Queen read portions of Cape May celebrates anniversary of MLK’s 1958 speech

Luther King Jr., and the words of the Rev. Martin McQueen quoted King. “I say to you that there are certain things within our social order in which I am proud to be maladjusted, and I call upon you to be maladjusted to all of these things,” McQueen quoted King. “I never intend to become adjusted to segregation and disfranchisement which take the necessities from the lives of men and women. I never intend to adjust myself to the viciousness of mob rule, I never intend to adjust my self to the self-defeating effects of physical violence.”

Mayor Chuck Lear introduced Anna Wright of Newtown Square, Pa., who witnessed King’s speech in Convention Hall in 1958. She said the hall was filled to capacity that night, with people standing in doorways and windows from the outside. “Of course Dr. King’s speech was so great,” she said. “His message to us as Friends was clear and to the point, but it was not just his words, it was the way he spoke. One of the leaders of the conference, Clarence Pickett, said King was a man with a voice that was heard around the world. ‘I think that says it all,’” she recalled. While Dr. King’s speech was over, she said, “We were inspired and we never saw, as heartbreakingly as we have seen.

Aptly, McQueen’s speech would be in Convention Hall.

“We lost Dr. King 50 years ago,” Lear said. “In the vast scheme of things, Cape May enjoys an admirably modest light on Dr. King’s life and what’s here, but we are determined to make it shine in his honor and memory now.” He said it was fitting to gather to observe King’s visit to the city with inspirational songs, his words and “hope in our hearts that his message of peace, and ‘hope in our hearts that his message of peace, justice and freedom will prevail no matter how perilous the times or how black the night. He said we have duties in America, and that’s work. And that work is not new, it’s not new.

Music was provided by a community choir directed by Lonie Smith, comprised of choir members from Macedonia Baptist Church, Cape May Lutheran Church, Cape May Methodist Church, and Tabor Tacony Christian Church. The choir offered “Lift Every Voice,” “I’m A Rollin’ Through an Unfamiliar Land” and “We Will Overcome.”

The Rev. Harold Harrold, a Macedonia Baptist Church, acted as master of ceremonies for the event. Harold Dean Trulear, an associate professor of applied theology at Howard University and director of the Healing Communities Prison Ministry and Prison Outreach Ministries Project of the Philadelphia Leadership Foundation, was the featured speaker offering a message entitled “Take Me to the Water.” He urged the audience to put a face on the incarcerated and drug-addicted.

“We look at people with addictions and we condemn them. We don’t see their humanity, we don’t see their struggles. We only see their humanity, we don’t see their addictions and we condemn them. We don’t see their humanity, we don’t see their addictions and we condemn them. We don’t see them as animals and thugs. We see them as our brothers and sisters. They’re your grandparents,” Trulear said.

The evening concluded with the choir and the near-capacity audience singing “America the Beautiful.”

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