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Story
by
Mike
Latona
Staff writer

Martin Luther King Jr.'s hopes perceived as a 'dream deferred'

The newspaper clipping in Mike Smith's hand was the only proof he needed that the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.'s dream has not yet been realized.

"Actually, it makes me sick. We've got 70 people who died last year," said Smith as he rattled off excerpts from the Jan. 1, 1994, issue of Rochester's *Democrat & Chronicle*.

The article listed all the people who had been murdered in the City of Rochester in 1993. Last year's count of 70 fatalities broke the old record of 68 set in 1991; both figures more than doubled the 1983 total of 32.

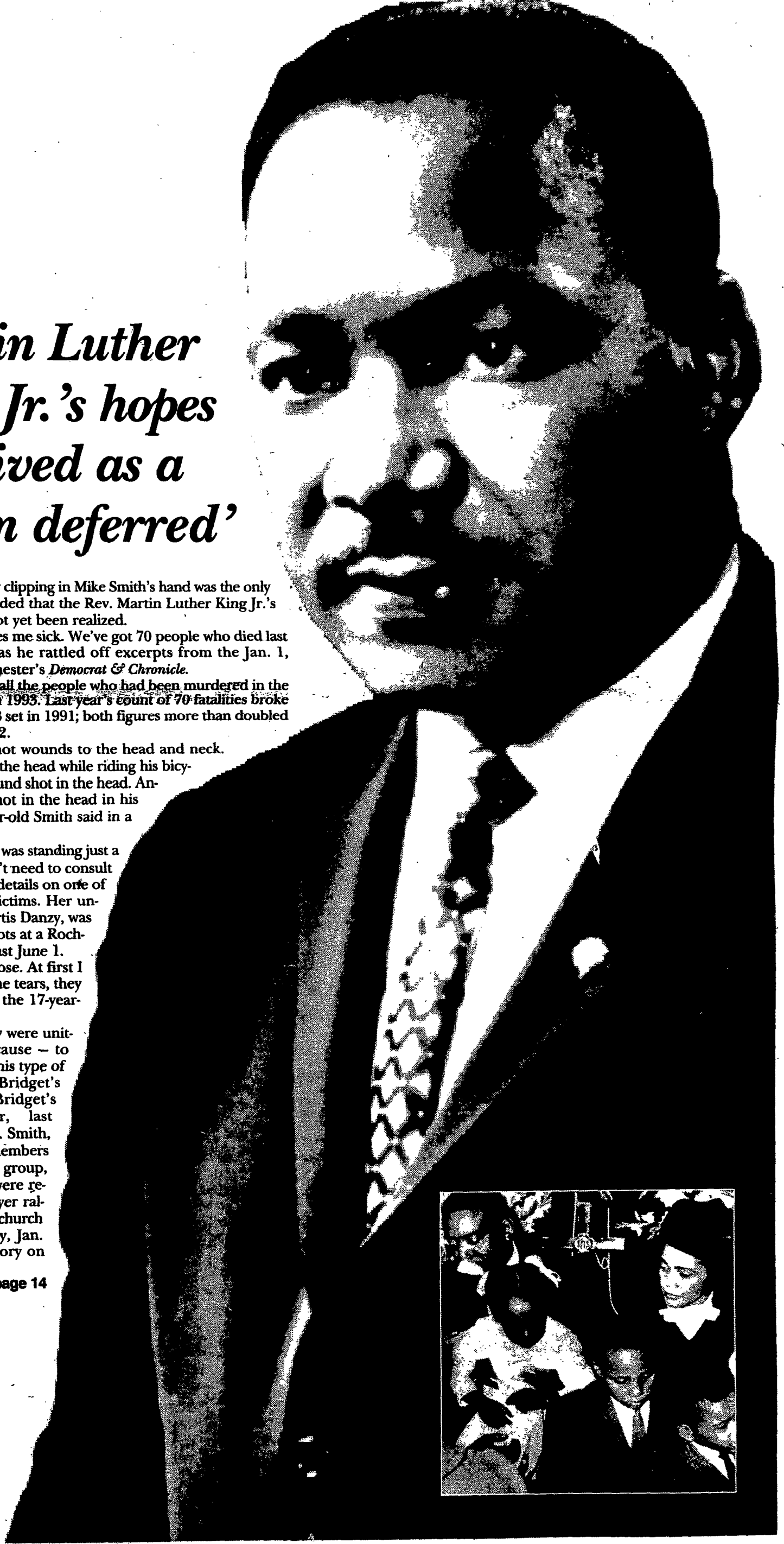
"Kim Bell, gunshot wounds to the head and neck. Tony Mays, shot in the head while riding his bicycle. Another guy found shot in the head. Another one found shot in the head in his garage," the 16-year-old Smith said in a bitter tone.

Toni Danzy, who was standing just a few feet away, didn't need to consult the newspaper for details on one of those 70 murder victims. Her uncle, 38-year-old Curtis Danzy, was cut down by gunshots at a Rochester playground last June 1.

"We were real close. At first I didn't believe it. The tears, they just kept coming," the 17-year-old Danzy recalled.

Smith and Danzy were united for the same cause — to speak out against this type of violence — at St. Bridget's Church, 175 St. Bridget's Drive, Rochester, last Wednesday, Jan. 5. Smith, Danzy and other members of a newly formed group, Teens for Peace, were rehearsing for a prayer rally to be held at the church this coming Friday, Jan. 14. (See related story on page 9.)

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