



A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT ROBERT MICHAEL FRANKLIN '75

JANUARY 2009

On the 20th of January, I joined many members of the Morehouse family—current students and alumni from around the globe—on the Mall in Washington, D.C., for the swearing-in ceremony of President Barack Obama. I observed a young president caught between his idealism and his pragmatism, his amazing rhetorical gifts restrained as if to underscore the need now for sobriety and focus after the celebrations of November 5. As one of the few living politicians ever to see nearly two million people in his audience, his apparent need to avoid stirring strong emotions among the expectant masses—something he probably learned more from reading theologian Reinhold Niebuhr than Dr. King—was appreciated. Niebuhr, tutored by his experience in Nazi Germany, also helped King to appreciate that humans have the capacity to commit outrages as groups that they would never consider as individuals. Mr. Obama is a very smart politician and public intellectual who knows that it is wiser to under promise now with the expectation of over-delivering later. We can all hope that will be the legacy of the 44th president.

Carson Joins the Morehouse MLK Collection

In 2006, owning the Martin Luther King Jr. papers was a remote dream for Morehouse College. But, less than three years later—through the benevolence of our mayor and a group of civic-minded donors—the 10,000-piece collection of Dr. King’s papers, sermons, manuscripts, and books are in their proper place. Currently secured inside the Robert W. Woodruff Library, the Morehouse College Martin Luther King Jr. Collection will be a gold mine of invaluable historical information for scholars, researchers, and Morehouse students. A world-class collection deserves world-class leadership, and that is exactly what we have acquired. Dr. Clayborne Carson of Stanford University is one of the world’s foremost scholars on Dr. King. On January 13, we announced his appointment as our first Martin Luther King Jr. Distinguished Professor and executive director of the Collection. A life-long student of Dr. King and a trusted confidant of Mrs. King, Dr. Carson has served as professor of history and founding director of the Martin Luther King, Jr., Research and Education Institute at Stanford University. He has edited and produced six volumes of *The Papers of Martin Luther King, Jr.*—a comprehensive collection of King’s speeches, sermons, correspondence, publications, and unpublished writings—and is the author of *A Knock at Midnight: Inspiration from the Great Sermons of*

Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., The Autobiography of Martin Luther King, Jr., and A Call to Conscience: The Landmark Speeches of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Dr. Carson will help the College meet its goal of developing and implementing a strategic plan for the Collection and raising its visibility in the local and national community. I encourage students to take advantage of Dr. Carson’s expertise by enrolling in his course, beginning fall 2009. I urge all of the Morehouse family to visit the Collection’s link on the library’s web site (www.auctr.edu) and to call Ms. Parham, the library’s executive director, for an appointment to view the Collection, which is already available on a limited basis.

Chick-fil-A Founder Rewards Morehouse for Developing Students for Leadership

S. Truett Cathy, Chick-fil-A’s founder and chairman, visited with me in January. During our discussion, Mr. Cathy praised Morehouse for not only providing excellent classroom preparation, but also for the Morehouse approach that emphasizes the need to make a positive first impression. He had read the December 2008 front-page article in the *Atlanta Journal Constitution* on our efforts to eradicate sagging pants and profanity on our campus and commended our efforts, noting that being well-dressed is “a very important, and sometimes overlooked, factor in maturing for a leadership role.”

As he said those words, he reached into a breast pocket and handed me a check for \$50,000 “to be used in attracting young men to train for future business leadership roles.” We thank our longtime friend for his example of ethical leadership. His support is a testament to his generosity and should inspire the Morehouse community to continue its efforts to raise funds by cultivating enduring friendships based on mutual values.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Chapter of National Residence Hall Honorary to Charter at Morehouse

Morehouse has been recognized by the National Association of College and University Residence Halls (NACURH) for service, scholastic achievement, and leadership. Through its honor society branch—the National Residence Hall Honorary (NRHH)—NACURH recognizes student leaders living in residence halls and acknowledges them for exceeding the call of duty to make the residence hall experience enriching. Lenny Mercedes, our assistant director of Housing and Residential Life, will serve as advisor to the chapter, the first at an historically black college. The campus community offers thanks to him and the Housing and Residential Life staff for their dedication to the students and for continuing the Renaissance. The official ceremony will take place in late February.

Alumni Commemorate King Birthday and Obama Inauguration with Great Dialogue

On January 19, the official holiday honoring the birth of Dr. King and one day before the inauguration of Barack Obama as our 44th president, 120 Morehouse alumni and friends converged on the historic Willard Intercontinental Hotel. They gathered to participate in “Dream Realized: Where Do We Go From Here?: A Morehouse Dialogue and Panel Discussion.” I am grateful for the leadership of Brothers Lamell McMorris '95, president and CEO of Perennial Strategy Consulting Group, and Curley Dossman '73, president of the Georgia Pacific Foundation, who served as architects of the event. The College is also

deeply indebted to moderator Julius Coles '64, president of Africare, and panelists The Rev. Otis Moss Jr. '56; political analyst Jamal Simmons '93; student activist Terrence Woodbury '09; The Rev. Calvin Butts '71; Martin Luther King III '79; and Dr. Clayborne Carson. I referred to the collective genius on the panel and in the room as the “pride of any college president.” The dialogue planted the seed for future discussions and, I am convinced, inspired alumni and students to recommit their support to the Obama administration and to advance the Morehouse Renaissance. I look forward to the future conversations inspired by this spirited dialogue, and I hope that every member of the Morehouse community will make a contribution to the ongoing progress for which Dr. King dreamed and worked to ensure. (Please be sure to check our web site for more information about the King Holiday and inaugural activities.)

This Month's Honorable Mentions

Kudos go to the following Morehouse family members for noteworthy accomplishments:

- **Dr. Walter Fluker**- *Ethical Leadership: The Quest for Character, Civility, and Community* was released by Fortress Press on February 1. Additionally, he and **Dr. Gregg Hall** were named interim co-directors of the Andrew Young Center for International Affairs.
- **The Rev. Herman Mason**- Elected national president of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., his swearing-in ceremony took place in King Chapel on January 24.
- **Dr. Stephane Dunn**- One of her essays was included in *Best African American Essays*, published in January. Also, her original play, “Chem-Girls,” was performed at the Horizon Theatre Company last week.
- **Dr. Leah Creque**- Her letter to First Lady Michelle Obama was included in *Go Tell Michelle*, released last month by SUNY Press.
- **Dr. John Williams**- Recently elected president of the HBCU Business Dean Roundtable, he is also president-elect of the American Real Estate Society.

Each month, I look forward to learning of your endeavors. Please continue to share with me so that I can, in turn, share with the entire community.

Please log onto www.morehouse.edu for our 142nd Founder's Day Observance (Feb. 12—15) activities.

“It is difficult to make a man miserable while he feels worthy of himself and claims kindred to the great God who made him.”

—President Abraham Lincoln



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