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Telephone ██████████

Southern Christian Leadership Conference

Martin Luther King Jr., *President*

Ralph Abernathy, *Treasurer*

Andrew J. Young, *Executive Director*

January 18, 1966

Mr. William A. Bennett, Jr.

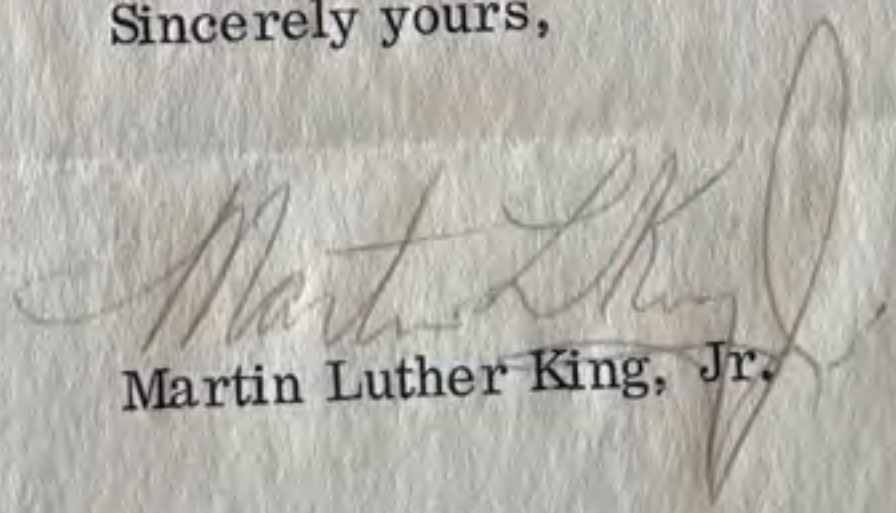
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Haddonfield, New Jersey

Dear Mr. Bennett:

I appreciated the meaningful points raised in your letter to me concerning racial appellations. The words "dark skinned American" constitute a vivid depiction of both citizenship and race just as you point out. I agree wholeheartedly with you that the import of that term is in salient contrast with the connotation attached to the word "nigger!" The word "nigger" carries with it a meaning deeply rooted in the debilitating racist caste ordering of our society's slavery epoch and segregation era.

The term, "dark skinned American," often finds its way into my speeches and writings and, encouragingly, I notice it, too, in the usage of so many others. The use of that and similar appellations reflect both our great heritage and our devotion to a brand of Americanism of the highest order.

Sincerely yours,

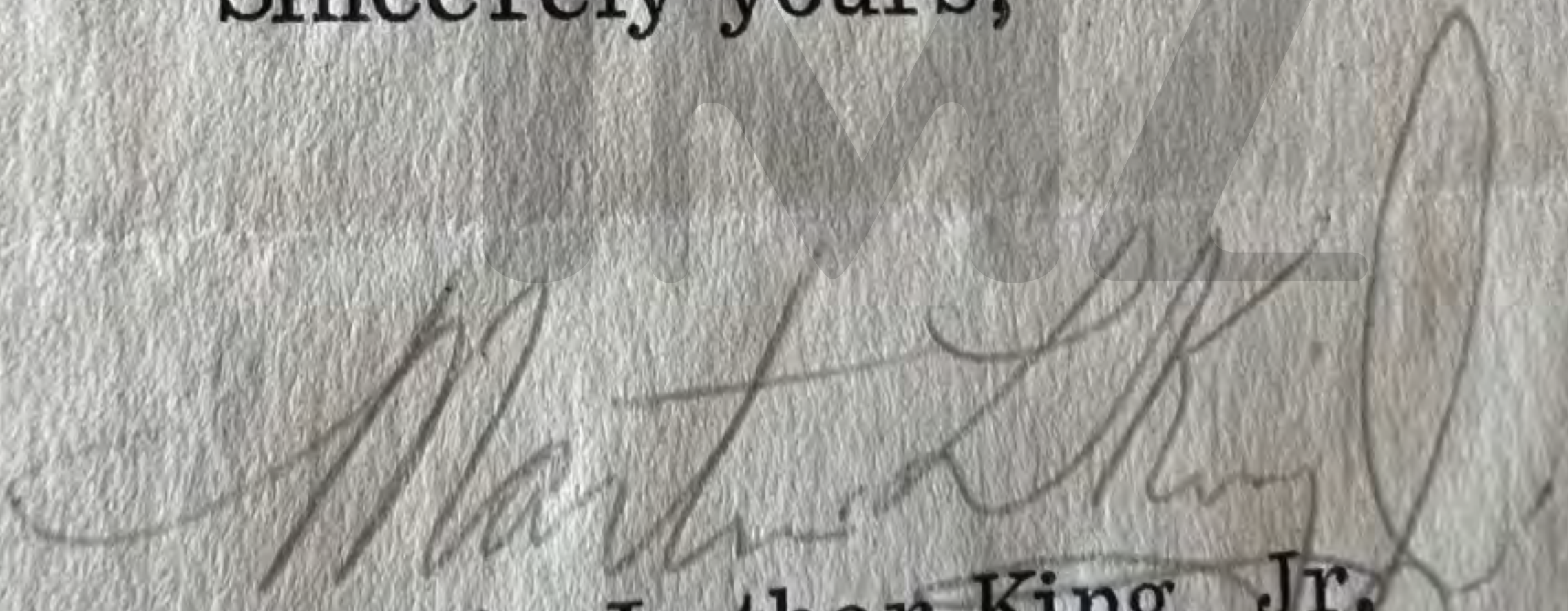

Martin Luther King, Jr.

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Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Martin Luther King, Jr.", written in dark ink on a light-colored, textured paper. The signature is fluid and somewhat stylized, with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Martin Luther King, Jr.