

The Observer

Volume XIV, Issue V

Re-Established 1993

Manchester, NH

Genocide Survivor Teaches Forgiveness



A crowded Walker Auditorium in silence during a moment of remembrance.
Photo/Katlyn Morin

Amanda Russell Editor in Chief

Seven women hiding from murderers in one bathroom for 91 days. On February 6, Immaculee Ilibagiza relived the horrific experience she endured during the Rwandan genocide for a capacity filled auditorium at Southern New Hampshire University.

On April 6, 1994 a plane carrying Rwanda's Hutu President, Juvenal Habyarimana crashed, killing everyone on board. An organized campaign by Rwanda's majority tribe, the Hutu's, followed shortly after the crash. Hutu extremists spent 100 days brutally killing approximately 800,000 Tutsis, the minority tribe in Rwanda.

Three out of four Tutsis in Rwanda were killed during the 100-day killing spree. Immaculee Ilibagiza was the only member of her family who survived the horrific genocide. Ilibagiza survived by hiding in

the bathroom of a Hutu Protestant priest with seven other women for over three months. Ilibagiza began a dialogue with God during the 91 days she spent in the bathroom.

Ilibagiza said, "God, if you save me today, I'm going to love you more than ever. These people who are killing all the Tutsis were friends and neighbors. Now I know that the only being I can trust is you, God."

Ilibagiza's dialogue with God continued as the days crept by inside the bathroom. Over 400 people searched the house to find and kill the seven Tutsi women. During each search, Ilibagiza turned to her faith to find it in her heart to forgive the murderers who were trying to exterminate the Tutsis population.

"The hatred in my heart made my blood boil. I surrendered myself to God and asked him how I could love these people. God reminded me that

earth is just a passage where you go through hardship. If you endure the hardship there is heaven after. If I hadn't found God during that time, I don't think I would have survived the genocide," Ilibagiza said.

When the genocide was ending and it was safe to leave the bathroom, Ilibagiza thought she was dreaming.

"So much had changed in the three months I spent in that bathroom. I no longer had a family, I had no money and no place to go. I just kept wondering why I was chosen to live. I knew God had a plan for me, and realized that the only way I could leave Rwanda was with forgiveness."

After leaving Rwanda, Ilibagiza traveled to the United States in search of a job with the United Nations. Ilibagiza applied for a position with the UN seven or eight times before landing the job of her

See Page 2 **Genocide**

Dr. Hassan Awarded by MLK Jr. Coalition

Frank Rubino
Managing Editor

Southern New Hampshire University's Dr. Mahboubul Hassan of the economics and finance department received the Martin Luther King Award on Monday January 15th, 2007 at the 25th annual Martin Luther King Day Community Celebration.

Hassan, president and founder of the Islamic Society of Greater Manchester, was presented the award by Reverend Christopher Emerson at the St. George Greek Orthodox Cathedral on Hanover Street in Manchester.

Founded in 1982, the Martin Luther King Coalition consists of 21 various organizations that are brought together to promote the principles, beliefs, and values of the late Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Some of the organizations include the Global Citizens Circle, New Hampshire Civil Liberties Union, and the Manchester Education Association.

For the last twenty years, the Coalition has awarded the

Martin Luther King Award to a New Hampshire resident that shows continued dedication to improving social rights based on the beliefs of the late Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. All of the Coalition member organizations, as well as previous recipients of the award, nominate an individual they feel deserves the Martin Luther King Award. The Coalition's Steering Committee then reviews the list of nominees and selects one to receive the award.

Reverend Dr. Bertha Perkins was the keynote speaker at the event. Governor John Lynch was also in attendance as well as participants from the very first Martin Luther King Day Community Celebration. The celebration also featured performances by the Rhythm of New Hampshire Show Chorus and the West High School Jazz Band.

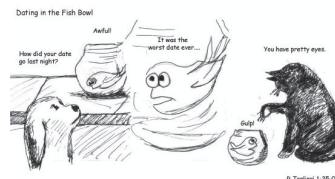
Dr. Hassan said that he is "very humbled by the award and by being the first Muslim recipient." Information about the Martin Luther King Coalition can be found at <http://www.martinlutherkingcoalition.org>.



Dr. Mahboubul Hassan received the Martin Luther King Award for 2007
Photo/Katlyn Morin

"The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy."

~ Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.
1960s Civil Rights Movement Leader



R. Tupper 1-25-07