

WooSox Staff Celebrate MLK Day at Quinsigamond Community College's 38th Annual Community Breakfast

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On Monday, January 16, members of the Worcester Red Sox' front office visited Quinsigamond Community College's athletic center, which was transformed into a dining hall, auditorium, and award room for the 38th Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Breakfast.

Massachusetts State Senator Robyn Kennedy, who represents the 1st Worcester District, and U.S. Attorney for Massachusetts Rachel Rollins were in attendance. WooSox President Dr. Charles Steinberg, Alex Richardson, Simi Stark, and George Lorin represented the club. The Worcester Police Department sat at the table closest to the podium, while other tables were filled by local colleges, such as The College of the Holy Cross, Assumption University, and Clark University.

Guests trickled in beginning at 7 a.m. and gradually left after 10 a.m. Attendees enjoyed a variety of juices, coffee, or water paired with egg sandwiches, fruit, and pastries. Similar to a "working lunch," guests began eating as the welcoming announcements commenced.

Vice Chancellor for Diversity and Inclusion at UMass Chan Medical School, Dr. Marlina Duncan, served as the master of ceremonies throughout the event.

QCC President Dr. Luis G. Pedraja, Worcester City Manager Eric Batista, and U.S. Representative James McGovern kickstarted the event with words of gratitude and hope for continued positive change.

Afterward, 11 local college students and one North Carolina student were awarded up to \$3,000 to continue their dedication to fulfilling the event's theme of "a day of service."

Next, Dr. George Storms Smith-one of the founders of the annual community breakfast with a decades-long career in education and civil rights-and Gordon Hargrove-who was a staff member and executive director of the board of directors for The Friendly House-earned the Eleanore T. Hawley Community Service Award.

Father and son duo, David and Noah Allen, added to the presentation with their live playing of guitar and trumpet. They rendered a unanimous standing ovation and applause even before Noah's final stave.

The Worcester Police Department recognized Captain Kenneth Davenport and Officer David Rutherford for holding the city to a standard of service and inclusion.

Rollins-who was confirmed by the U.S. in December of 2021 after being nominated by U.S. President Joe Biden as the first-ever Black woman to be serve as Chief Federal Officer for Massachusetts-served as the keynote speaker of the celebration.

In wrapping up the morning, attendees were reminded to donate new books to Worcester and Fitchburg Public Schools and to sign up for future volunteer opportunities to attach action to the impactful words said throughout the event.

Next Tuesday, on January 31, the WooSox will launch Black History Month a day early by hosting their second annual Jackie Robinson Zoom call with Worcester Public School students in grades four through six to discuss Jackie Robinson's legacy, on what would have been his 104th birthday. The panel discussion will feature current and former players Mo Vaughn, Oil Can Boyd, Josh Ockimey, and Frank Jordan, as well as Bob Kendrick (President of the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum) and others.