

Bernice King blasts brothers' plans to sell MLK Bible

by [Adelle M. Banks](#)

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(RNS) The daughter of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. said Tuesday (Feb. 4) that she will fight her brothers' attempts to sell their famous father's Bible—used at President Obama's second inauguration—and King's Nobel Peace Prize medal.

The Rev. Bernice King, the youngest of the four King children, posted the statement about her father's "most prized possessions" on her Facebook page, saying, "I am absolutely opposed to the selling of these extremely sacred items."

She and her brothers, Martin Luther King III and Dexter King, have been in and out of court for years over various disputes about their father's estate. Bernice King is CEO of the King Center in Atlanta, but her brothers have charge of their father's estate.

Bernice King said she learned Jan. 20, the national holiday marking her father's birthday, that her brothers wanted the items, which were being kept in a secure location. They filed suit on Friday (Jan. 31) after she refused, she said.

A spokesperson for Martin Luther King III could not be reached immediately for comment.

"As Mark 8:36 teaches, 'For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul?'" Bernice King said. "Our Father MUST be turning in his grave. As a minister of the Gospel, the thought of selling my daddy's Bible troubles my mind, vexes my spirit and weighs on my soul."

Obama took his second official oath of office by placing his hand on King's "traveling" Bible, which sat atop a Bible belonging to President Abraham Lincoln.

Bernice King also expressed outrage that her brothers want to sell the medal King received 50 years ago when he was named winner of the Nobel Peace Prize. She said profiting from the medal's sale is "spiritually violent" and "outright morally reprehensible."

Though she was not interested in entering another court battle, Bernice King said, her brothers' request has left her no choice. The Kings' other daughter, Yolanda, died in 2007.

"Some actions are sacrilegious and some things are not for sale no matter the circumstances, including my daddy's Bible and Nobel Peace Prize Medal," she said.

"Both are tangible evidence of the faith and devotion of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Coretta Scott King. Parting with this priceless memorabilia should not be an option."