

Aiken Technical College students share thoughts about Martin Luther King Jr.



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STAFF PHOTO BY LARRY WOOD Charles Garrett, Student Government Association vice president at Aiken Technical College, writes “Nonviolence” on a poster honoring Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. as part of an MLK Day commemoration.

GRANITEVILLE — Kathrina Reeves became emotional when she walked across the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama, so “Emotional” is the word she used to describe Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. on Friday on a poster honoring the civil rights leader at Aiken Technical College.

“I started crying as I was walking across the bridge,” said Reeves, who took her son to the site on a history trip.

In 1965, the bridge was the site of a conflict between armed police officers and civil rights demonstrators marching to the state capital of Montgomery in support of voting rights for blacks.

Reeves, who is working on an associate degree in nursing, described King, a leader of the civil rights movement in the 1960s who used nonviolence to achieve social justice, as “just a great man” who worked for equality for all races and all people.

“We were blessed to have had him with us for a little while,” she said. “I feel, in a lot of ways, he is still here with us because his dream lives on still.”

Other ATC students also shared their thoughts about King before the holiday Monday and wrote words or messages about what the civil rights leader means to them on posters in buildings around campus. The posters will remain in place for a few days after the holiday for other students to read.

Student Government Association President Patricia Graham wrote “Freedom” and “Equality” on a poster outside the gym in the Student Activities Center.

“He was the voice that gave us our freedom and our equality for all races,” Graham said.

Like Reeves, Charles Garrett, SGA vice president, remembered King for his belief in nonviolent resistance to bring about social change.

“Violence is not the key,” Garrett said. “Everything Dr. King did – when he marched in Selma and when he marched in Washington – was based on nonviolence, and everything he learned was from God. I thank him for that.”

Gabriel Uvalle, a second-year welding major who will graduate in May, wrote “Opportunities” on the poster.

“For me, it means that all races come together and opportunities because I get to meet great people that I might not have gotten to meet,” Uvalle said. “I’m thankful for Martin Luther King Jr. Day.”

Jonathan McGee, president of the Student Veterans Association and a Campus Ambassador, called King an inspiration.

“I wrote “Inspiring” because one of the things that I adhere to is that great leaders inspire others to be great,” said McGee, who is in his third semester at ATC and is studying computer networking. “Martin Luther King inspired everybody.”