

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Legendary Civil Rights Leader and Organizer of Landmark Selma Marches Will
Visit Hartford Feb. 5 as Black History Month Event Keynote Speaker**



Dr. Bernard LaFayette, Jr. (pictured at left with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.), a civil rights leader and activist, will speak to the importance of nonviolent conflict reconciliation at Hartford Public Library.

Hartford, Connecticut (January 9, 2015) – In the wake of recent nationwide social unrest, and on the 50th anniversary of a major turning point in the American Civil Rights Movement, Hartford will welcome one of the leaders of the movement to speak to the importance of nonviolent conflict reconciliation in today's communities. **Dr. Bernard LaFayette, Jr. will appear at Hartford Public Library on Thursday, February 5 at 5:30 p.m. as keynote speaker of the MLK Nonviolence Leadership Institute, a program presented by the Connecticut Center for Nonviolence in partnership with the Library** Dr. LaFayette's talk is free and open to the public, and all are invited to attend.

As a seminary student in Tennessee, Bernard LaFayette studied nonviolence under well-known activist James Lawson, and began to use the techniques to oppose racial injustice in the South, participating in sit-ins at restaurants and businesses practicing segregation. In 1961, he joined other students in the Freedom Rides movement, and faced brutal attacks and arrest. In the summer of 1962, LaFayette became director of the Alabama Voter Registration Campaign, working with the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee to begin organizing in Selma, Alabama. The Selma marches that took place three years later would become a critical turning point in the Civil Rights Movement, eventually leading

to the landmark passage of the 1965 Voting Rights Act. Dr. LaFayette was an associate of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and appointed national coordinator of the 1968 Poor People's Campaign.

Dr. LaFayette comes to Hartford as part of the MLK Nonviolence Leadership Institute, a Level I Certification Training in Kingian Nonviolence Conflict Reconciliation, taking place January 24 through March 28 at the Library's Downtown location. The ten-week program teaches the Six Principles of Nonviolence, developed by Dr. King, as well as basic concepts, strategies and tools that individuals and communities can use to address conflict without resorting to violence. The curriculum for the Institute was co-authored by Dr. LaFayette and David Jenhsen.

The keynote event will feature a conversation surrounding recent social unrest throughout the country, including protests against the police shooting of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, where Dr. LaFayette worked on the ground with community activists. Remarks from local leaders will open the program. All are invited to this unique opportunity, and community organizations, school groups and activists are particularly welcome.

The Institute and keynote event are made possible in part by funding provided by the Challenging Hartford to Engage Civically and Keep Improving Together (CHECK IT) Initiative of the City of Hartford Department of Families, Children, Youth and Recreation –Division of Youth. For more information about the keynote event, please visit hplct.org.

For information about the MLK Nonviolence Leadership Institute, please email info@ctnonviolence.org or call 860-567-3441.

ABOUT THE CONNECTICUT CENTER FOR NONVIOLENCE

The CT Center for Nonviolence is a non-profit organization that empowers communities to reconcile conflict through education and the arts. CTCN has worked with hundreds of people to train and implement the philosophy and strategies of Kingian Nonviolence across racial, social, economic and generational divides.

CTCN has certified over 150 youth and adults in Kingian Nonviolence Conflict Reconciliation since its inception in 2007. In addition CTCN is partnered with leading universities, schools and nonprofit organizations conducting ongoing Kingian Nonviolence training projects for people of all age and has reached thousands of people in numerous settings.

ABOUT [HARTFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY](#)

As a finalist for the 2014 National Medal from the Institute for Museum and Library Services, Hartford Public Library has been recognized as national leader in redefining the urban public library in the 21st century as an innovative and stimulating place where people can learn and discover, explore their passions, and find a rich array of resources that contribute to a full life. Hartford Public Library provides free resources that inspire reading, guide learning, and encourage individual exploration. Serving the residents of Hartford and beyond at its nine branches and Downtown location, Hartford Public Library receives more than 860,000 visits per year from adults, children and families seeking early literacy opportunities, work skills training, civic engagement, arts enrichment, and so much more. Visit hplct.org.

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