

Moving Beyond the 'Isms'
BY SALLY MARKS MCKEE
MESA, ARIZ.

Martin Luther King III has carried on his father's legacy to champion equal rights for all people. He has been actively involved in policy initiatives to maintain the fair and equitable treatment of all people in the United States and abroad. Among dozens of commitments to humanitarian concerns, he also founded in 1988 an organization, Leadership 2000, for the development of leadership capabilities in individuals aspiring to public office.

Mr. King has been touring the world giving lectures and prefers that his lectures be in an open dialogue format. Rodney Mitchell accompanied and introduced Mr. King during open dialogue with Arizona State University law students. The human rights advocate answered questions and gave his thoughts on how to improve conditions in society. Mr. King said his grandfather preached love, his father taught love, and he is carrying the torch to encourage others to live in peace and harmony.

In his speech at the Hayzel B. Daniels Award Ceremony (see accompanying "Profile" this page), Mr. King said: "We've got to get beyond the issue of race and class. We have to move beyond 'isms' We've got to find a way to bring people together." He also said, "Every city is made beautiful by its people."

Later that evening, Mr. King discussed the power of love and commitment. After his father was killed, Mr. King said his mother, Coretta Scott King, went to her children and explained that they would not feel their father hug them anymore, but he would always love them.

There was never any mention of hating the person who killed their father. Instead, Mrs. King took the three eldest of her four children on the march that Martin Luther King Jr. was supposed to lead.

"We need to frame our decisions by what is right," Mr. King continued, "not by what is convenient or easy."

He quoted his grandfather's commitment to love his fellow man. "I refuse to allow anyone to force me to hate; I am every man's brother," said the elder Martin Luther King. King Sr. refused to hate even those who took the lives of his wife and his son.

After the banquet, Mr. King spoke of his desire to help youth develop. He described his four-point philosophy for teaching children to live in peace. "It's a simple plan," he said. "Love of self, love of family, love of community, and love of God."

Following his father's philosophy, which was based on the teachings of Jesus and Mahatma Gandhi, Mr. King reiterated the need for a nonviolent society.

"We need to find a way to curtail killing," urged Mr. King. "We need to get angry and not tolerate killing. We have to stop the romanticism of guns in our society. We need to go through healing and move forward and build relationships. We need to raise our children to work in harmony with one another."

WT