

EDGEWATER, MD – Today, Congressman Steny H. Hoyer (MD-5) spoke at the dedication of the Coretta Scott King Memorial Gardens at Sojourner-Douglass College. Below are his remarks as prepared for delivery:

“We are here today to honor the legacy of Coretta Scott King, which is memorialized in this beautiful garden bearing her name—and which lives on in the life of our country.

“As the wife and partner of Dr. King, Coretta Scott King shaped the American civil rights movement from its earliest days. Dr. King said that ‘without [her] love, sacrifices, and loyalty, neither life nor work would bring fulfillment.’

“Just as Mrs. King was there through all the struggles and triumphs of his life, she was there for the triumphs of the movement to which she dedicated so many decades of work. She was there for the Montgomery bus boycott, and there to urge the passage of the landmark Civil Rights Act. And in the wake of Dr. King’s death, Coretta Scott King was there to lead and inspire the movement for which he gave his life—to remind all those Americans who shared a vision of a more just nation that their movement was far greater than one man.

“Mrs. King gave her life to the civil rights movement, as well—because she lived her life for those goals, even when it would have been easiest to stop. As Jesse Jackson said, ‘like all great champions, she learned to function with pain and keep serving. She kept marching. She did not flinch.’ And because she kept marching, the civil rights movement remained a powerful voice for justice, for peace, and for the equal rights of all Americans.

“It is fitting that we remember her life and work with this memorial garden. This garden is a living legacy, just like the legacy Coretta Scott King left behind. But it will only stay alive as long as we have the dedication to water and care for it—a reminder that the work of the civil rights movement is now in our keeping, and will require our discipline, our care, and our commitment every day.

“Coretta Scott King said: ‘The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members.’ Those words are true of our country not just at times of great moral struggle, but at all times. I hope that we can all do our part to live up to them.”