Crown Forum 2012

Orientation and Empowerment

Theme: “Men of Morehouse: Discovering Truth as a Liberating Force and Freedom as a Moral Responsibility”

Thursday, September 13, 2012
11:00 ante meridiem

Martin Luther King Jr. International Chapel
Morehouse College
In the City of Atlanta
The Reverend Gerald L. Durley, Ph.D.

Dr. Gerald L. Durley was born in Wichita, Kansas. He grew up in California and graduated from high school in Denver, Colorado. Being endowed with exceptional basketball skills and a deep interest in improving the civil and human rights of African Americans, Dr. Durley chose to leave the west and venture south where he enrolled in Tennessee State University in Nashville, Tennessee.

While earning a Bachelor of Science Degree in Psychology, playing on a championship basketball team, and serving as student government president, he became very active in the civil rights movement. After graduating with a Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology, Dr. Durley became one of the first Peace Corp volunteers to enter Nigeria, West Africa. From Africa he ventured to Switzerland where he enrolled in postgraduate studies at the University of Neuchatel where he was invited to play for one of the Swiss National basketball teams.

When he returned to the United States, Dr. Durley enrolled in Northern Illinois University where he again became intensely involved in the struggle for human dignity, and earned one of the first Master’s Degrees in Community Mental Health. He assisted in the founding of the Afro-American Cultural Organization whose goal was to teach minorities about their heritage. Upon graduation, he remained in Dekalb, Illinois, as an administrator, counselor, professor, recruiter, Director of Black Studies and liaison between Black students on campus and in the town of Dekalb. Recognizing his sincerity for positive change, the U.S. Office of Education invited him to move to Washington, D.C. and become Assistant Branch Chief of Pupil Personnel Services. A compelling desire to be even better prepared, however, dictated that Dr. Durley enter the University of Massachusetts and earn a Doctorate Degree in Urban Education and Psychology.

The Institute for Services to Education, Inc. invited Dr. Durley to direct many of its major projects working with historically black colleges and universities. He later founded and became president and CEO of Perspectives International, Inc. to produce positive, constructive programs for African Americans and other minorities.

Having been a dedicated educator, an effective psychologist, and a nationally sought after motivational speaker, Dr. Durley was gravely disturbed by the decaying moral, social and family value systems throughout the nation. This grave concern led him to enroll at Howard University and earn a Master of Divinity Degree.

Combining the disciplines of psychology and religion, Dr. Durley moved to Atlanta, Georgia, and accepted the position as Director of the Counseling Center at Clark College (now Clark Atlanta University). He later became Dean of Student Affairs at Clark Atlanta University. His concern for families and children encouraged him to accept the Executive Directorship of the Head Start Program for Fulton and Douglas Counties in Georgia. Realizing that the spirit and mind must work in concert with the physical body, Dr. Durley joined the faculty at the Morehouse School of Medicine as the Director of the Health Promotion Resource Center.

Dr. Durley has been intricately involved in the global warming climate change discussions across the country. He was invited to a Climate Leadership Retreat at the Garrison Institute to share with scientists, clergy, and environmentalists. He has been asked to serve on the Conservation Fund’s National Forum on Children. Dr. Durley appears in the film The Great Warming where he is discussing climate change with urban youngsters at the YMCA. Recently, he was asked to testify before the Environmental Protection Agency. On April 22, Dr. Durley spearheaded a forum involving Atlanta clergy to speak about religion and science on Earth Day, emphasizing his strong belief that the educational, scientific, business, political and religious communities must join forces and agree on positive actions for immediate, constructive change to save the environment.

For the last five years Dr. Durley has been traveling to Israel, Turkey, Jordan and other destinations with Muslims, Christians, and Jews to better understand the differences and similarities among people, cultures and beliefs. He has worked across faith lines to promote interfaith relations, and has been a vocal, outspoken advocate for assisting groups and individuals to communicate across faith disciplines.

Dr. Durley is called upon to address hundreds of civic, political, higher education, and social groups throughout the year on various topics. He also served as associate pastor at Mt. Olive Baptist Church in Arlington, Virginia, and he was ordained and became a pulpit associate at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta, Georgia. After 24 years of distinctive service, Dr. Durley recently stepped down from his position as Pastor of the historic Providence Missionary Baptist Church in Atlanta, Georgia. Dr. Durley has served on a number of boards of directors and advisory boards, his organizational memberships are numerous, and his awards and recognitions are legion.

Dr. Durley has been married for forty-five years to his wife, Muriel. Together they have one daughter, Nia, and one son, Hasan, and he is the grandfather of four.
~~ Program ~~

Presiding
Dr. Anne Wimbush Watts
Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs

PRELUDE
“Fantasie in G major, BWV 572”  
Johann Sebastian Bach

PRAYER FOR REFLECTION AND PEACE
Mr. Carrington Jackson ’13

FOCUS ON THE ACADEMIC YEAR
Dr. Watts

MUSICAL SELECTION
“The Music of Life”  
Nobel Cain

INTRODUCTION OF SPEAKER
Dr. Watts

MESSAGE
The Reverend Dr. Gerald L. Durley
Educator, Civil and Human Rights Activist, Psychologist, Counselor, and Former Pastor

MUSICAL SELECTION
“Good News, Chariot’s a-Comin”  
arr. Wendell Whalum ’52

The Morehouse College Quartet
Sherman Modeste ’13, Tenor I
Tislam Swift ’13, Tenor II
Marcus Greene ’13, Baritone
Tyler Hill ’15, Bass

PRESIDENTIAL CITATION:
Dr. Gerald L. Durley

Dr. Willis Braswell Sheftall, Jr. ’64
Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

OIL PORTRAIT UNVEILING
Dr. Gerald L. Durley

Dr. Lawrence Edward Carter, Sr.
Dean, The Martin Luther King, Jr. International Chapel
Dr. Sheftall

COLLEGE HYMN
“Dear Old Morehouse”  
J.O.B. Moseley ’29

Dr. David Edward Morrow ’80
Associate Professor of Music/Director of the Glee Club

Dr. David Francis Oliver
College Organist
Dear Old Morehouse

Dear old Morehouse, dear old Morehouse
We have pledged our lives to thee;
And we’ll ever, yea forever,
Give ourselves in loyalty.

True forever, true forever
To old Morehouse may we be;
So to bind each son the other
Into ties more brotherly.

Holy Spirit, Holy Spirit
Make us steadfast, honest, true
To old Morehouse and her ideals
And in all things that we do.