

# **The BLACK C o M M e n t a t o r**

An independent weekly internet magazine  
dedicated to the movement for economic justice,  
social justice and peace - Providing commentary,  
analysis and investigations on issues affecting  
African Americans and the African world.

[www.BlackCommentator.com](http://www.BlackCommentator.com)

[Contents of Issue](#)

[Click here](#)

**November 5 , 2009 - Issue 349**

[Home](#)

## **Will Rev. Bernice King's Bully Pulpit at SCLC Bash Gays? Inclusion**

**By The Reverend Irene Monroe**  
**BlackCommentator.com Editorial Board**

Click on the back button of your browser to return to non printer friendly page of this article

[Click here](#) to get helpful hints for viewing and printing this printer friendly plain text page

Rev. Bernice King has been bestowed the honor to be the eighth president and first woman to head the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC).

Co-founded by her father, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the Rev. Bernice King may be a legacy pick for SCLC, but unfortunately, she will not be carrying on his legacy.

As a matter-of-fact, given the homophobic vitriol Rev. Bernice King has spewed out over the years, the LGBTQ community is bracing to see what next she'll say and do, given the bully pulpit she now has.

Because Rev. Bernice King has been rumored for years to be a lesbian, her track record concerning LGBTQ civil rights has been less than humane and antithetical to both legacies of her parents.

For example, Rev. Bernice King's most audacious sign of desecrating her father's legacy was the December 2004 march titled, "Stop the Silence," promoting an anti-gay agenda.

Beginning the protest march by lighting a torch at her father's grave site and then passing it on to her spiritual mentor and the march organizer, Bishop Eddie Long of

New Birth Missionary Baptist Church, who proudly carried the lit torch in a two-mile march through Atlanta with thousands of followers, Rev. Bernice King adamantly stated that the march was not against LGBTQ people. It's a "need for God's People to stop being silent" and being "about God's business of speaking up for the Kingdom of God," King told *Associated Press*.

However, contrary to her claims, the first goal of the march listed on the church's website promoted a constitutional amendment to protect marriage "between one man and one woman."

On speculating about her father's viewpoint on marriage equality, let us not forget one of Rev. Bernice King's sanctimonious moments of ranting and railing against it when she stated, "I know in my sanctified soul that he (Dr. King) did not take a bullet for same-sex marriage."

Bernice dishonored her mother's civil rights legacy by holding the funeral at Bishop Long's church, which Julian Bond, the national NAACP chairman, didn't attend.

"Mrs. King was a strong supporter of gay and lesbian rights. Her husband was a strong believer in helping the poor and preached a theology of contempt for seekers of material goods - and lived his life that way. The pastor of the church where she was funeralized led an anti-gay march through Atlanta - sadly, Mrs. King's youngest daughter, an elder in his church, accompanied him. We cannot know what Mrs. King's wishes were for a funeral - she probably had no choice about church or minister - but I did have a choice - and while I have an abiding respect for my former neighbor and friend, I chose not to be in that church" Bond told AP.

SCLC has an outstanding legacy of championing the civil rights of African Americans. But it has not expanded its reach beyond racial discrimination. And attempts to do so have been admonished by SCLC's national board.

For example, Reverend Eric P. Lee, president of the Los Angeles chapter of the SCLC and the author of the book, "Marriage Equality: Proposition 8, The California Divide" was called on the carpet by SCLC's national board last year for his advocacy in favor of LGBTQ marriage equality during California's heated Proposition 8 controversy.

Comprised mostly of conservative clergymen and some churchwomen, SCLC remains in an intentional time warp. With its refusal to speak on present-day issues not only plaguing the African American community but plaguing all Americans, SCLC exists as a visiting museum tethered to the 1960's civil rights era rather than exist as an organization faced toward the challenges of today. For example, King's oldest son, Martin Luther King III, was president of SCLC from 1997-2004. He failed to join the national fight against HIV/AIDS, ravaging African American communities, because he "felt uncomfortable talking about condoms," L.A. times reported in 2001.

SCLC's religious rhetoric against LGBTQ citizens chokes progress, hinders equality, and allows religion-based bigotry to flourish.

"The SCLC cloaks its support for inequality in religious rhetoric. I often hear the argument that religious African Americans are somehow required to be homophobic and to oppose marriage equality because of their deep commitment to Christian

doctrine, practice, and belief. But this ignores that the primary distinguishing characteristic of African American Christianity is its rejection of oppressive biblical interpretation in favor of embracing a liberating and loving God,” Melissa Harris-Lacewell, professor at Princeton, wrote on the blog, “The Notion.”

While many in the LGBTQ community now gasp at the reality of Rev. Bernice King being at the helm of SCLC, I gasp at SCLC’s audacity to still call itself a civil rights organization.

**BlackCommentator.com** Editorial Board member, the Rev. Irene Monroe, is a religion columnist, theologian, and public speaker. A native of Brooklyn, Rev. Monroe is a graduate from Wellesley College and Union Theological Seminary at Columbia University, and served as a pastor at an African-American church before coming to Harvard Divinity School for her doctorate as a Ford Fellow. She was recently named to MSNBC’s list of [10 Black Women You Should Know](#). Reverend Monroe is the author of [Let Your Light Shine Like a Rainbow Always: Meditations on Bible Prayers for Not-So-Everyday Moments](#) . As an African American feminist theologian, she speaks for a sector of society that is frequently invisible. Her website is [irenemonroe.com](http://irenemonroe.com). Click [here](#) to contact the Rev. Monroe.



Let your voice be heard  
The call is free

Powered By  
**Google** voice

[Click Here](#)

**[Contents of Issue](#)**

[Click here](#)

[Home](#)

Click Here To  
CONTRIBUTE TO **bc** NOW

Click Here To  
CONTACT **bc**

Your comments are always welcome.

### **e-Mail re-print notice**

If you send us an e-Mail message we may publish all or part of it, unless you tell us it is not for publication. You may also request that we withhold your name.

Thank you very much for your readership.

Website Design and Hosting provided by



Copyright © 2002-2009  
www.BlackCommentator.com  
All Rights Reserved