

Bringing King With Us



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If it were not for one man with a radical idea and modest approach, the shape of the U.S., and everything its society has come to know, could have been much different.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. not only changed a nation politically, but also resonated into the depths of the sports world.

Remarkable changes in sports have occurred as leagues designated only for blacks, such as the Negro baseball league, have made a way for black athletes to make up 85 percent of players in the NBA and 75 percent in the NFL.

In celebration to his words, thoughts and dreams, the university hosted an MLK banquet in the University Center Bluebonnet Ballroom with keynote speaker Ron Washington, manager of the Texas Rangers.



The Shorthorn sat down with Washington after his message to get his thoughts about King and his life.

The Shorthorn: What kind of inspiration do you hope someone find in your words tonight?

Ron Washington: Opportunity. Opportunity to be and do and become anything they would like to become. I'm addressing mainly the younger crowd because they're the future. I think that's why Martin Luther King got killed, because he was trying to make opportunity available for everyone. Race, creed or color, doesn't matter.

TS: To touch on your words about life after Hurricane Katrina, how has the sports team's success helped aid in the recovery of New Orleans?

RW: I think it's always an outlet. It's nice for people to get away from the chaos and disaster that's going on. So it's always been a fine wine (smiles). It's like a release.

TS: How has Dr. King's dream affected Ron Washington as a person, and Ron Washington the baseball manager?

RW: It affected Ron Washington the person because it shows to other African-Americans that if you dream, you can reach it. And it affected me, as a manager,

because I'm the first black manager in Texas Rangers' history. I'm not just here because of that — I'm here because I'm capable. So if you're capable, you're capable.

TS: How does it feel to be the Rangers' first black manager?

RW: That's tough, because I have such a serious passion for baseball. It's hard to describe. It's so overwhelming. I just know I'm doing what I set out to do in life.

TS: How has Dr. King's dream transformed the sports world into what it is today?

RW: There were many a time when they just thought that anyone of African descent couldn't run a club, any club. We're beginning to find out if you're capable, opportunity is out there. If you're capable and can get the job done you have an opportunity to do that.

TS: If Dr. King was with us today, what is one thing you would want to say to him?

RW: I want to thank you for opening the doors for all Americans.

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