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Governor reauthorizes W.Va. Martin Luther King commission

By Staff, wire reports

CHARLESTON, W.Va. -- Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin has reauthorized a state commission that promotes the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday.

Tomblin on Tuesday issued an executive order, replacing one that expired in June.

Fifteen people have been appointed to the Martin Luther King Jr. State Holiday Commission, including state, academic and church leaders.

The commission's purpose is to coordinate and promote activities around the state to commemorate King's birthday and achievements. Next year's holiday is observed on Jan. 20.

Commission members include state Education and the Arts Secretary Kay Goodwin; David Fryson, West Virginia University's chief diversity officer; Julie Palas of the Governor's Office of Health Enhancement and Lifestyle Planning; Michelle Easton, dean of the University of Charleston's School of Pharmacy; state NAACP President Sylvia Ridgeway; former state senator Marie Redd of Cabell County; Anthony Woart of Bluefield State College's Minority Health Institute; and state Culture and History Chairman Randall Reid-Smith.

Also, Patricia Wilson, associate professor at West Virginia State University; Jacqueline Proctor, deputy commissioner of the state Division of Tourism; Rev. B.J. Roberts of the Kingdom Life Fellowship Church in Nitro; Hazo Carter, former president of WVSU; Rev. Ron English, retired pastor of Charleston's First Baptist Church, who grew up in King's church in Atlanta and delivered the prayer at King's funeral; retired state Supreme Court justice Larry Starcher; and Kanawha Circuit Judge Tod Kaufman.

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