

**Remarks by  
Donna Tanoue  
Chairman  
Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation  
On the Observance of  
Martin Luther King Day  
Wednesday, January 20, 1999**

I want to welcome all of you here today. Martin Luther King, Jr. How that name echoes through time -- humanitarian, civil rights leader, author and preacher -- Dr. King was all of these and more. Simply put, he profoundly changed the consciousness and character of America.

This weekend, my husband, Kirk, and I took my 4-year old daughter, Maya, to the Lincoln Memorial. Even in Pre-Kindergarten, children are already learning about Dr. King. So, we wanted to give her a greater context for what she is learning in the classroom.

We took her up the stairs to the top of the Memorial and down to the museum, where we showed her photos of Dr. King and watched the video clips of the 1963 "March on Washington." Before we left the Memorial, I asked her a couple of questions to see if she understood what we were trying to convey about Dr. King. Maya looked up quizzically and asked, "He had the whole world in his hands?" I think Maya was right.

"I Have a Dream," King's most famous speech, was delivered to more than 200,000 people at the "March on Washington" at the Lincoln Memorial. But he looked beyond his immediate audience to engage the attention of the world. In the Summer of 1963, the nation was seething with racial tension. Frequent riots were tearing apart communities. In the midst of this crisis, King conveyed his vision in powerful language that the world has never forgotten.

"I have a dream," he said, "that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed - "we hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal"."

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"I have a dream," he said , "my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character."

Coretta Scott King has said so well that "Martin's Day is both a day to remember his work and dream, and a day to celebrate in the true spirit of community. But, most importantly, Martin's Day is our day to act on those issues for which he dedicated his life.

Here at the FDIC, I think it significant that our Corporation is one with a worldwide reputation, but nonetheless, we are always consciously striving to become an even better corporation.

One key component is increasing diversity within our workforce. Our diversity efforts directly connect with our best instincts and our highest aspirations. At the same time, our efforts reflect the reality of the marketplace.

We serve an American public that is becoming increasingly diverse. And to better serve the public, we must better develop and retain our existing employees. We must also cast our net wide - and recruit, develop and retain the best talent and expertise in the marketplace.

We, at the FDIC, have long recognized that the most valuable resource of the Corporation is the people who work in it, and our practices should reflect our unswerving belief in the value and dignity of each person. We must strive to develop a corporate culture that accepts, includes and values each individual for the contribution he or she can make to the FDIC and the American people.

Recently, some of our colleagues have forged a definition of diversity, a definition of what the term means within our Corporation.

I am pleased to share that definition today:

"Diversity is about who we are as individuals, both differences and similarities. The Corporation's strength comes from the dedication, experience, and diversity of its employees. Given the opportunity, each employee can make a difference. The FDIC is committed to promoting and supporting an inclusive environment that provides to all employees the chance to work to their full potential, individually and collectively, in pursuit of the Corporation's mission."

In the coming weeks we will hear a great deal more about the FDIC's diversity effort.

In that regard I have another announcement. We have created a Web page devoted to our diversity effort, a Web page that goes on-line today. It will chart the progress we are making. But it is not just information being sent one way. Our Diversity Steering Committee and I want to hear what you have to say about this effort, so there is a place on the Web site where you can send in your comments and suggestions. And, I urge you -- give voice to your most thoughtful, insightful ideas and comments.

And if you have any doubt whether we will actually consider your comments, know that the FDIC is prepared to handle and consider those comments - we've shown that with our "Know Your Customer" proposal, handling more than 10,000 e-mails!

Our colleagues who are leading the diversity effort are aiming to have a formal program in place by April. But to be successful, this program must reflect a process everyone in the Corporation is aware of and involved in. Let me say -- we have to have your help in

all of this. You know that. As Chairman, I ask you for your direct, sustained involvement and investment in this diversity effort.

Today, as we remember Dr. King and his dream, and in the days ahead, let us bring to our corporate diversity effort optimism and idealism. But, let us also reaffirm that Diversity is not simply an intellectual ideal. It is a commitment of the Corporation -- that must be lived every day.

We know what the challenge is. It is the challenge for all within the FDIC, working individually and collectively, to fulfill the potential of the FDIC to better serve the American people.

Let us find the means to meet that challenge.

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