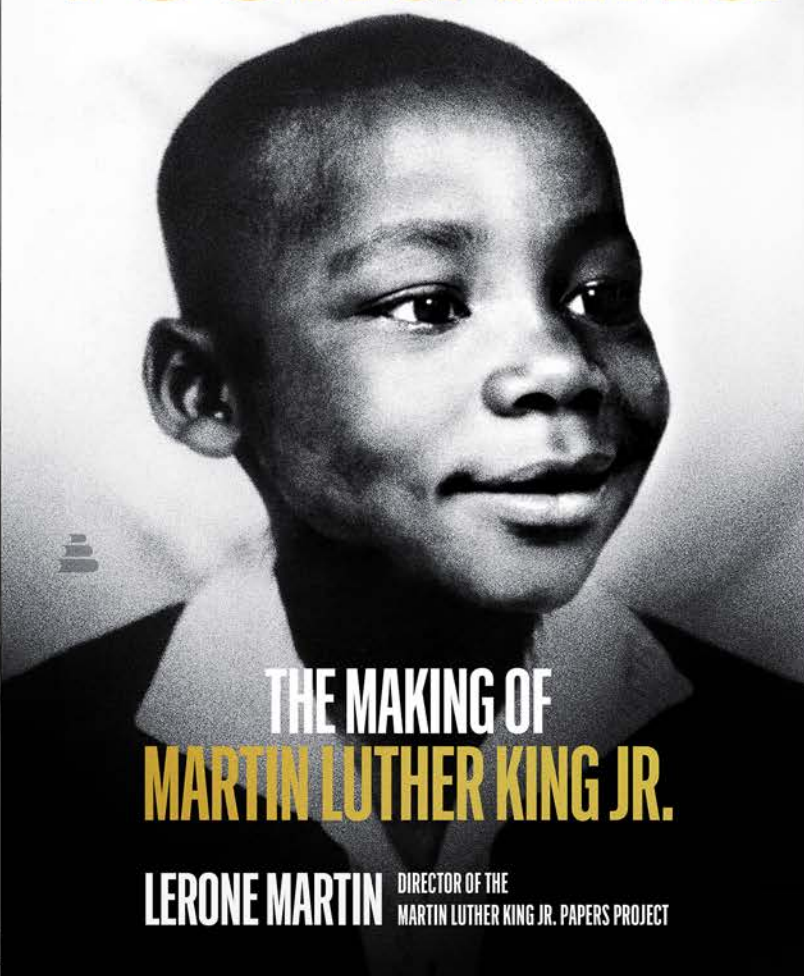


FAN

YOUNG KING



THE MAKING OF MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

LERONE MARTIN DIRECTOR OF THE
MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. PAPERS PROJECT

Young King: The Making of Martin Luther King, Jr. Lerone A. Martin, Ph.D.

Martin Luther King, Jr. Centennial Professor in Religious Studies and African and African American Studies at Stanford University.
Director of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Research and Education Institute, based at Stanford.

Thursday, September 17, 2026, 7:00 PM CT

Evanston Township HS Auditorium 1600 Dodge Ave., Door 6, Evanston, IL 60201

BONUS BOOK GIVEAWAY of *Young King* at the event, while supplies last.



This event is #freeandopentothepublic and will be recorded. No registration required. Suitable for youth 12+

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: LERONE A. MARTIN, Ph.D. – IN PERSON

CONTACT: Lonnie Stonitsch, Executive Director of FAN, lonnie@familyactionnetwork.net

Thursday, September 17, 2026 | 7:00 PM CT

Young King: The Making of Martin Luther King Jr.

A FAN in-person keynote address by Lerone Martin, Ph.D.

Evanston Township High School Auditorium, 1600 Dodge Ave., Door 6, Evanston, IL 60201

No registration required.

Book Giveaway: FAN is giving away copies of *Young King* at the event, while supplies last.

We know who Martin Luther King, Jr., became. But who was he at the beginning? Before he was a civil rights leader, a Nobel laureate, and a global icon, King was a sensitive boy and a middling high-school student devoted to fashion, dancing, sports, and dating. How did his moral clarity and world-changing resilience emerge from those ordinary roots?

In *Young King: The Making of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, preeminent King scholar **Lerone A. Martin, Ph.D.**, (FAN '24) turns his full attention to MLK's early years, correcting the myth of inevitability and showing that King's greatness was not preordained but shaped by choices, experiences, mentors, and struggles. Drawing on rare archival materials, unpublished interviews, personal letters, and King's own reflections, Martin traces the formative seasons of King's youth: a boy navigating academic uncertainty and the daily humiliations of the Jim Crow South, even as flashes of brilliance and moral imagination begin to take shape.

Structured in five stages that mirror King's coming of age, the book reveals a young man searching, stumbling, questioning, and evolving long before the world knew his name. Martin, who wrote it in part as a father, calls it a kind of superhero backstory. King, he suggests, would not be shocked by our present challenges. He would be shocked that we are surprised, when his own life shows that progress is never inevitable.

Martin is the Martin Luther King, Jr., Centennial Professor in Religious Studies and Director of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Research and Education Institute at Stanford University. Previously, he was a member of the faculty in the John C. Danforth Center on Religion and Politics and Director of American Culture Studies at Washington University in St. Louis. He currently serves as senior editor of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Papers Project and as an advisor on the forthcoming PBS documentary series *The History of Gospel Music & Preaching*.

This event is suitable for youth ages 12 and up. It will be recorded but not live streamed and available on FAN's website and YouTube channel.

Sponsored by **FAN**, in partnership with The Alliance for Early Childhood, The Ancona School, The Avery Coonley School, Avoca D37, Baker Demonstration School, Barrington D220, Beacon Academy, Bennett Day School, Bernard Zell Anshe Emet Day School, Brickton Montessori School, British International School of Chicago, Catherine Cook School, Chiaravalle Montessori School, Compass Health Center, Connections Health, Countryside Day School, Evanston Scholars, Evanston Township HS D202, The Family Institute at Northwestern University, Family Service Center, Foundation 65, The Frances Xavier Warde School, Francis W. Parker School, Glenbrook HS D225, Glenview Public Library, Gorton Center, Hyde Park Day School, Illinois Student Assistance Commission, Josephinum Academy, Kenilworth D38, Lake Bluff D65, Latin School of Chicago, Leo Catholic High School, Lycée Français de Chicago, Near North Montessori School, North Shore Country Day, Northwestern University Office of Neighborhood and Community Relations, Northwestern University School of Education and Social Policy, Oakton College, Pope John XXIII School, Regina Dominican High School, Rogers Park Montessori School, Sacred Heart Schools, Santa Clara University School of Law, Science & Arts Academy, The Sonia Shankman Orthogenic School, Stevenson HS D125, Township High School D113, Township High School D214, Wilmette Public Library, Wintrust Bank, Woodlands Academy, Youth & Opportunity United.