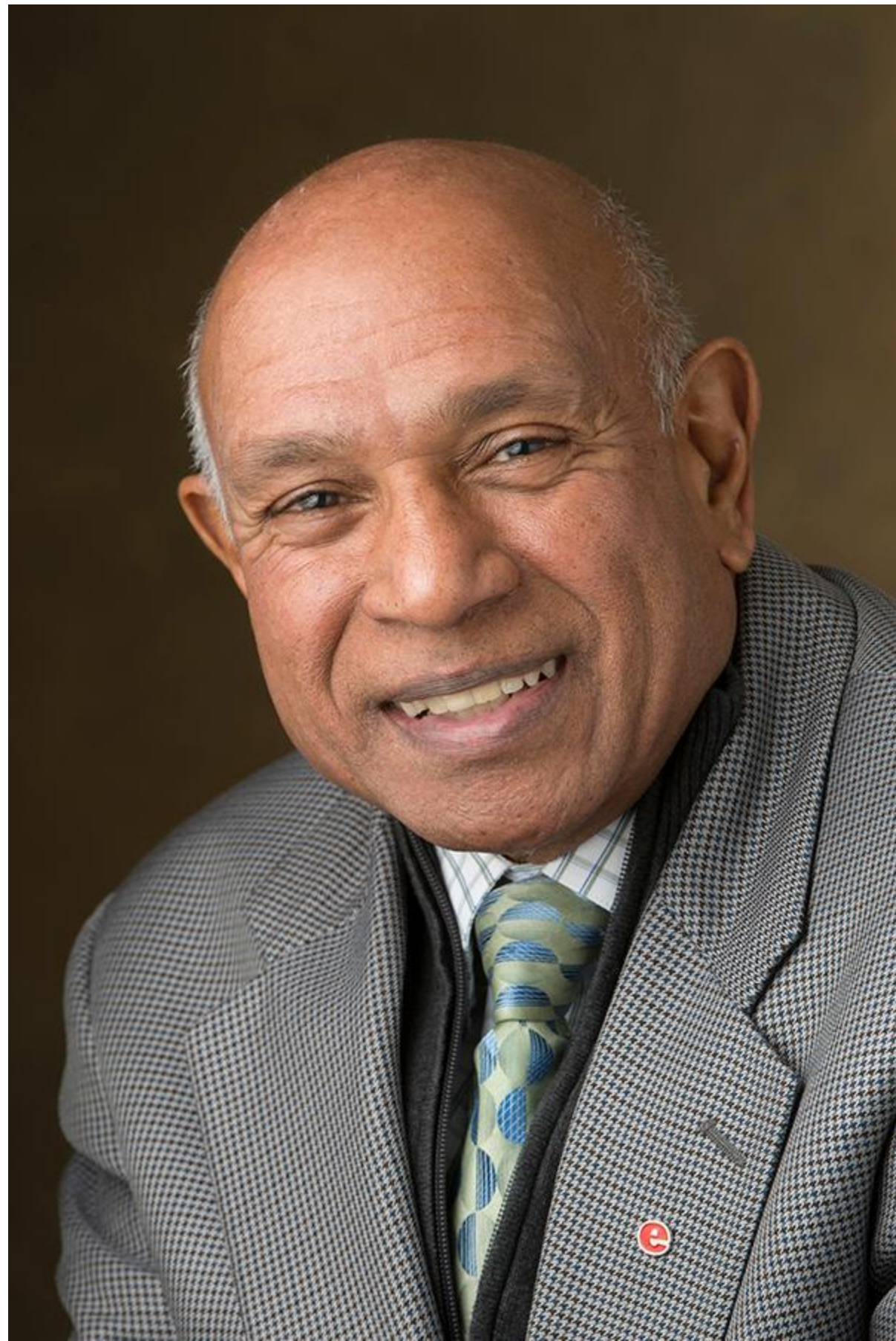




SIUE celebrates Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. birthday with annual awards

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Southern Illinois University Edwardsville recognized seven individuals today during the 33rd **Annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday Award Celebration** in the Morris University Center's Meridian Ballroom. The award recipients exemplified King's ideals and principles through their actions, talents and achievements.

Political science major **Dillon Santoni**, an SIUE senior and student representative to the SIU Board of Trustees, served as master of ceremonies.

Humanitarian awards are presented to a community member, and both SIUE faculty and staff members. The award recognizes individuals who exemplify the philosophy of nonviolent social change, and demonstrate the humanitarian principles and ideals of Dr. King through their community service contributions.

Former SIUE Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs Narbeth "Nobby" Emmanuel, PhD, received the community award. Emmanuel has served the SIUE and surrounding communities for 20 years in a variety of capacities.

"Nobby worked tirelessly as SIUE's vice chancellor for student affairs to advocate for under-represented populations, to mentor students and staff alike, and to develop long-standing programs and facilities to carry out the ideals and values of inclusion, diversity and achievement," Santoni said.

Musonda Kapatamoyo, PhD and associate professor of mass communications in SIUE's College of Arts and Sciences, received the faculty humanitarian award. Kapatamoyo is active in the Metro East and St. Louis communities. He is president of the Community of Zambians and helps integrate individuals new to the country while coordinating activities to showcase Zambian culture to the metro region. He also participates in the Edwardsville Rotary Club, Meals on Wheels and the Cub Scouts.

Kapatamoyo's nominator said, "Dr. Kapatamoyo quietly and consistently contributes to his community as an active volunteer for initiatives that benefit the elderly, the disadvantaged, the young, the ambitious and newly arrived members of the community. No one I know has consistently demonstrated such significant community engagement, respect for all people, and the ability to seek out and address the diverse needs of our community than Dr. Kapatamoyo."

Lara Jennings, a program counselor for Upward Bound math and science at the SIUE East St. Louis Center, received the staff humanitarian award.

"In her professional position, she works to close the racial disparity gap in education," Santoni said. "She dedicates the majority of her free time to international advocacy work – raising awareness and organizing demonstrations to protect and preserve the

human rights of Palestinians. Through both her career and personal life, she dedicates her time to serving under-represented groups.”

SIUE students annually apply for the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Scholarship. Jasmine French, a senior mathematics major from Collinsville, will receive one semester of tuition from SIUE. French was described as an enthusiastic and committed student, who exhibits her commitment to enhancing diversity through her civic engagement.

The high school contests for essay, poetry and visual arts provide a forum for recognizing outstanding achievement and foster the development of academic and creative skills. Twenty-one entrants represented five area high schools.

Ian Hurford, of Edwardsville and St. Louis University High School, was the essay winner. The poetry award went to Bella Neuman of Chesterfield, Mo., and Parkway Central High School. Zuan Le, of St. Louis and McKinley Classical Leadership Academy, took the visual arts prize.

Serving as the keynote speaker was Rev. Traci Blackmon, the first woman pastor of Christ the King United Church of Christ in Florissant, Mo. She has created and facilitated workshops on racism, sexism, heterosexism, classism, grief, domestic violence and interfaith dialogue. During the past two years, she has served as a community leader and minister as the Ferguson protest movement sought reform and peace. She continues to advocate for victims of oppression, racism and violence.