

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**



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**WHATCOM COMMUNITY COLLEGE CO-HOSTS 12<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL  
MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. HUMAN RIGHTS CONFERENCE:  
*BOOKS NOT BARS: EDUCATION, THE MEDIA AND AMERICA'S PRISON SYSTEM***

Bellingham WA, January 5, 2010 – Whatcom Community College and the Whatcom Human Rights Task Force are pleased to present the 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Human Rights Conference at the College's Syre Center on Saturday, January 16.

This year's conference boasts over 20 workshops and training sessions for educators, youth and community members. Teachers can receive "clock hours" for their attendance and youth can participate in the annual MLK Youth Summit, an exciting opportunity to join with youth from across the county to address human rights issues in ways that are directly relevant to them.

Keynote speakers will be Gerald Hankerson in the morning and Jeff Shaw in the afternoon. Mr. Hankerson was pardoned by Governor Gregoire in April of 2009 after being convicted of aggravated murder. Maintaining his innocence, he spent over half his lifetime behind bars before his innocence was proven. Gerald Hankerson's compelling story is one that must be heard and shared. The afternoon address will be provided by Jeff Shaw, an award-winning journalist and long-time human rights activist. Whatcom Community College, the Whatcom Human Rights Task Force, Bellingham School District, the Woodring College of Education, Northwest Indian College and numerous other community organizations are proud to present these two keynote speakers at this year's conference.

Registration for clock hours, as well as free coffee service, will begin at 9:30 a.m. with the opening ceremony and keynote address at 10:00 a.m. Workshops will run throughout the day. The conference is **FREE** and open to all community members. Accommodations include parking, light refreshments, and sign language interpreters. No advanced registration is necessary. Additional information, including a full schedule, is available at [www.whrtf.org](http://www.whrtf.org).

Whatcom Community College is a comprehensive two-year college serving over 12,000 students. Whatcom offers transfer degrees, professional training programs, as well as basic education and enrichment classes. For more information on Whatcom Community College, please contact Nate Langstraat at 360.383.3312 or visit [www.whatcom.ctc.edu](http://www.whatcom.ctc.edu).

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