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**MLK BREAKFAST FOUNDER, LOCAL PASTOR TO DELIVER KEYNOTE ADDRESSES AT CLARION**



***January 08, 2025***

**Two Clarion community pillars will deliver keynote addresses to honor the annual Martin Luther King Jr. celebration.**

**Dr. Brenda Sanders Dédé and Pastor Jake Jacobson will be speakers for the 13<sup>th</sup> annual Martin Luther King Jr. Community Breakfast at 9 a.m. Jan. 20 in PennWest Clarion’s Eagle Commons. This year’s theme is The King Legacy: Celebrating 30 Years of the Day of Service.**

**Dédé, who was awarded emeritus status from Clarion, retired in 2018 as associate vice president for Academic Affairs for PennWest Clarion, where she served 23 of her 48 years in higher education. She founded the MLK breakfast in 2011, the annual Juneteenth program in 2002 and the annual Martin Luther King celebration. At Clarion, Dédé previously served as interim associate provost, associate vice president for Academic and Student Affairs, assistant vice president for Academic Affairs, coordinator of graduate studies and director of faculty research.**

**She is executive director of the Pennsylvania Black Conference of Higher Education, Inc., and she is a charter member the American Association of Blacks in Higher Education. In the Clarion community, Dédé has served with the Chamber of Business and Industry, Borough Planning Commission, Kiwanis Club, United Way, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, SAFE domestic violence agency, Clarion Blueprint Committee Inc., Clarion County Community Choir and the First Baptist Church. She was an elected member of Clarion Borough Council from 2010 to 2024.**

**Jacobson has been pastor of Grace Lutheran Church in Clarion for 41 years. For the past 18 years, he has served as director for Evangelical Mission with the Evangelical Church in America and as assistant to the bishop in the Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod. He holds undergraduate degrees in chemistry and biblical studies, and he holds a graduate degree from Lutheran Theological Seminary, now United Seminary. He is a certified and practicing spiritual director.**

**Jacobson serves the Clarion community as chaplain for Clarion Psychiatric Hospital and VNA Hospice, and as chaplain coordinator for Clarion Hospital. He is board president for Pathways, SAFE and Clarion Agency on Aging. He coaches Clarion Little League and girls' basketball**

**at Clarion YMCA. Jacobson promotes the arts through Clarion Arts Council and United Way Arts Initiative. He serves Clarion Area School District's Strategic Planning and Middle States Evaluation committees, and he is part of the Downtown Revitalization Project and Meals on Wheels.**

**Jon Anderson, president of Pennsylvania Western University, will present the welcome and closing remarks, and Student Senate president Gage Gray will give the student address. Dr. Erin Lewis, field services coordinator for PennWest's Education Department and local vocal instructor, will lead the singing of "Lift Every Voice."**

**Cost of the breakfast is \$9 at the door. Non-perishable food items will be collected in support of Clarion Community Food Bank. The breakfast is sponsored by PennWest Clarion and Clarion community businesses, churches and organizations.**

**Following the breakfast, Clarion Free Library will host a volunteer fair beginning at 10:30 a.m. to honor the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Day of Service. Various organizations from the surrounding communities will set up tables, and attendees will have the opportunity to learn about volunteering for these organizations.**