Dick Gregory at MCC

from page 1

Through wit and facts, Mr. Gregory revealed the deeper meaning of the actions of people in power today, and events that affect every one of us for good or evil.

A man of God, Mr. Gregory cares about people. He is a man of his word, and has been relentless in his pursuit of truth and enlightenment.

In his lecture, Mr. Gregory spoke about a certain “few evil white” men who have come to power because of fear. Some have made billions on the sports exchange, while people think that games are not fixed. He said that people cannot continue to fear those who have put themselves in authority only to rule with dead spirits and the pleasure of manipulating the masses. He quoted the famous saying, that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself. He said that no one should fear the “godfathers” of the Mafia with the power to kill, or the CIA, or Hitler. That very fear empowers those tyrants. He said you must fear God and not a corrupt system, with corrupt leaders.

Mr. Gregory said that this fear fosters a white, racist, sexist system that perpetrates lies, purports cover-ups and fosters discontent, hatred, and animosity. He stated that games are being played, falsehoods are being spoken, and people are being manipulated 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Mr. Gregory shouted to the audience that it is time to wake up, and that you should refuse to be intimidated.

“There has to be a psychological change,” he said. “Listen to what is not being said. Look for the deeper meaning. A white man killed a black man and the secret service waited three days before looking for the murderer, then there was no arrest. What kind of message is being sent? Yes, the Colorado shootings were unspeakable. But what about May 18, 1920, when a white man burned down a high school, killing all inside, then shot his wife, and [it all] went unpunished. What kind of message is being sent? When we say one thing and do another, can we be an honorable people?”

Mr. Gregory remarked: “There’s a mess to clean up. The recess is almost over and someone’s going to pay. Unfortunately, it is you.” Fortunately, “I do not believe we have gone beyond the point of no return,” he emphasized.

“Know God. Act right. Talk right. Educate right. Take care of your body and your brain. Redo the whole thing.” Mr. Gregory directed. “That’s what it will take, but it takes every person, and it has to start now.”

Dick Gregory was a powerful speaker, who gave the audience a great deal to think about, and a new desire to make the commitment that needs to be made to shape the type of future that will benefit us all.

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Mr. Gregory was generous with his time. After talking at length, and rocking us with laughter, he stayed to sign books, cards, and answer some interview questions.

Massasoit Voice: What were your role models as a young person and why?

Dick Gregory: My mother, Jackie Robinson, my uncle, my principal of my grad school, my cross-country coach in high school, and my track coach in high school.

I also looked to men like Alan Ladd and John Wayne. There were only white men on the screen in the 50s, and I think that they were black at heart. They were not the best people to look up to, but they were men who had certain ideals, men of honor.

Massasoit Voice: What was it that prompted you to shift careers from acting to political activism?

Dick Gregory: The “Black Movement.” It was led by men of trust, integrity. They were people like John Wayne, but yet with something else.

Massasoit Voice: What do you consider your most important contribution?

Dick Gregory: My book on health and nutrition.

Massasoit Voice: What would you like to be remembered for by your contemporaries and/or young people today?

Dick Gregory: The agitator without dirty wet drawers.

Jones introduced Mr. Gregory when he came to speak at Massasoit. We are thankful for the Top of the Rainbow and Professor DiNappoli for putting on such an excellent program for Black History Month.