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VIDEO: Rep. Sewell Honors the Rev. Dr. Bernard LaFayette Jr. on the House Floor in Advance of Selma's "Dr. Bernard LaFayette Jr. Day"

Selma, AL – Ahead of the City of Selma's declaration of May 14, 2022, as "Dr. Bernard LaFayette Jr. Day," U.S. Rep. Terri Sewell (AL-07) spoke on the House Floor to join the city in honoring the extraordinary contributions of the great civil rights leader, activist, and advocate for nonviolence.

A video recording of Sewell's remarks can be accessed and downloaded [here](#). Her remarks are transcribed below:

Rep. Sewell: Mr. Speaker, I proudly rise today to join the City of Selma, Alabama, in celebrating May 14, 2022, as 'Dr. Bernard LaFayette Jr. Day,' honoring the extraordinary contributions of civil rights leader, activist, and advocate of nonviolence, Reverend Dr. Bernard LaFayette Jr.

Dr. LaFayette has made his mark in history as a civil rights organizer, minister, educator, and lecturer whose contributions to the Civil Rights Movement have garnered him national recognition as a leading authority on the strategy of nonviolent social change.

As a student advocate in the 1960s, he played a leading role in the early organizing of the Selma Voting Rights Movement. Dr. LaFayette was an active participant in the sit-in campaign and the Nashville Student Movement, and he worked closely throughout the 1960s with groups such as the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, SNCC, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, SCLC, and the American Friends Service Committee.

Dr. LaFayette began his activism as a student at American Baptist Theological Seminary in Nashville, Tennessee, where he was taught by teacher and SCLC mentor James Lawson the techniques of nonviolence. Dr. Lafayette learned alongside fellow students John Lewis, James Bevel, and Diane Nash before participating in the Nashville Student Lunch Counter Sit-Ins in the 1960s.

From there, his passion for civil rights continued to blossom, leading him to become one of the co-founders of SNCC, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee.

As the director of SNCC's Alabama Voter Registration Project in 1962, Dr. LaFayette relocated to my hometown of Selma, Alabama, where he worked with the Dallas County Voter League to open voter registration clinics throughout the City of Selma. Gaining a reputation as a fiery organizer and passionate proponent of nonviolence, Dr. LaFayette expanded his work from Alabama to Chicago, working with the American Friends Service Committee, Dr. Martin Luther King, and the SCLC's Chicago campaign.

He later became an ordained Baptist minister and served as president of his alma mater, the American Baptist Theological Seminary. Dr. LaFayette is recognized as one of the leading proponents of nonviolent direct action in the world. He has taught and preached the philosophy of nonviolence in many colleges and universities across the globe, and he was a recipient of numerous honorary degrees, including one from Mount Holyoke College, the University of Rhode Island, and Antioch College's Coretta Scott King Center for Cultural and Intellectual Freedom.

Dr. LaFayette has written several books about his experience in the Civil Rights Movement and books covering his views and thoughts on nonviolence. These books include, 'The Leaders Manual: A Structured Guide and Introduction to Kingian Nonviolence,' 'The Briefing Booklet: An Orientation on Nonviolence,' and most recently 'In Peace and Freedom: My Journey in Selma.'

For over 50 years, Dr. LaFayette has remained dedicated to equality and justice for all, lecturing at various universities and traveling internationally to train the next generation on how to achieve social change using the philosophy of Dr. King and nonviolence.

I ask my colleagues to join me, the citizens of the City of Selma and Dallas County, Alabama, in declaring May 14, 2022, as 'Dr. Bernard LaFayette Jr. Day' in celebration of the extraordinary life and legacy of the Reverend Dr. Bernard LaFayette Jr., an Alabama gem and an American treasure.

Thank you, and I yield back my time.