

Florida's 42nd Annual King Celebration Highlights Leadership, Service, and Unity

Gainesville's King Celebration 2026 (Jan 9–19) honors Dr. King through service, education, and civic leadership, with the Hall of Fame Gala Jan 10.

GAINSVILLE, FL, UNITED STATES, January 5, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Gainesville, FL — The [Martin Luther King, Jr., Commission of Florida, Inc.](#) will host its 42nd Annual King Celebration from January 9–19, 2026, in Gainesville, Alachua County. The 2026 theme, “Steadfast & Unmovable Against All Odds!”, reflects the enduring values of leadership, service, and unity exemplified by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. The Martin Luther King, Jr., Commission of Florida, Inc. is a community-based, private nonprofit organization that coordinates annual King Celebration programs in partnership with local leaders, schools, civic groups, and community supporters.

A central event of King Celebration 2026 is the 42nd Annual Hall of Fame Gala, to be held on Saturday, January 10, 2026, at the UF Hilton Hotel. The evening will bring together community leaders, educators, students, and partners to recognize service and leadership inspired by Dr. King's legacy.

The Gala Networking Reception at 5:30 p.m. is sponsored by [Hiten Bhuta](#) & Associates, followed by dinner at 6:30 p.m. and a social gathering. During the program, Hiten Bhuta, a Florida-based entrepreneur and community leader of Indian origin, will offer brief remarks acknowledging Dr. King's historic contribution to American leadership and expressing appreciation for the values of courage, nonviolence, and service that continue to guide communities nationwide.

“Dr. King strengthened America by calling us to live up to our highest ideals—freedom, dignity, and responsibility to one another,” said Bhuta.

“I am grateful to the Martin Luther King, Jr., Commission of Florida, Inc. for the invitation and for its steadfast work in preserving and advancing Dr. King's legacy through community leadership and service.”

The evening's Keynote Speaker will be Ms. Essence Davis, IB Senior at Eastside High School and



Hiten Bhuta

recipient of the 2026 Edna M. Hart Keeper of the Dream Scholarship Award, sponsored by UF Health and Publix Super Market Charities. The 2026 Hall of Fame Award will be presented to The Honorable Diyonne L. McGraw, recognized for her contributions to community service in Gainesville and Alachua County.

Donations and seating reservations for the Hall of Fame Gala are \$150 per person and may be completed online through the Commission's website.

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