



## DETROIT'S WALK TO FREEDOM

The Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. is among America's best-recognized civil rights activists. He delivered his most famous speech, "I Have a Dream", in Washington D.C. on August 28, 1963. Dr. King first gave that speech in Detroit.

In the spring of 1963, Detroiters looked for a way to remember the anniversary of racial violence that tore through their city twenty years earlier. In 1943, turmoil between Black and white members of the community had left thirty-four people dead and hundreds injured. The Detroit Council for Human Rights called for a "Walk to Freedom" because "the same basic, underlying causes" of the 1943 disturbance persisted.

On June 23, 1963, an estimated 125,000 people marched down Detroit's Woodward Avenue carrying placards and singing "We Shall Overcome." National and state leaders who marched along with Reverend King included United Auto Workers president Walter Reuther, former Michigan governor John B. Swainson, and Detroit mayor Jerome Cavanagh.

The march ended at Cobo Hall where thousands of marchers cheered the Reverend King when he emphasized that segregation needed to end. King believed that African Americans to take part in demonstrations like the Walk to Freedom, which he called "one of the most wonderful things that has happened in America."

In his speech, King spoke of having a "dream" where white people and Black people were "walking together, hand in hand," in harmony and equality. Two months later, he shared these thoughts with thousands of Americans at a rally at the Lincoln Memorial in the nation's capital.