



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Martin Luther King, Jr.
National Historic Site
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National Park Service News Release

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Long Term Park Ranger Retiring at Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site

Reverend Graham Williams, an 85 year-old Park Ranger at Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic, loves his job and it shows by the smile on his face. After more than 10 years working at this national park unit, first as a volunteer, Reverend Williams has decided to hang up his ranger hat and retire. Since 1999, Ranger Williams has worked at the 28-acre King Historic Site in the Sweet Auburn community of Atlanta. For years, he led visitors through King's Ebenezer Baptist Church and the home where King was born and brought inspiration to thousands of park visitors. Williams brought a lifetime of experience to the Site. The son of two ministers, Williams competed as a prizefighter and served as a combat engineer in the South Pacific during World War II before taking up his life's work as a church pastor. Because of his personal involvement in the Civil Rights Movement, his tours and talks always related back to the time he spent with Dr. King and his struggles with segregation in Macon, GA where he served as pastor during the 1960s. His stories of the Civil Rights Movement connected visitors to Dr. King's work and legacy. "When we first tried to integrate a restaurant in Macon, we were put in jail twice in one morning. We would leave home each morning with a toothbrush, a facecloth and a dime to call home, because we knew would be going to jail," said Williams.

Faye Walmsley, Supervisory Park Interpreter, stated, "I consistently get phone calls and emails from groups specifically requesting Reverend Williams to present them talks and tours. They love hearing his inspirational life experiences as he speaks with his minister baritone voice that draws people in to that historical moment."

Williams feels that superior interpretation is found in knowing what the visitor's question is before they ask. He says, "Here at the King Historic Site, we have a vision of embracing humanity in an environment that inspires peace, justice and equality. My goal was to do that and to create a visitor connection to the resource that will bring them back time and time again".

Park Ranger Reverend Williams will conduct his final tour on Thursday, April 22, 2010. For more information about Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site, visit our website: www.nps.gov/malu or call 404-331-5190.

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Reverend Graham Williams, Park Ranger