

Announcing the  
Rev. Dr. Valentino Lassiter  
“Continuing the Dream” Award

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Student Essay Contest

The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. envisioned a society in which war and violent oppression give way to hope and lasting peace. At the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, DC, on 28 August 1963, the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation, he exhorted Americans to remember our foundational affirmation of the equality of all human beings, who share the “unalienable Rights” of “Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”

Now is the time to make real the promises of democracy. ... Now is the time to make justice a reality for all of God’s children. ... And so even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream ... deeply rooted in the American dream ... 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 [people] are created equal.” ... I have a dream that ... we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of [solidarity]..., to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day. ... And when this happens, and when we allow freedom to ring ... from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God’s children, black ... and white..., Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual: Free at last! Free at last! Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!

During this present time of racially motivated acts of hate as seen across news programs and papers, Dr. King’s vision is all the more significant in 2015 as it was in 1963.

The Rev. Dr. Valentino Lassiter not only shared Dr. King’s dream but also worked to make it a reality by generously serving the church and the wider Cleveland community, leading by word and example, through education, activism, and walking together with those in need.

In honor of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Dr. King’s speech, Dr. Lassiter inaugurated the “Continuing the Dream” lecture series. Part I, in 2013, was entitled “Hope and Peace in Word and Song,” Part II, in 2014, highlighted “Women and the

Ministry.” For Part III, in 2015, he planned to focus on the contributions and talents of young people who are continuing Dr. King’s dream of equality and harmony across racial, ethnic, and religious boundaries.

This essay contest provides the opportunity to celebrate students who are continuing the dream shared by the Rev. Drs. Lassiter and King of one nation united together in freedom and harmony, with each person being treated with justice and respect.

#### **ESSAY REQUIREMENTS:**

In an essay of 1500 words (typed, double-spaced, in 12-point Times New Roman font):

1. Describe one activity in which you have participated that helps further the work of the Rev. Drs. Lassiter and King to realize the American dream of “one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.”
2. Based on the activity you described, outline a workshop or other short program you could do with other JCU students that would help them grasp the significance of the justice question at the heart of your activity.
3. The prizewinner will be expected to run this workshop or other program in the spring semester. Please review the university academic and events calendars and then specify how and when you would propose to carry out your program.

**SUBMISSIONS:** Submit entries in PDF form *via* email to [trs@jcu.edu](mailto:trs@jcu.edu), with the subject heading “Lassiter Award Entry.”

**DEADLINE:** Entries must be received by November 1<sup>st</sup> to be considered for the award, which will be presented in January of the subsequent year.

**PRESENTATION:** The Lassiter Award will be presented at JCU events in honor of Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

**ELIGIBILITY:** All currently enrolled John Carroll University students are welcome (and encouraged) to enter this contest.

**SELECTION COMMITTEE:** TRS Faculty and related colleagues

**PRIZE:** \$500 prize for the winning entry, awarded after the workshop or program is completed.