

Dane County Exec, Parisi, Madison Mayor Rhodes-Conway: Announce Martin Luther King, Jr. Humanitarian Award honorees

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Today, Dane County Executive Joe Parisi and City of Madison Mayor Satya Rhodes-Conway announced Dr. Charles Taylor and the late Wayne Strong as this year's recipients of the combined City-County Humanitarian Awards honoring Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The award winners were selected by the City-County Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Commission and are community members who reflect the values of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

"Both Charles and Wayne have embodied the spirit of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. through their dedication to serve our community," said County Executive Parisi. "Whether it's Charles' talent for writing and producing or Wayne's legacy of longstanding civic involvement, both recipients have bettered the Dane County community. Congratulations to both honorees and their families for receiving this award."

"Each year, these awards offer us the opportunity to reflect on the good work happening in our community. This year, the recipients reflect a theme of legacy," said Mayor Rhodes-Conway. "Giving Wayne this award posthumously honors his legacy and reminds us to celebrate people while they are with us. Giving Charles this award celebrates not only his legacy, but the legacy of Madison's Black community through his work. As we celebrate the legacy of Dr. King, I hope we can channel the passion of these two, and carry on their work."

The City and County will present the awards at the annual City-County Martin Luther

King, Jr. Observance on Monday, January 16. The program will run from 6:00pm to 7:30pm. More information can be found at <http://mlkingcoalition.org>.

Award Recipients:

Dr. Charles (“Chuck”) Taylor

Dr. Charles (“Chuck”) Taylor has a lifetime of accomplishments and service ranging from producing award-winning documentaries, *Decade of Discontent*, and *Leaders of Madison’s Black Renaissance*, to writing the official Juneteenth book, used in the movement to make Juneteenth a national holiday. Dr. Taylor is a retired professor from the doctoral program at Edgewood College where he also served as the Dean of the Business School. He is the founder and president of Roar Enterprises, a national consulting firm whose mission is to promote unity, cultural competency, and racial understanding.

Chuck has a well-documented track record of giving back to the Madison community. Dr. Taylor’s vision resulted in the Madison Urban League’s multi-million dollar building on S. Park Street. Chuck founded the Students of Color Leadership Conference, which trained several thousand Wisconsin high school students to become future leaders. He founded the Diversity Institute on Wheels, and the Multicultural Student Retreat—two innovative projects that allow Whites and people of color to engage and get to know one another better, the types of projects that Dr. King would have surely endorsed. The flame of civil rights and volunteerism was lit early in his hometown of Cape Girardeau, Missouri when he marched during the civil rights movement.

He is also extremely creative having produced TV shows, films, radio programs, and *ROARrrr*—a children’s musical play. Chuck wrote and produced the *Journey of Hope* film series on Rev. Carmen Porco’s low-income housing ministry in Madison and Milwaukee. Dr. Taylor is the author of over a dozen books, including two biographies and a highly acclaimed novel-thriller: *Lakeside University Cover-Up*. He received his Ph.D. from UW-Madison, his master’s degree from the University of Oregon, and his bachelor’s degree from Southeast MO State University.

Wayne Strong

A humanitarian in every sense of the word, Wayne Strong devoted his life—both personally and professionally—to the betterment of his community, particularly to

those who were marginalized and impacted by systemic inequities.

As a public servant for MPD, Wayne used his position to build authentic relationships with community members and fight for structural change to build up the economic power of residents to reverse disparities. During his time as a neighborhood officer, Wayne volunteered with the Southside Raiders Youth Football and Cheerleading program.

In recent years, Wayne continued on with his commitment to social justice and civic engagement through various roles at the Urban League of Greater Madison, Overture Center for the Arts, Evident Change, and The Reisling Group. He also continued to serve as a dedicated member of S.S. Morris African Methodist Episcopal Church—serving in various roles integral to the church's functioning for over 30 years.

His most recent role at UW-Madison's Center for Law, Society & Justice was a culmination of both his passion for career development and mentorship as well as his deep knowledge of criminal justice and educational issues. Within the last year, Wayne made history when he joined the Wisconsin State Journal's Editorial Board as part of the inaugural class of local community members asked to serve a one-year term.

It is well known that Wayne always made time for others — but his family remained first in his heart. Wayne's legacy lives on through his wife, Terri, children Jessica and Byron, and grandchildren Bella, Noah, and Mari, and a host of other relatives and friends. They will carry the torch for Wayne to ensure his legacy lives on and that the causes he fought so fervently for are not forgotten.