

When my son Burns was young, my husband and I took him to the Martin Luther King Historic Site in Atlanta. As we walked through the exhibits we came across the photographs of fire hoses in Birmingham, the 16th Street Baptist Church, Governor Wallace standing in the Schoolhouse Door and the Edmund Pettus Bridge.

Burns stood still as the truth of his family's past washed over him. He turned to me and asked, 'Why did Paw Paw do those things to other people? I realized that at that moment I was at a crossroad in my life and the life of my son. The mantle had passed, and it was now up to me to do for Burns what my father never did for me. It was the first step in my journey of building a legacy of my own. I knelt down beside my son, drew him close and said, 'Paw Paw never told me why he did those things, but I know that he was wrong. So maybe it will just have to be up to me and you to help make things right.'

Standing here before you today is yet another day for the fulfillment of the promise that I made to my son. For today and for all the tomorrows to come there are opportunities for all of us to raise the call for justice in our lifetime.

Montgomery, Alabama, Dexter Avenue and the State Capitol are enshrined in the annals of American history. A historic place for historic times. But for me, it is much more personal, for it brings to mind the events that shaped my life.

It was here that I attended four inaugurations of my father and one of my mother.

It was here that I heard my father say the words "segregation now, segregation tomorrow and segregation forever."

It was here that my father fought to support a culture of exclusion, riding on the wings of fear rather than seeking justice on the wings of eagles.

It was here that my mother Governor Lurleen Wallace lay in state following her death at the age of 41 while thousands of Alabamians both white and African American stood in line for hours to pay their last respects.

It was here that my father met Vivian Malone for the second time and told her that she was an icon of the civil right movement.

It was at the Dexter Avenue King Memorial Church that my father went to ask for forgiveness for his racist past. A moment that could not rewrite his personal history but an opportunity brought about by my father's own suffering that allowed him to see the hurt of history in the eyes of African American men and women who had been denied the right to live the American Dream.

But on March the 25th of 1965, as Ralph Abernathy, Juanita Abernathy, Martin Luther King and thousands more gathered in the shadow of this Capitol, there was never an opportunity to address their concerns or state their grievances to the one person who could have changed the course of American History then and there. For Governor Wallace watched through a window in the privacy of his office, while others persevered and changed the history of America without him.

Today, we must not allow others to make the right choices for us. We must have courage each day to stand up for equality and the rights of all Americans. We must lead by example and live our lives with inspiration, always aspiring to make the choices that lead us to higher ground, that guides us to understanding and purpose of not just who we are but who we can become. An opportunity for each of you, an obligation for all of us, to see others, feel others and celebrate others, respecting their humanity for who they are.

Working each day to inspire the nobility that lies in the heart of each of us, Martin

Luther King taught that there is power in all of us to reach out, to support and stand firm in the belief that all of our lives count for something. There is no better time than now for Americans to hold hands, rather than holding down, the inherent rights of the common man.

One can never measure the true worth of a mended heart that beats again because someone cared. How many more anniversaries of the struggle for civil rights can we celebrate by looking over our shoulder rather than standing shoulder to shoulder to face the challenges that lay ahead? How can Americans reach for higher ground if we do not inspire others with what we do? We cannot expect the next generation of Americans to do something to change the world, if we aspire to do nothing to protect liberty and recognize our individual obligations to service.

How can we teach future generations about positive social change if we see injustice and turn our backs? For injustice knows no death. It rises like a dark mist on the horizon, laying low in the hearts of those that are unwilling to accept the notion of unconditional love.

We must promise that when we say all men are created equal, it means something, protects something and encourages us to embrace the belief that the diversity among us has nothing to do with equality, but has everything to do with strength. Tolerance must be more than what we believe, it must be what we live and leading by example is what we must do. Tolerance does not always mean agreement, but tolerance always requires understanding and compassion for others.

Very few of us will have monuments built to honor us after we are gone, but ALL OF US can do monumental things each day to help America be better. Those moments in Selma yesterday will stand as a testament to all of our lives. For there is power in moving forward, there is joy in an unburdened heart and there is strength in stepping away from beneath the shadows of your lives.

I sometimes wonder what my mother and father would think of their daughter that stands here today, and my mind's eye returns to a wood framed house on Eufaula Street in Clayton, Alabama, when life was uncomplicated and happiness was something you lived not something you just hoped for. And my father would smile at me and say "little girl, you're doing just fine, I sure am proud of you."

But for today, I am most thankful for the life and inspiration of Congressman John Lewis.

Congressman Lewis, in March of 2009 you held my hand and walked with me across the Edmund Pettus Bridge; the very bridge where, as a young man, you were beaten by Alabama State Troopers. That walk with you helped me understand the power of forgiveness and gave me the courage to speak with my own voice. Since that time I have looked for an opportunity to return, in some small measure, the gift of love and understanding you gave to me.

Fifty years ago, you stood here in front of your State Capitol and sought an opportunity as a citizen of Alabama to be recognized and heard by your Governor and he refused. But today, as his daughter and as a person of my own, I want to do for you what my father should have done and recognize you for your humanity and for your dignity as a child of God, as a person of goodwill and character and as a fellow Alabamian and say "Welcome Home."

TRIBUTE TO MS. DORIS WELLS

HON. HENRY C. "HANK" JOHNSON, JR.

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 17, 2015

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I submit the following Proclamation:

Whereas, Ms. Doris Wells' service to DeKalb County can be seen in the programs instituted in the Public Library System in our district; and

Whereas, her dedicated service touched the lives of many in our district from the moment she was hired as the first African American employee for the DeKalb County Library System in 1974, she has innovated the service of the Wesley Chapel-William C. Brown Library by introducing programs such as the Kwanzaa Awareness Festival and the Jubilee of Reading Adult Book Club Conference; and

Whereas, this remarkable, positive woman gave of herself, her time and her talent; educating and assisting those in need; and

Whereas, she led by example as the manager of the Scott Candler Library and the Wesley Chapel-William C. Brown Library; she was dedicated to her family, community, her church Clifton United Methodist Church and her beloved Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.; and

Whereas, this virtuous Proverbs 31 woman was a mother, a daughter, a friend, a warrior, a matriarch, and a woman of great integrity; and

Whereas, the U.S. Representative of the Fourth District of Georgia has set aside this day to bestow a Congressional recognition on Ms. Doris Wells for her leadership, friendship and service to all of the citizens in Georgia and throughout the Nation; now therefore, I, HENRY C. "HANK" JOHNSON, Jr., do hereby attest to the 114th Congress that Ms. Doris Wells of DeKalb County, Georgia is deemed worthy and deserving of this "Congressional Honor": Ms. Doris Wells, U.S. Citizen of Distinction in the 4th Congressional District of Georgia.

Proclaimed, this 4th day of March, 2015.

A TRIBUTE TO NICK ACKERMAN

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 17, 2015

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate and recognize Nick Ackerman for being named a 2015 Forty Under 40 honoree by the award-winning central Iowa publication, Business Record.

Since 2000, Business Record has undertaken an exhaustive annual review to identify a standout group of young leaders in the Greater Des Moines Area that are making an impact in their communities and their careers. Each year, forty up-and-coming community and business leaders under 40 years of age are selected for this prestigious honor based on a combined criteria of community involvement and success in their chosen career field. The 2015 class of Forty Under 40 honorees will join an impressive roster of 560 business leaders and growing.

Nick has the determination and drive to be successful in all that he does. At the American