



Dr. King's Legacy in Today's DEI Landscape

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January 12, 2024 | [Atlanta](#)

Several years ago when my husband, photographer Isaac Diggs, and I were still living in New York, we bought a limited-edition photograph of Martin Luther King Jr. from the early 1960s at auction. We had never bought anything at auction before, and we arguably could not afford it. And yet, neither of us could resist the opportunity to have this particular piece of history in our lives. The black-and-white image shows Dr. King in a convertible, top down, smiling and with his hand extended to the crowd around him. They in turn are reaching out to him, pure joy lighting up their faces even as police (with their dogs) hover ominously in the background.

As a Black female attorney who now lives in Atlanta, Georgia, I stand on the shoulders of giants who paved the way for justice and equality. Among those towering figures, Dr. King stands as an indomitable force whose legacy transcends time. His profound impact on the civil rights movement not only transformed the American landscape, but also laid the foundation for a future that champions diversity, equity, and inclusion around the world. Reflecting on his teachings, it becomes evident that Dr. King's vision aligns seamlessly with the principles that guide my own journey as a legal professional committed to fostering a more just and inclusive society.

Dr. King's unwavering commitment to justice and equality serves as a guiding light for all who strive to make the legal profession more diverse and inclusive. In the face of systemic racism and discrimination, he led a nonviolent revolution that demanded equal rights for all, regardless of race, color, or creed. I draw inspiration from his courage to confront injustice head-on, challenging the status quo with a relentless pursuit of a more equitable world.

In the realm of diversity, Dr. King's dream resonates profoundly. He

envisioned a society where individuals are not judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character. True diversity is not merely about representation but about recognizing and valuing the unique perspectives that individuals from different backgrounds bring to the table. Dr. King would undoubtedly applaud efforts to break down barriers and ensure that our profession reflects the rich tapestry of our society.

Equity, a cornerstone of Dr. King's dream, remains an imperative in the pursuit of justice, and we must continue to understand the importance of dismantling systemic barriers that hinder the progress of underrepresented individuals in the legal profession. Dr. King's legacy calls for a legal landscape where every person, regardless of race or gender, can access equal opportunities and receive just treatment.

Inclusion, a concept Dr. King championed through his advocacy for a beloved community, is crucial in fostering a legal environment that reflects the principles of justice and equality. In the context of the legal profession, this means creating spaces where diverse voices are not only heard but actively valued. Dr. King would undoubtedly support initiatives that promote mentorship, allyship, and a sense of belonging for individuals traditionally marginalized within the legal community.

I find strength in Dr. King's teachings to persist in the face of adversity. Our profession, like any other, has its challenges, but his legacy teaches us that perseverance is key to overcoming obstacles. Dr. King's dream was not just for his time but for the generations to come, and as a Black female attorney, I proudly carry the torch forward, working toward a legal world that reflects the ideals he fought for. I do not do so alone, and I am grateful for everyone who recognizes that Dr. King Jr.'s legacy is a beacon that guides the path toward a legal profession – and our law firm specifically – characterized by diversity, equity, and inclusion. His dream of a just and equal society remains a call to action, urging us to continue the journey he started.