

Baltimore activist Kwame Rose headlines Week for Peace

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Activist Kwame Rose addresses a crowd of Tulane, Loyola and Xavier university community members during Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Week for Peace, held Wednesday (Jan. 21) in the Lavin-Bernick Center on the Tulane uptown campus. (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

Social activist, hip-hop artist and blogger [Kwame Rose](#) was the featured speaker at the [30th annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Week for Peace](#) convocation. The event took place Wednesday (Jan. 20) night in the Qatar Ballroom of the Lavin-Bernick Center on the Tulane University uptown campus.

Rose, a Baltimore native, gained fame last year after an encounter with reporter Geraldo Rivera during the unrest following Freddie Gray's death. Since then he has continued to spread a message of what he refers to as "Black EXCELLENce."

“We, as blacks, have a lack of encouragement, investment and inspiration that must be addressed,” Rose said to a crowd of about 200 people from [Tulane, Xavier and Loyola universities](#). He encouraged the audience to take a stand against racism, as well as against the passive acceptance of the “injustice built into society’s notion of equality,” and to protest peacefully.

Rose talked about how King was just an ordinary man, with a family, occupation and a dream. But he brought to light the idea that, while King acted as an exceptional human being, any person with passion and desire can make a difference. Although King preached about equality and integration, American society still faces aspects of discrimination today, he pointed out.

Danielle Esses, a Tulane sophomore majoring in psychology, referred to Rose’s speech as “incredibly moving. My best friend experienced the uprising in Baltimore last year, and this really hit home for me.”

It was obvious that Rose’s words affected the audience: He received a standing ovation.

Sydney Noymer, a junior at Tulane majoring in communication, said, “MLK would be proud. People are always saying that someone should stand against what isn’t right but [many] never do anything. Kwame is actually making a difference.”

That night, event organizers also honored New Orleans City Council member LaToya Cantrell with the 2016 Lifetime Achievement Award and presented community service awards to three students — Ryan Hitchens of Tulane, Emily Mastin of Loyola and Chandler Schexnayder of Xavier.

Melissa Felcher is a sophomore majoring in communication at Tulane University.

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Sydney Noymer, Tulane junior