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Title	<b>0092</b>	11/04/2025
	by [REDACTED] in <b>Mini Grant Application</b>	id. 52188651
	[REDACTED]	

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## Original Submission 11/04/2025

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Score	n/a
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Date	Nov. 3, 2025
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Organization Address	[REDACTED]
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Organization Phone Number	[REDACTED]
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UEI Number	[REDACTED]
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Employer Identification Number	[REDACTED]
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Name of applicant organization's Authorizing Official (executive director, board president, etc.)	[REDACTED]
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Title	[REDACTED]
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Authorizing Official's Address (if different from org. address)	[REDACTED]
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Authorizing Official's Phone Number	+ [REDACTED]
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Authorizing Official's Email	[REDACTED]
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Name of Project Director	[REDACTED]
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Project Director's Address (if different from org. address)	[REDACTED]
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Project Director's Phone Number	[REDACTED]
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Project Director's  
Email



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Project Title

Celebrating Coretta Scott King: Her Story and Songs

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Project Summary

On February 17, 2026, at 7 p.m., in Eppley Auditorium, the mostly unknown story of Coretta Scott King, will be told, including that this classically trained singer performed in concerts across the U.S. to raise funds for the Civil Rights Movement. Songs Coretta sang during her life--performed by professional opera singers, Morningside University faculty and students, and the Sioux City [REDACTED] Choir--will enhance the spoken narrative. The printed program will include stories of poet and orator Frances Ellen Watkins Harper and singer Marian Anderson, who also toured the country to promote freedom for Black Americans. An interactive conversation between audience members and the narrator, scholars, and performers will follow the narrated concert. Our local library will exhibit books on King, Harper, and Anderson.

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Project Narrative

Prologue and Rationale

Sioux City's NAACP participates in a Martin Luther King, Jr., celebration each January to tell his inspiring story through words and song.

But who was Coretta Scott King beyond MLK's wife and widow? Neil Nelson remarked that he studied at New England Conservatory (NEC) but never knew that Coretta had studied there until NEC faculty member Timothy Steele invited Neil to sing at an event that celebrated the 70th anniversary of her senior recital through words and song.

What else about Coretta do few know? An active NAACP member, Coretta's knowledge of race politics dazzled MLK on their first phone call. Her household from the Rosa Parks era until her husband's death was headquarters for the Civil Rights Movement. She sang those fund-raising concerts while raising four children. While MLK preached non-violence, Coretta lived with threats of violence. Of Coretta, her husband said, "My wife was always stronger than I was through the struggle. . . . In the darkest moments she always brought the light of hope." From 1968 to 2005, Coretta advocated for world peace, the women's movement, and gay rights and against apartheid and capital punishment. She ensured MLK's legacy was preserved through the national holiday and King Center.

Our NAACP chapter, whose mission includes education, decided to honor Coretta by presenting her story and songs to an intergenerational, interracial audience of 250 to 300 during Black History Month.

Fortunately, we have permission to use the narration and song list from the original NEC concert Tim Steele created. We added humanities elements to enhance audience engagement. Our three-state, urban and rural Siouland area, with a population of 146,000, will allow us to meet our audience goal.

Project Information

First-Time HI Grant Submitter? Yes (NAACP)

First-Time Project Director/Scholar [REDACTED] No.

[REDACTED]

Location of Events: Concert—Accessible Morningside University Eppley Auditorium (1400 seats) used for community and campus events; Book Exhibit--Accessible Sioux City Public Library

Humanities Areas Represented in Grant: Historical Biography, Women's Studies

Humanities Scholars and Methodologies

Timothy Steele (M.M., University of Southern California) Collaborative pianist, vocal coach, conductor; faculty in opera department at New England Conservatory 34 years; 224 operas for 33 companies (including NEC), producer and musical director for Milton Community Concerts series. (Tim grew up in a family of humanities Ph.D.'s and reads avidly.)

Humanities Methodologies Tim Used to Create the NEC Coretta Biographical/Historical Narration:

To research the narration and the list of songs, nearly all by Black composers, Tim used Coretta's memoirs and archival information, including concert programs, from NEC, Antioch College's CSK Center, and the King Center. (Tim plans to display copies of the concert programs in the Eppley lobby.)

The structure of Tim's narration follows the structure of Coretta's Freedom Concerts: words followed by appropriate songs. The narration moves chronologically from Coretta's growing up with supportive parents in violently segregated rural Alabama to the years of her activism after MLK's death. Tim weaves facts with quotations from both Coretta and MLK. We see triumphant moments such as when Paul Robeson praised youthful Coretta's singing and urged her to get the best possible vocal training, discouraging moments such as when "Daddy King" was not impressed with a rural Alabama girl as his son's wife, and frightening moments such as when the King home is bombed. Then there are Coretta's conflicts such as when her passion for a concert career meets the juggernaut of MLK's eagerness to marry her after their first date.

Marty S. Knepper (Ph.D., English, Univ. of Neb., collateral field women's studies; emerita English professor, Morningside University; relevant courses taught: Women and Literature American Minorities Literature; scholar for Iowa State Historical Museum's "Hollywood in the Heartland" exhibit; 175 published articles, conference papers, workshops facilitated, speeches given, or professional editing positions held; member, NAACP.

Marty's Humanities Methodology: Reading primary and secondary books and articles on Coretta and the two featured women for the program notes, PR interviews, and post-event discussion. I will describe in the program Marian Anderson's 1943 visit to Sioux City where she experienced wild adulation and the pain of segregation.

### Scholars Serving on Planning Committees

Tim Steele and Marty Knepper will serve on the interracial Narrated Event Planning Committee including Morningside vocal music faculty; narrator Monique Scarlet, and Sandra Pearson of the MLK Choir.

Marty Knepper will serve on the interracial PR Committee along with adult and youth NAACP members. Ike Rayford will handle the project's finances. We plan to use mass media (radio, TV, print, social media) as well as posters, flyers, and email mailing lists to reach music lovers, the Black community, Black and progressive churches, Morningside's community and music alumni, and other Siouxlanders.

### Narrator

Monique Scarlett (NAACP President, community leader, former school board member, public speaker; strong links to civic leaders and the Black community).

### Professional Singer (Grant-Funded)

Neil Nelson (Graduate, NEC; bass-baritone opera and concert singer; has performed in Russia and the US, mainly with Florida's major opera companies. Neil sang in the NEC Coretta concert.

### Professional Singer (Volunteer)

Clark Sturdevant (M.M., Washington University in St. Louis) has sung over 50 roles in opera companies, symphonies, and concerts in the Upper Midwest, mainly in St. Louis. Clark's parents will provide housing for Clark and Neil Nelson.

### Professional Singer (Volunteer)

Shannon Salyards Burton (M.M., Boston University) has sung with Boston Lyric Opera and teaches voice and opera at Morningside.

### The Sioux City [REDACTED] Gospel Choir

Led by Sandra Pearson, the choir sings often in Sioux City.

### Accompanist and Musical Director

Tim Steele will accompany the singers on the piano and coordinate the musical program. He has begun conversations with singers and choirs.

### Sequence of Events for the Sioux City Community

Feb. 1 The SC Public Library circulating exhibit goes up with multiple copies of books on the three featured women traveling activists.

Feb. 15 Tim and the two opera singers arrive and have dinner with Planning Committee members.

Feb. 16 and 17, during the day, opera guests meet Morningside vocal music students and rehearse, as needed.

Feb. 16 at 7 p.m. Dress rehearsal

Feb. 17 Performance

Greeters have guests sign in and distribute programs and evaluations. They alert the audience to the post-event conversation. Signs direct guests with accessibility issues to special seating. Other helpers pass out programs which will include--besides pages on Frances Ellen Watkins Harper and Marian Anderson--songs and performers, selected lyrics, committees, and thank yous, including to HI, NEH, and the Federation. After the concert, Monique Scarlett and Marty Knepper will facilitate interactive discussion among audience, performers, narrator, and scholars. Rather than simply asking for questions, we plan that each speaker will talk briefly to open lines of inquiry for the audience to respond to.

We are already thinking about snow dates and locations.

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Date you plan to begin making expenditures for project activities:

We will reimburse Marty Knepper for the airline tickets for Tim Steele and Neil Nelson immediately if/when the grant is approved.

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Date you plan to finish making expenditures for project activities:

We will cut checks for the honoraia for Tim Steele and Neil Nelson shortly before Feb. 17.

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Anticipated audience (the total number of people expected to participate in all activities)

250-300 for the narrated concert; 50 for the conversation; 10 books checked out and more circulated after the concert.

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U.S. Congressional District(s) where project activities will take place

Iowa 4th District

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Dates/Times/Locations Tuesday, Feb. 17, 7 p.m., Eppley Auditorium, 3625 Garretson Ave., on the Morningside University campus. (Narrative Concert and Post-Event Conervation). During the month of February during library open hours (M-W 9 a.m.,-8:00 p.m., TH-SAT, 9 a.m., 5 p.m., SUN 1-5 p.m.) at the downtown Sioux City Public Library at 529 Pierce St., the circulating Black History Month Exhibit will include books on Coretta Scott King, Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, and Marian Anderson. We will have multiple books on each author.

HUMANITIES IOWA  
MINI GRANT  
BUDGET

Operating budget of applicant organization 

Total grant funds requested from Humanities Iowa: \$3,000

1. Will admission or registration fee will be charged? No

2(a). Cash contributions from other sources— Private, Corporate or Government N/A

2(b). Total cash contributions N/A

3. Cash from applicant's own funds \$1,500

4. Total Cash \$1,500

5. In-Kind Contributions from third parties \$1,500

6. TOTAL MATCH \$3,000

7. REQUEST FROM HUMANITIES IOWA \$3,000

8. Total Project Cost – total of lines 6 and 7 above \$4,500

Budget Worksheet Template

[Online-Expense-Worksheet.xlsx](#)

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Upload Budget Worksheet

[HI\\_Coretta\\_Budget\\_FINAL\\_from\\_Excel\\_11.3.25.docx](#)

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Upload Any  
Supporting Materials  
(Optional)

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Brief Budget  
Narrative

Grant Funded: \$3,000  
\$1,500 Honorarium and Airplane Ticket for Tm Steele, scholar/professional music director and accompanist  
\$250 Honorarium for Monique Scarlett--narrator  
\$250 Honorarium for Sioux City MLK Gospel Choir  
\$250 Honorarium and Travel for HI Evaluator (Janet Flanagan from Sioux City)  
\$750 Multi-Page Program and Publicity

NAACP Funded: \$1,500  
\$1,500 Honorarium and Airplane Ticket for Neil Nelson--African-American professional opera singer

In-Kind Match from Morningside University: \$1,500  
(NOTE: Some musicians from Morningside will sing in this event, but Morningside is not a co-sponsor. NAACP has written the grant, provided the cash match, recruited the professional and local singers, and is doing the PR.)  
\$1,000 One-night rental of Eppley Auditorium  
\$100 Rental for an additional night for rehearsal  
\$100 Piano fee  
\$100 Crew fee

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Signature of  
Authorizing Official



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## Internal Form

Score

n/a

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