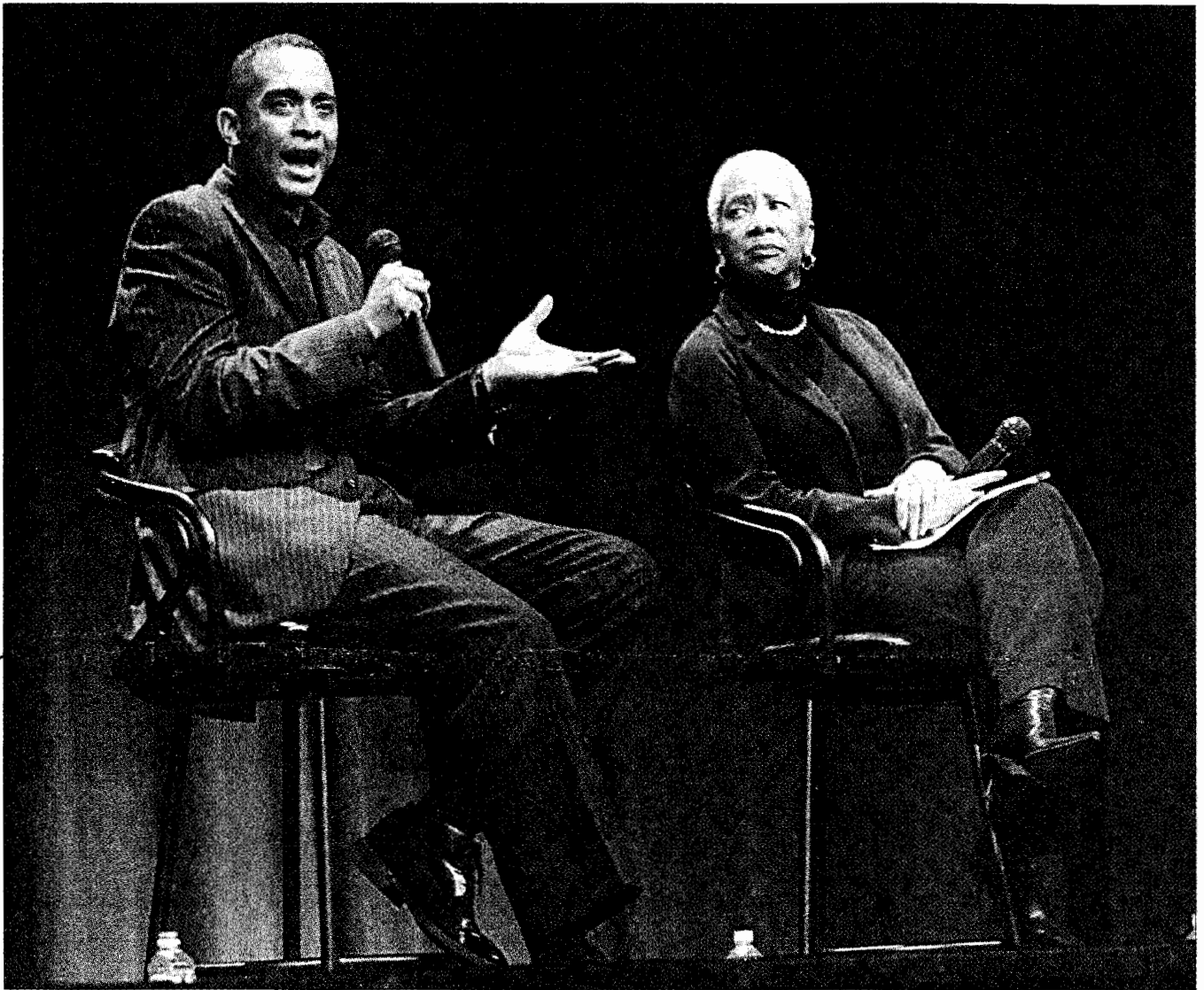


INSPIRING THE NEXT GENERATION



Dan Coyro/Sentinel

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Convocation speakers Keith Beauchamp and Angela Glover Blackwell take questions from the Civic audience during the 22nd annual event.

MLK Convocation imparts dreams of freedom, justice

By **GWEN MICKELSON**
SENTINEL STAFF WRITER

SANTA CRUZ — Inspiration.

Creating it didn't come without a struggle for Martin Luther King Jr., and several hundred people gathered Tuesday night at the Civic Auditorium to celebrate and honor the civil rights leader's legacy.

Inspiration was the feeling the speakers

at UC Santa Cruz's 22nd annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Convocation hoped to ignite.

"I hope they'll leave inspired, challenged, informed about how issues change over time, but our responsibility is to be educated about what's happening to our fellow residents and citizens of the country, and our obligation is to expect and demand justice," said speaker Angela

Glover Blackwell, chief executive officer of Oakland-based PolicyLink, a nonprofit research, communications, capacity building and advocacy organization.

The convocation, part of UCSC's celebration of Black History Month, presents speakers who discuss current civil rights issues of freedom, justice

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Dan Coyro/Sentinel

UC Santa Cruz student Tarnjeet Kang questions the two speakers about learning more of the civil rights struggles that's not offered in school curriculum.

MLK

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and opportunity.

Blackwell spoke on "the importance of being able to capture the wisdom and commitment of the heroes we often bring out during Black History Month," and applying those strengths to challenges going forward.

She shared the keynote address with filmmaker Keith Beauchamp of New York, whose documentary, "The Untold Story of Emmett Louis Till," nine years in the making, focuses on the 1955 case of a 14-year-old Chicago boy visiting relatives in Mississippi who was murdered for whistling at a white woman in a store.

The brutality of the case shocked the world and is considered by many to be a turning point in the African American

struggle for civil rights.

In 2004, the U.S. Department of Justice reopened the nearly 50-year-old murder case, citing Beauchamp's documentary as a major factor in its decision and the starting point for its investigation.

His goal, said Beauchamp, was "to inspire those who feel they are not a part of the movement to becoming a part of the movement."

Before the keynote speakers began, UCSC Chancellor Denice Denton spoke about diversity, saying discussion of it can be "turbulent and uncomfortable," but that doing so leads to "a deeper understanding of oneself and one's world."

Quoting a Swahili proverb, she said, "Step by step, we will achieve our goal."

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