

Vincent Harding, historian and colleague of King

News in the [June 11, 2014](#) issue

Vincent Harding, 82, a scholar, civil rights activist, and colleague of Martin Luther King Jr., died of an aneurysm in a Philadelphia hospital on May 19 following surgery the week before.

Harding was a speechwriter for King and drafted King's address on Vietnam. Among his many books were *Martin Luther King: The Inconvenient Hero* and *There Is a River: The Black Struggle for Freedom in America*.

He also was the first director of the Martin Luther King Memorial Center in Atlanta.

Harding taught and lived in Denver in recent years, where he was professor emeritus of religion and social transformation at Iliff School of Theology from 1981 to 2004. He and his late wife, Rosemarie Freeney Harding, founded the Veterans of Hope Project, "a multifaceted education initiative on religion, culture, and participatory democracy" in 1997.

Harding earned his doctorate in history at the University of Chicago, advised by Martin Marty, a *Century* contributing editor.

He had returned to Chicago for a visit in March. He was a pastor in the late 1950s and early 1960s of Woodlawn Mennonite Church on the city's Southeast Side.