

To Ruth Bunche and Aminda Wilkins

23 Nov
1956

23 November 1956
Montgomery, Ala.

King thanks Bunche and Wilkins for co-chairing the Montgomery Anniversary Concert on 5 December. The benefit, sponsored by In Friendship and coordinated by Stanley Levison and Bayard Rustin, was held at New York's Manhattan Center and featured Coretta Scott King, Harry Belafonte, Duke Ellington, and Tallulah Bankhead.¹

Mrs. Ralph J. Bunche and Mrs. Roy Wilkins
Co-Chairmen, Montgomery Anniversary Concert
"In Friendship"
122 East 57 Street
New York, 22, N.Y.

Dear Mrs. Bunche and Mrs. Wilkins:

I am very pleased to know that you are helping raise funds for Montgomery through the Anniversary Concert on December 5th.

Your help comes at our most critical period. Our car pool has been destroyed by legal action. Despite the Supreme Court's decision, the busses are still segregated, and influential people in places of great power have threatened violence rather than comply with the court's decision. At present, therefore, Montgomery's 50,000 Negroes are forced to walk and must continue to do so until the Supreme Court's mandate reaches the local courts. That may take a month, or even longer.

Beyond this, we have 200 people who have driven in the car pool. They are "marked men and women" and will have great difficulty finding work in Montgomery for a long time.

These factors mean that we are unfortunately in grave need of funds for carrying on the most critical phase of our struggle. I am sending out an urgent appeal but at present will not do so in New York. But hope that you will impress the religious, labor and civic leaders that they can make a very real contribution now by supporting the Anniversary Concert.

I can not tell you how much the people in our movement appreciate and, at

1. Coretta Scott King spoke at the event and sang a program of classical music and spirituals, including some of her husband's favorites such as "Honor, Honor" (see Speech at the Montgomery Anniversary Concert, 5 December). Ruth Ethel Harris Bunche (1906-1988), wife of Ralph Bunche, was a native of Montgomery and graduate of Miner Teachers College. She taught first grade in Washington, D.C., for many years before becoming more active in charitable organizations. Aminda "Minnie" Ann Badeau Wilkins was born in St. Louis and graduated from Chicago's Recreation Teaching School in 1926. She then organized neighborhood programs for the National Urban League in Kansas City, where she met and married Roy Wilkins. She later worked for New York City's departments of social services and welfare.

The Martin Luther King, Jr. Papers Project

24 Nov this very moment, need your encouragement and support. With best regards to
1956 your husbands, I am

Very sincerely yours,
[*signed*] Martin L. King
Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.
President

TLS. FORP-PSC-P.