



Hundreds walk on Washington Street, west of Seventh Street, in Phoenix Monday to honor civil-rights icon Martin Luther King Jr. An organizer said the march drew more participation because it coincided with President Barack Obama's second inauguration. TOM TINGLE/THE REPUBLIC

March

Continued from Page B1

she said. "We focus a lot on how hard it is now, but all it takes is to look back on our (ancestors) and what they had to go through as motivation to keep going."

Hayes and her friends were among the hundreds of people who turned out for the approximately 2-mile march through downtown Phoenix on Monday. Others honored the civil-rights leader with a parade and festival in downtown Mesa and a brunch in Tempe.

In Phoenix, participants started gathering at Pilgrim Rest Baptist Church at 1401 E. Jefferson St. long before the march's 9 a.m. start. The march ended at Margaret T. Hance Park, just north of downtown.

The march played out as President Barack Obama, the nation's first Black president, was inaugurated for a second

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ASAVA DUNN

Tolleson resident who participated in the Phoenix march

time.

"This march represents something greater than just the walk," said Asava Dunn, a Tolleson resident who participated in the Phoenix walk. Dunn reflected on the progress those fighting for equality have made since King was assassinated in 1968.

"It represents a man who actually had a dream that has now come to fruition," she said.

Dunn said the United States has made great strides in achieving equality among all people, but just because the nation has its first Black president doesn't mean the work has ended.

"When you weed through all of that ... there's still hatred," she said.

Jason Adkinson marched

with his wife and three children. He said his family has participated annually for the last six years.

Adkinson said life will be better for his children, but African-Americans will continue to struggle with other forms of institutional racism such as high incarceration rates and unemployment.

High-profile public figures attended the event, including Maricopa County Supervisor Mary Rose Wilcox, Phoenix Police Chief Daniel V. Garcia and state Superintendent of Public Instruction John Huppenthal.

Wilcox said she's participated in the march every year, except one when she had the flu.

"It's just wonderful to come out and see people still enthused and see people talking

about justice," she said as she prepared to start the trek.

Valerie Churchwell, a member of the city's Arizona Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration Committee, which put on the event, said the march drew more interest this year because it coincided with Obama's inauguration.

The Phoenix Police Department, which oversaw security, was not able to provide an estimated crowd size. Organizers expected about 1,000.

"His commitment to social justice and equality for all of us is why we are here today and able to do what we are able to do," Churchwell said.

In the East Valley, hundreds attended a parade in downtown Mesa that featured marching bands, floats and units from the Mesa Police and Fire departments and then headed to the Mesa Arts Center for a festival. Tempe's Human Relations Commission hosted a brunch, while ASU students helped various non-profit groups in a day of service.