

programs and museum exhibits.

The late civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., would have been 72 on Jan. 15.

The King family and the Atlanta-based Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Non-Violent and Social Change Inc. will once again lead the way in hosting activities commemorating King's birthday.

The King Center will present its annual Salute to Greatness Awards Dinner at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in downtown Atlanta. The Center will also team up with the historic Ebenezer Baptist Church and present a Martin Luther King, Jr. Annual Commemorative Service at the church.

The King Center is also encouraging citizens to fulfill King's principles of equality and compassion by making the holiday a day of volunteerism and community service.

In Washington, D.C., a major gath-

ering is expected on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial for a King Birthday Celebration.

In Chicago, Rev. Jesse Jackson's Rainbow/PUSH Coalition will hold its annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemorative Breakfast "Actualizing The Dream In The New Millennium" at the Chicago Hilton & Towers on Jan. 15. TV court show host Judge Greg Mathis will deliver the keynote address at the salute.

Also in Chicago, Tennessee Congressman Harold E. Ford Jr. will deliver the keynote address at Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley's annual King Interfaith Breakfast at the Chicago Hilton and Towers on Jan. 12.

In Dallas, the Black Academy of Arts & Letters will sponsor the annual Black Music and Civil Rights Concert on Jan. 14.

Parades are also planned in Los Angeles, Las Vegas, Miami, New Orleans and Jackson, MS.

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## **Clinton Commutes Sentences Of Two Black Women Inmates; Grants Clemency To 62 In All**

In a gesture reflective of the goodwill and generosity of this past holiday season, President Clinton recently granted clemency to 62 people, among them two Black women who were serving long prison terms under federal drug sentencing guidelines.

Clinton commuted the sentences of Kemba Smith, 28, of Richmond, VA, and Dorothy Gaines, 42, of Mobile, AL, to time served, allowing

them to be freed in time to celebrate the Christmas holiday season with their families.

Smith was sentenced in 1995 to 24 years and six months in prison with no chance of parole for helping her boyfriend Peter Hall, head of a violent drug ring. Gaines received 19 years, seven months in 1995 for her low-level role in a local drug ring. The men who ran the ring received more lenient sen-





◀ *Kemba Smith holds son Armani during recent church services in Richmond, VA. Smith was one of 62 people granted clemency by President Clinton.*

tences for their offenses.

“President Clinton has shown mercy and integrity by releasing these individuals,” said Julie Stewart, president and founder of Families Against Mandatory Minimums Foundation (FAMM).

“They are not the drug ‘kingpins’ Congress intended to target when it passed these laws in 1986 and 1988. They are all low-level drug offenders who deserved punishment for breaking the law, but received disproportionately harsh sentences for their tangential involvement in the drug trade.”

Clinton also commuted the sentence of a third prisoner, former Missouri House Speaker Bob F. Griffin, who was serving time for bribery and mail fraud, and issued pardons for 59 others, most notably ex-Rep. Dan Rostenkowski (D-IL), one-time chair of the Ways and Means Committee.

Clinton, at JET press time, said that he expects to issue another round of presidential pardons before he leaves office Jan. 20. Clinton previously had granted 196 pardons and 22 commutations.

A commutation reduces a criminal penalty, such as shortening a prison term. A pardon releases a person from the punishment of a crime.



◀ *Dorothy Gaines enjoys her reunion with her son Phillip, 17, who wrote Clinton about his mother. Gaines had her lengthy prison sentence commuted by Clinton.*