Wilkins thanked King and commented: “The more I see of the present struggle, the more I take off my hat to the Negro citizens of the South.”

Mr. Roy Wilkins, Executive Director
The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
New York City.

Dear Roy:

I have just read the full text of your recent address made at Richmond, Virginia. I read every word of it very scrutinizingly, and think it is a superb job.

Please know that we are always grateful to you for the great work that you are doing for the Negro and the whole of American democracy.

You will always have my support in this great work.

Sincerely yours,

[signed] Martin L. King, p
Martin Luther King, Jr.
MLKnp

TLSr. NAACPP-DLC. Group 111A-177.

The Martin Luther King, Jr. Papers Project

To Arthur L. Johnson

17 March 1958
[Montgomery, Ala.]

Johnson wrote King on 3 March, asking him to appear at an 11 March reception for the Detroit branch of the NAACP. After learning that King would not be able to attend, Johnson responded on 6 March that he was "shocked and disappointed." He cautioned King to "be ever mindful that a helping hand from you is ten, twenty-five, one hundred times more productive than that of countless other friends whose resources and influence can never quite measure up to their interest in this work."

1. Arthur Lyman Johnson (1925–), a native of Americus, Georgia, and a college classmate of King’s, earned his B.A. (1948) from Morehouse and his M.A. (1949) from Atlanta University. While working for the U.S. Department of Health in Detroit, he joined the local branch of the NAACP and served as its executive secretary from 1950 to 1964.
Mr. Arthur L. Johnson, Executive Director
Detroit National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
606 East Vernor Highway
Detroit 1, Michigan

Dear Arthur:

On my return to the office, I found your letter of March 6th expressing your disappointment in learning of my inability to assist in your Freedom Fund Campaign. Certainly, it was with the deepest regret that I declined the invitation in the beginning. I did so only because it was impossible for me to take on any additional engagements during my visit to Detroit. The Detroit Council of Churches had planned a schedule for me which kept me busy, too busy, every hour in the day.

On Tuesday evening, the evening that you wanted me to appear, I had a speaking commitment at the Highland Park Presbyterian Church after which I had to attend a reception at the Statler Hotel. Every evening was spent speaking at a different church. As you know, I had to speak at Central Methodist Church every day at noon.

Between this period, I was either appearing at luncheon or dinner groups or making tape recordings for broadcasts. Along with all of this, I attempted to get some writing done on my book which, by the way, the publishers are demanding by the middle of April.

Because of the pressing responsibility of this book, I find it necessary to limit my engagements in almost every city I visit. These are only some of the reasons I found it impossible to accept your invitation. I do hope you will understand that my non-acceptance was not due to a lack of interest, but to the tremendous pressures of an overcrowded schedule.

My physician has insisted that I slow down or face the tragedy of a physical breakdown. There are ever so many things that I would like to do, that I would enjoy doing, such as being with you on your Freedom Fund program, but they are physically impossible.

Please express my deepest regrets to the other members of your committee who so graciously joined you in extending the invitation. I do hope that it will be possible to serve you at another time.

Let me commend you for the great work you are doing with the Detroit branch. I am always happy when I hear of your success. You are doing a job, not only for Detroit and the Negro, but for the whole of American democracy. You have my prayers and best wishes for continued success in all of your endeavors.

Sincerely yours,
Martin Luther King, Jr.
MLK:p

TLc. MLKP-MBU: Box 52.