

Alveda King Says All Ethnicities Deserve Recognition for Making America Great

Alveda King has celebrated Black History Month for many years. She's proud of the heritage of her people, and what her family has done to enhance the history of the United States of America.

Black History Month began Wednesday and will run through Tuesday, Feb. 28.

After all, her uncle was Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., the civil rights leader whose ministry impacted millions and continues to impact future generations.

But, she says, it's not only African Americans who should be lauded with a specially designated celebration. Others, she says, have contributed mightily to making our country great.

"I've not talked about this before publicly," King says. "I was doing some research, and I want to point out how many different ethnicities celebrate their heritage on a special day or a special month. There are many. The Latinos, the Asians, the Native Americans—there are heritage and historic days or months for every ethnic community. In America, there are so many of them. And I was so surprised.

"I said, 'wow.' So, it's appropriate to celebrate ethnicity. That's a good thing. So, what we do in Black Heritage Month or African American Heritage Month is to acknowledge accomplishments and some of the troubles and pain that we went through to get our freedom. It's done so that the generations who have yet to come will know all the good things that

happened and expand and grow and the things that needed corrections. Then, we're able to correct some of those things as well."

Black educators and Black United Students at Kent State University in Ohio first proposed Black History Month in February 1969. The first celebration of Black History Month took place at Kent State a year later, from Jan. 2 to Feb. 28, 1970.

King herself has made a major contribution to the betterment of American culture. She is an activist, an author and a former state representative for the 28th district in the Georgia House of Representatives.

She is a pro-life activist, and serves as the Chair of the America First Policy Institute's Center for the American Dream.

Several Black leaders in history, including some current ones, have made an impact on King's life. Harriet Tubman, an escaped slave woman who became a "conductor" on the Underground Railroad, leading enslaved people to freedom before the Civil War, is certainly at the top of the list.

She also points to her own pastor, Alan McNair, and individuals like Ben and Candy Carson as African Americans she admires. But there's also Ernestine, her fifth-grade teacher, who made a big impact on her. And then, of course, is her uncle, MLK.

"There are so many, but I like to talk about the unsung heroes as well," King says. "There are amazing stories of how these people have lived. We can talk amongst ourselves and our families and our friends and communities. We should take the time to learn and explore about other ethnicities as we celebrate the African American community as part of the American community. We're all part of the beloved community that my uncle, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., was so fond of

talking about.” {eoa}

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Shawn A. Akers *is the online editor at Charisma Media.*