

**A Martin Luther King Musical Tribute By Unlikely Celebrity Fan:
SOON TO CELEBRATE HIS 86th BIRTHDAY, MUSIC ICON PAT BOONE HAS A
GIFT FOR THE WORLD, A SONG BASED ON MLK's "I HAVE A DREAM"**

**Race Relations Allies: As A First-Time, 23-Year-Old Network TV Star-Host in the
1950s, The Pop Singer & Writer of Over 100 Songs
Booked Many African American Artists for the First Time on National TV**

(Hollywood, CA, Jan. 6, 2020)—They were both southern born and each had big dreams, Martin Luther King, a dream for international peace, and Pat Boone, the quest to perform around the world.

In tribute to Martin Luther King, Jr., MLK Day (Jan. 20), the civil rights movement and "Black History Month," Boone, who has had 38 Top 40 hits in his career, has written and recorded, along with the Pat Boone Singers, a song and music video in tribute to Dr. King and his herculean civil rights efforts, titled "I Had A Dream" (download on iTunes) or preview at <https://youtu.be/gekRffhvvBQ>.

Says Boone: "I was in Washington, DC the night Martin Luther King was assassinated. I sat up all night, watching all the horrific TV reports. The next day, I was flying home, and on the plane, I had my face against the window, because I was tearful and his powerful words (*I Have A Dream* speech) kept running through my mind. Before I got off the plane that day - to LA - I had written a song to a gospel melody. I thought, 'Those words need to be immortalized in music,' and I recorded the song."

At 23, Boone was given his own prime time TV variety show.

In those days, **it was rare for an African American artist** to guest star on national TV, but Boone, who loved music, even at an early age, was still an undergrad at Columbia University **when the TV show launched, first booked for national TV, many such performers, from Nat "King" Cole and Sammy Davis to Ella Fitzgerald and Harry Belafonte.**

After a series of such bookings, Boone was told by the network to stop booking so many black entertainers. The TV show sponsor, Chevrolet, complained, too.

They said that **Chevy dealers in the South were furious about the number of African American acts on his show.**

Boone ignored all of these requests and threatened to walk away from a lucrative, dream job, early in his career.

Previously, Boone was making hit records, many of them covers of songs originally recorded by African American artists, like Little Richard and Fats Domino.

Boone's covers made the Top 40 charts while the original artists' versions did not.

For years, Boone was accused of exploitation but people like Little Richard and Fats Domino eventually recognized his contribution to their careers.

"As I looked back, he (Pat) really opened a wider door for me," says Little Richard.

"By him recording 'Tutti Frutti' it made it bigger and made me accepted to a wider market and I became 'Pop' instantly! You know, thank you, Pat."

"Ain't That A Shame" was a **Fats Domino** song recorded by Boone that yielded big sales, too. Years later, Domino, who wrote the song, **told Boone he didn't mind the bigger recognition and all those new royalty checks.**

Over the years, Boone has recorded with many other African American artists, such as James Brown, Sam Moore, Sister Sledge, Smokey Robinson, The Four Tops and Kool & The Gang.

He's also written 100s of songs, including what is often referred to as Israel's second national anthem, "The Exodus Song," and is reported to have recorded more than 2,100 songs to date.

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