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(Above): The DHS Alumni Jazz Band performing during the social hour. Left to right - Antonio Irons on guitar (Stoughton resident and UMass-Dartmouth student), Derek Jameson on drums (DHS alum and Berklee College of Music student), Joseph Borsellino on saxophone (DHS alum and Temple University Boyer School of Music student) and Jim Duncan on bass (DHS alum and Berklee College of Music student).

Photo contributed to The Dedham Times by Maureen Sargent Photography

“Dream all you can become”

Messages of hope and humanity emanate from community celebration of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

by Scott Heald

In the inaugural version of an event that may become an annual tradition, hundreds of Dedhamites gathered on Monday at the town's public middle school to honor and perpetuate the inclusive legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. on the holiday dedicated to his memory. The occasion took the form of a community dinner, musical and dance performances, student essay

readings, an interlude of poetry and a keynote address by a distinguished civil rights attorney.

The crowd was attired casually on this frosty winter night, and featured regular citizens and various dignitaries. Among the attendees were dozens of children and adolescents, some of whom took leading roles in planning or implementing the program.

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(Above): As audience members and Superintendent Mike Welch look on, first grader Benny Chang from Oakdale Elementary School reads aloud his composition about Martin Luther King Day. Standing next to him on stage are the other elementary level winners of the district-wide contest: fifth grader Emily Gallagher of Avery, fourth grader Allison Flynn of Oakdale, third grader Ibrahim ElBatnigi of Greenlodge and second grader Katerina Matern of Oakdale. [Not pictured are the winners representing Dedham Middle School and Dedham High School, who were eighth grader Charlotte Healy and tenth grader Alondra Msallem, respectively.]

Photo by Scott Heald

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Community Celebration of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

Celebration, from page 1

About an hour after the dinner started, attendees assembled in the auditorium. Dr. Margaret Adams of Dedham, who is an administrator in the Melrose Public Schools, gave opening remarks.

Then local poet Deana Tavares proclaimed from several works, and quoted one of Dr. King's most encompassing statements: "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."

One of the poems she recited, titled "Beautifully Complex," included the following:

*I am so much more
than that stereotype,
Within your brain's
catalogue,
Where... the past
leaves behind all.*

*I am so much more than
Just red,
Just green,
Just yellow,
Just ivory-brown,
Just tan,
So much more
than just woman or man.*

At that point Joseph Borsellino of Dedham, a distinguished civil rights attorney, introduced his colleague, Charles E. "Chuck" Walker, Jr., Esq., as keynote speaker.

Attorney Borsellino said in part, "He embodies everything that Dr. King stands for... What's special about Chuck is that, it doesn't matter what he encounters. You cannot shake his love, you cannot shake his optimism. When you deal in civil rights you viscerally encounter some of the greatest

injustices that people can experience."

Then Professor Walker made his presentation, interweaving serious recollections of history with some humorous anecdotes. He teaches at two law schools, and has also held numerous prominent positions including Chief Hearings Officer and Chairman of the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination.

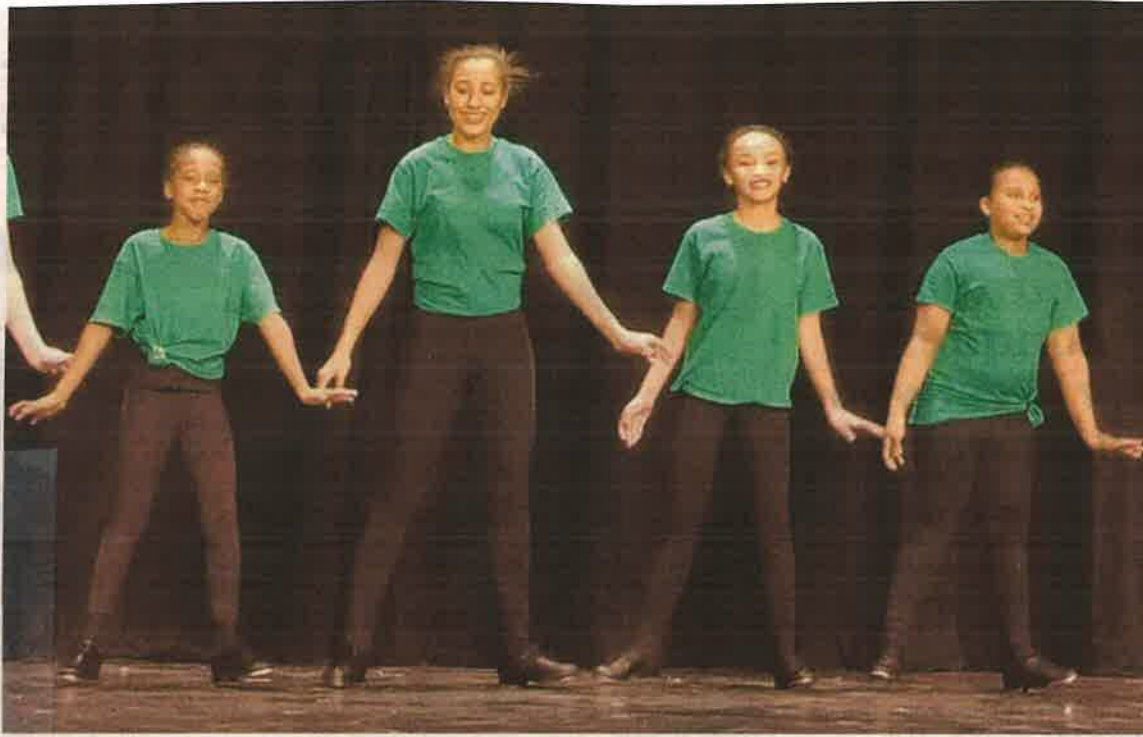
In his remarks he outlined growing up in the 1950s and 60s during Dr. King's advocacy of a post-racial America.

Prof. Walker then requested, and received, vociferous participation by the audience when he instructed everyone to turn to a neighbor seated to his or her right or left and state: "Dream all you can become, and become all you can dream."

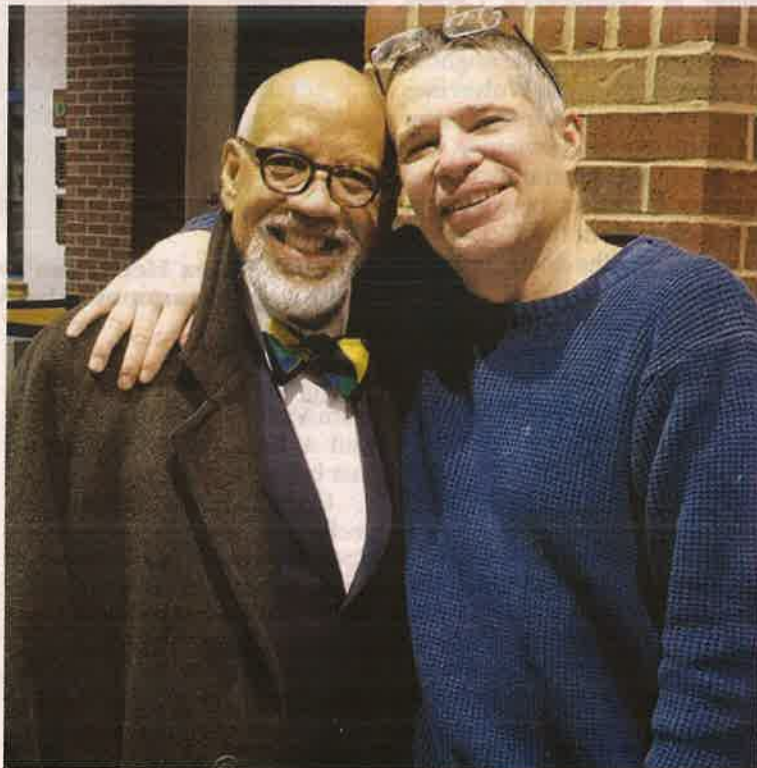
Later in his address he recounted being the son of a father who was a member of the famed Tuskegee Airmen, a group of African-American military pilots who fought in World War II after training near Tuskegee, Alabama.

Prof. Walker said his father eventually became the first African-American commander of a U.S. Air Force base. PowerPoint slides on a massive screen showed pivotal scenes from the life of Prof. Walker's father, including images of his wedding, of his bomber squadron during the war, and of him standing with others in front of a statue of Booker T. Washington.

When Chuck, as a young man, asked his father why he devoted his career to military service despite the racial barriers still prevailing in the American armed forces during the middle decades of the 20th century, the elder Walk-



(Above): Students from The Dance Center in Dedham performed a routine at Monday night's celebration.



(Right): Charles E. Walker, Jr., left, and Dedham resident Joseph Borsellino are longtime colleagues as prominent attorneys in the field of civil rights law.

Photos contributed to The Dedham Times by Maureen Sargent Photography

er replied, "I did it because I wanted to learn how to fly, and I wasn't going to let anyone get in the way."

Prof. Walker concluded his remarks by connecting the lessons from the era of the civil rights movement to the challenges of today: "You are the substance of Dr. King's dream," he said.

Another speaker was Superintendent of Schools Michael Welch. He noted, "Some of you may have heard about our recent surge in enrollment in the Dedham Public Schools of students whose families were dis-

placed as a result of the terrible hurricane that caused so much destruction in Puerto Rico and other areas of the Caribbean and Florida."

Welch continued, "Similar to our wonderful students who joined us from Haiti after the earthquake in their country eight years ago, we have welcomed over thirty new students and their families from Puerto Rico in the past two months... The Dedham Public Schools are going to be enriched, and will grow to become better from learning from their culture and perspectives."

Then one by one, seven students read compositions about the meaning of Dr. King's life and teachings.

A fifth grader named Emily from Avery Elementary School summed up the recurring theme of the evening when she said, citing Dr. King, "You, too, should choose love."

There followed performances by several groups, including students at The Dance Center, the Dedham High School Chorus directed by Mr. Nate Hayward, and the Dedham High School Band directed by Mr. Jeff Bolduc.