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## Panel: Dr. King's Dream Has Yet to be Realized

**FORT WORTH, Texas** – In recognition of Black History month, the Black Law Students Association welcomed five speakers on Feb. 4 for a panel discussion on the progress of African Americans and an analysis of whether Dr. Martin Luther King's dream has been reached in today's society.

Panelists included Casey Thomas, president of the Dallas NAACP, Texas Wesleyan law professor Jason Gillmer, local attorney and law school alumnus Shaun House '02, Shanterra McBride, founder of Preparing Leaders of Today (PLOT), and Dr. Frederick Haynes, senior pastor at Friendship West Baptist Church in Dallas.

Citing everything from historical events to current community issues, panelists agreed that the African-American community has yet to reach the goal of Dr. King's dream.

"No, we are not there yet," Haynes said. "[And] we are recognizing the need for this kind of debate. It was the legal and religious communities that gave rise to the birth of the Civil Rights movement. To allow just one or two of our community to achieve success and say that we've made it – this isn't enough."

McBride, who makes presentations at elementary and middle schools around the country for PLOT, said her encounters with many of the students she meets have shown her that society has not achieved what Dr. King preached.

"If children are surprised they are touching a black person, and this is 2008 ... we have come a long way, but we are not there yet." McBride said. "As adults, we unfortunately do not equip them. They're not sure how to handle it."

Incorporating comments and questions from attendees, panelists also discussed various challenges to the African-American community, including cultural influences and the need to continue working toward Dr. King's dream.

"We have made strides, and we need to point that out, always being mindful that there's more that we can do." House said.

"It's comfortable to talk about what hasn't been done," Thomas said. "It's hard to begin the work, and it's not going to be easy. If it was easy, it would have been done."

About 35 students, staff and faculty members attended the lunchtime panel discussion.

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