**15914, Robert Burton**

Good Evening Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am honored to welcome both our City leaders and our community today to this celebration to honor Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Dr. King is well known for his fight for the civil rights of all. He was active in bus boycotts, marches, and even chose jail over surrendering his beliefs in equal rights. He firmly believed in non-violent means of protest and spoke out boldly for the rights of all people to go to the same schools, eat in the same restaurants, and live in the same neighborhoods, regardless of race.

Dr. King set the example for bringing a community together in unity to peacefully achieve the desired results of equal rights. Our theme for tonight is “Unity Matters – We Cannot Walk Alone.” Just as Dr. King gathered thousands of people from all around the nation to join together to further the civil rights of people during his life, we must follow his example today.

It is imperative that we come together as a community to accomplish our goals. Today it is about more than just racial differences. If we are to seek equal civil rights for all then we must put aside all our differences so we can achieve our goals together. As the well-known saying says, United We Stand, Divided We Fall. In today’s world we are facing challenges unlike those of our predecessors. Attacking and overcoming those challenges will require the skills and talents, as well as the determination and commitment of everyone in the community.

It is true, we could each work in our little groups and attack selected problems. In doing so we would still make progress, but not as much as if we pool our resources together. By uniting as a community we combine our strength, we combine our knowledge, and we combine our skills so that we can tackle the challenges of our world today.

Just as Dr. King did in his day, we too can make great strides in overcoming the challenges of our society. Together we are stronger than we could ever be as separate groups or individuals. Together we can accomplish more and overcome more. By choosing to put aside our differences and join together in unity we ensure that the rights of each of us are protected.

Just as the United States is stronger when we all stand together, we as a community are stronger when we stand together. Our communities are becoming more and more diverse, and those differences can be a source of division or a source of unity. We as a community must be able set aside any and all differences that we find. It is only through the inclusion and acceptance of all within our community that we can take advantage of the variety of strengths, skills and talents as we work to make our world a better place for us and for our children.

As we meet here today and at other gatherings of this type may we honor the memory of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. by setting aside our differences and coming together in unity to make our community a better place.

Thank you.