



A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT ROBERT MICHAEL FRANKLIN ' 75

**FEBRUARY 2009**

In 1926, Dr. Carter G. Woodson established Negro History Week to coincide with the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass. He could not have imagined that the current occupant of the White House would be an African American. Recently, during a question and answer session following a speech I delivered to The City Club of Cleveland, someone asked if President Obama's presence signals the opportunity to abolish Black History Month. I responded that Dr. Woodson created the observance both for black Americans to celebrate our heritage and identity at a time when we were "invisible" in textbooks, but also for America to pause and acknowledge our contributions to U.S. history and society. Now that America has taken a huge step forward in recognizing black leadership, intelligence, beauty and patriotism, we should not abolish prematurely the means that enabled us to arrive here. Just as other European ethnic groups enjoy moments of celebrating their particularity and their contributions to America, African Americans should continue to honor the unique richness of our past. There will be plenty of time in the future to assess which traditions can be abandoned and which we should preserve.

**Political Science Department Update**

As you may know, our stellar Department of Political Science is in the process of an exciting reconstruction. We are very pleased that Laura Seay, currently at the University of Texas at Austin Department of Government, will join the Morehouse College Department of Political Science this fall. Ms. Seay, who has done extensive research on Africa, will teach courses in international relations and comparative politics. She also will serve as the co-adviser for the Model UN program. Also joining the Department of Political Science for the fall semester is Dr. Roger Cusick, who has taught at the University at Albany and the University of Richmond. Dr. Cusick will assume leadership of the pre-law program and will teach constitutional law and national government classes, as well as a class on the presidency. Both of these distinguished scholars will bring considerable value to their respective classrooms and co-curricular activities. We look forward to welcoming them to the Morehouse community.

**The Morehouse Research Institute**

On February 10, Dr. Obie Clayton, chair of the Department of Sociology, convened a one-day symposium titled "The State of African American Males: Strengths, Challenges and Weaknesses: Implications

for Research, Programs and Policy." In addition to assembling a group of powerful thought-leaders, the symposium was designed to stimulate further research and writing on the subject—further establishing the College as a clearinghouse for information on more than 16 million men. Dr. Bernard Anderson (The Wharton School); Dr. Bobby Austin (University of the District of Columbia); Dr. Michael Holzman (Schott Foundation); and Judge William Webb (Federal District Court of Eastern North Carolina; Southeast Region, Boule)—a powerful assembly of thought-leaders—served as panelists, leading a forum that advanced the College as a clearinghouse for information on America's 16 million black men. This summit will become an annual gathering at Morehouse College as we establish our profile as the nation's think tank and research center on African American boys, men, and families.

**Alumni Respond to the Call**

The floundering economy has had an impact on the ability of many American families to afford tuition and fees, and approximately 200 Morehouse students faced departure this semester. Though we still have young men in financial need,

I am pleased to report that Morehouse Men and friends responded to my urgent appeal for help. We received nearly 200 gifts totaling \$88,000, significantly improving the enrollment for the semester. As a consequence, a much smaller number of our students departed the College for financial reasons (temporarily, we hope). On behalf of the talented and deserving young men who remain at Morehouse because of you, I offer grand thanks. Your prompt response and generosity are overwhelming.

### **Founder's Week Reflections**

At 142 years of age, Morehouse is vital and thriving, still blazing trails in order to provide the best education possible to young black men of promise. We are proud of our legacy of excellence, and each year, alumni return to Morehouse to pay homage to its rich heritage. Several weeks ago, alumni were present in impressive numbers to share in the celebrations that signal the arrival of Founder's Week. I am always encouraged by the presence of alumni at the Founder's Day Convocation, as well as by their enthusiastic participation in the "A Candle in the Dark" Gala, where we honor the accomplishments of Morehouse Men and others who have made a significant difference in their communities. It was a week full of camaraderie, and I praise the Morehouse family—faculty, staff, students, alumni, and friends—who created a magical week.

### **Reunion 2009 on the Horizon**

There will be more information on the Reunion 2009 in the days to come. Now, however, it is my desire simply to remind alumni of the importance of networking and engaging in dialogue with brothers and friends. This year, especially, I am counting on the desire of alumni to be actively involved in the life of the College. We need your support as we assist students affected by an economy in crisis. Your help, now more than ever, is needed to maintain a strong student enrollment and to ensure that Morehouse remains strong and viable. And, your support provides us with leverage with other donors whose first question is often, "What percentage of Morehouse Men give to their alma mater?"

### **The Economic Stimulus Package and Higher Education**

I believe it is important to understand how the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act will impact Morehouse students, their families, and the institution. Because Morehouse is a private college, the \$53.6 billion that have been allocated for states through the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund will not have a direct impact on us. We will, however, derive substantial benefit from the legislation in a number of other ways. First, a student aid program allotment of \$15.64 billion raises the individual maximum Pell Grant award to \$5,350, while another \$200 million in college work-study supplements expands the support for students who work while attending school. The legislation also provides for work-study allocations to students employed in community services, including community-accessible childcare and assistance for disabled students. We should also be pleased that the stimulus package has provided for organizations—for example, the National Science Foundation and the U.S. Department of Energy—that have partnered with the College on various initiatives. Finally, many families across America will benefit from the tax credits implemented by the legislation, including a small increase in their monthly pay, child tax credits, and earned income credits for families with three or more children. I encourage all members of the Morehouse community to become familiar with the legislation and take advantage of those tenets that will benefit you.

### **In Memoriam**

The Morehouse family mourns the loss of its own Freddie Miller Jr., who died tragically on Sunday, February 22. Freddie served Morehouse faithfully as a member of the Campus Operations/Physical Plant team for more than 11 years and, in his own inimitable way, was an ambassador for the College. While we will miss him, we will remember Freddie and always appreciate him for his warmth, humor, and devotion to the College and the Morehouse family.

**Basketball Season Ends on a High Note**

The Maroon Tigers Basketball Team wrapped up the season with “Senior Night” and a final victory against the Kentucky State University Thoroughbreds. During the halftime ceremony of their final home game, the five seniors on the team—Kenney Boyd; Larry Diamond; J.P. Felder; Travis Floyd; and Paul Williams—received framed jerseys to commemorate their athletic careers at Morehouse. It was a pleasure for me to see the end of the game and to take photos with Coach Brewer and the graduating players. I thank each of them for being fine scholar-athletes, and I offer gratitude to the coaching staff, led by Coach Gary Brewer, for their leadership.

**Israeli Prime Minister Honored at Morehouse**

A photo exhibit featuring Yitzhak Rabin, the former prime minister of Israel who devoted his career to fostering peace in the Middle East, was held at Morehouse on February 25. Morehouse joined with the office of the Consulate General of Israel; The Temple, Atlanta; and the Atlanta Chapter of the American Jewish Committee to celebrate the life of Prime Minister Rabin, a 1994 Nobel Peace Prize laureate.

The event, hosted by the office of the Martin Luther King Jr. International Chapel, also served as an introduction to the Rabin-King Initiative at Morehouse, which will feature an exchange program between the College and Haifa University in Israel. We thank our partners for their support and look forward to providing progress updates on the Rabin-King Initiative as they develop.

**New Student Enrollment Project Underway**

In an effort to maintain strong student enrollment, we are engaging in a collaborative project—involving the Offices of Admissions; Registrar; Housing; Student Financial Services; Financial Aid; Technology; Student Health Services; and Communications—that focuses on a redesign of key business processes, improved customer service, cost efficiency, a strong communications plan, and academic advisement coordinated through the General Education Program. We are excited about the many ways in which this project has already made a positive impact, and we will continue to share reports as progress is made.

“The first interpretation of African history is the responsibility of scholars of African descent.”  
—John Henrik Clarke

