the 2022 Washington State Legislature from Jan. 10 to March 10.

Donna and Mario presented WSCC priorities: the state budget, respecting life, human dignity, aging people, people with disabilities, immigration, education, restorative justice, health care, economic justice, children and families, affordable housing, workers' rights and care for God's creation.

Mario said they support increasing the personal needs allocation for state financial care from \$1,000 to \$2,382, still less than the cost of living: \$2,900 per person. He said the Catholic bishops oppose proposals to expand access to assisted suicide, such as reducing the waiting time. WSCC supports bills expanding broadband access and overseeing permanent supportive care.

Donna discussed bills to provide a monthly diaper subsidy for parents and caregivers, to protect renters from excessive rent and fee increases and to allow unaccompanied or homeless youth to receive health care without parental consent.

Mario also pointed to the need for more permanent supportive housing to reduce homelessness, assuring better outcomes for people struggling with housing and other issues with the assistance of case managers and 24-hour staff.

For information, visit wacatholics.org.

Jessica is working with WSCC and FAN on bills to promote environmental justice.

The Growth Management Act includes climate change in up-
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