

Q113 – Martin Luther King, Jr. is famous for many things. Name one .

DOUGLAS GINSBURG, Federal Judge, U.S. Court of Appeals, D.C. Circuit:

Martin Luther King, Jr. fought for the rights of black Americans. In fact he was our greatest civil rights leader.

King first became famous while leading the Montgomery Bus Boycott to protest segregation. After a year of lost revenue from black riders, the city gave up and integrated its buses.

In the fight for civil rights, King rejected violence in favor of civil disobedience: sit-ins, boycotts, and marches – including his greatest: the March on Washington, which drew a quarter-million people of all colors.

There, he gave one of the most memorable speeches in our history: his “I Have a Dream” speech.

King worked for the equality for all Americans -- equal opportunity not equal outcomes. And today, as a result, opportunity is more equal than ever. In the years after the March on Washington, young African American radicals denounced King, spurned nonviolence, and ironically embraced re-segregation.

King’s life was cut short by an assassin – but not before he had helped black Americans secure their constitutional rights. In the film “Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner” – released four months before King’s death -- Sidney Poitier’s character poignantly tells his father, “You think of yourself as a colored man. I think of myself as a man.”

Remember King’s dream of the day when we all will be judged by our character not by our color. That’s truly an American dream.