

# SWOSU Celebrates MLK

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Among the panelists at the MLK breakfast were (from left): Dr. Blake Sonobe, Dr. Kermit McMurry, Dr. John Hays, Mike Brown, Steve Ray, Dr. Cindy Foust and Dr. Henry Kirkland.

SWOSU President John Hays makes a point during the breakfast. Listening is Weatherford Mayor Mike Brown.

SWOSU students as well as community residents listen during the MLK breakfast held January 16 on the SWOSU campus in Weatherford.

Southwestern Oklahoma State University celebrated the life and work of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., on January 16 with an MLK Power Breakfast that was attended by over 300 people.

The panel discussion featured SWOSU President John Hays, Oklahoma Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs Dr. Kermit McMurry, Weatherford Mayor Mike Brown, SWOSU Provost Dr. Blake Sonobe, SWOSU Associate Provost Dr. Cindy Foust, Weatherford Police Chief Byron Cox, Weatherford City Treasurer Tony Davenport, Weatherford Economic Development Director Bill Shonley, SWOSU Professor Emeritus Dr. Henry Kirkland, SWOSU alum and author Dr. Almas J. Sami, SWOSU alum and 2004 Clinton Teacher of the Year Lillian Collins, SWOSU Professor Passard Dean, SWOSU Academic Coordinator for Underrepresented Students Richard Subia and SWOSU Distance Learning Assistant Director and Black Student Association faculty sponsor Steve Ray.

The group talked about Martin Luther King and shared some of the struggles that still take place in the area of civil rights. All gave examples from their professional work life which reflect the words and deeds of Dr. King and his legacy.

“In my opinion, Dr. Martin Luther King has been labeled many things by many people,” McMurry said. “Critics labeled him as controversial, outspoken and antagonistic. Proponents, on the other hand, called him a contemporary ‘Prince of Peace,’ and a champion for all people.”

McMurry said the three attributes of peace, truth and a man of God clearly made him special.

Sami said King was a rare bird in that he was truly a non-judgmental person. Kwame Toure of “Black Power” fame said in his dying days that Dr. King was the only leader who never made negative personal attacks on other leaders. He went on to say that all of them often took shots at Dr. King personally.

“Yet, Dr. King remained true to his ideals and continues even to this day to lead us with his examples of ‘non-judgmental’ perspectives as we pause on this historic day to reflect on his impact and the implications of his legacy,” Sami said.

Sponsoring the breakfast were the SWOSU Black Student Association, Student Oklahoma Education Association, Collegiate Activities Board and the Student Government Association. Emcee of the event was Cindy Dougherty, dean of students at SWOSU.

Another free event coming up on Thursday, January 19, is a 7 p.m. showing of "The Man and the Dream." The movie will be shown in the SWOSU Wellness Center. Admission is free, and there will also be free birthday cake.