

**A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT ROBERT MICHAEL FRANKLIN '75****NOVEMBER 2008**

Just 44 years ago when the legendary Benjamin E. Mays was Morehouse president, most black Americans could not safely and reliably vote. Now, the United States has elected a young president who happens to be black. It is almost unimaginable that one nation could make that much progress in four short decades, but that is the American way. Once again, the world stands in awe of us, or better, in awe of that wonderful, ineffable quality we call the American spirit. It is a resilient spirit. And it constantly surprises us with its bottomless potential for renewal. For this—and many other blessings—this holiday season, I encourage you to pause and reflect on the many gifts we give and receive throughout the year.

Morehouse Teaching America

It is the College's great fortune to be the epicenter of revolutionary discussions that have the potential to make an impact on the world. Last week, we hosted such a discussion when Teach For America—the 18-year-old, 200,000-member organization committed to bringing quality education to students in underserved communities—organized a panel of speakers to address the Morehouse family about the challenges facing African American men with respect to education. I joined Dr. Michael Eric Dyson, activist Kevin Powell, and political hip hop artist Stic.Man on the panel and was pleased by the breadth of my fellow panelists' insight into the cultural implications of undereducated black men, as well as their commitment to modifying the nation's current education policy. Moderated by CNN anchor T. J. Holmes and our own Dr. Bryant Marks, director of the Morehouse Male Initiative, the discussion gave rise to questions from our students, who turned out in large numbers to partici-

pate in this important conversation. Their presence and interest in the topic encourages my belief that real solutions are imminent. Many thanks are due to Teach For America for its ongoing commitment to education and to the Morehouse community for tackling difficult issues in a positive and proactive manner.

Maroon Tiger Football

We have transitioned out of football season, and it is an appropriate time to acknowledge the Maroon Tiger Football Team for a successful season, both in terms of athletic and academic prowess. The team faced tough opponents but finished the season victoriously—and did so without compromising the Morehouse standard of academic excellence. In addition to ending the season with a 6-4 record (6-3 conference), three of the team members were named to the Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (SIAC) All Academic Team. Sophomore Matthew Burns, sophomore Turner Coggins,

and senior Micah Streiff earned grade points averages of 3.73, 3.74, and 3.91, respectively, giving Morehouse more spots on the SIAC All-Academic team than any other institution in the conference. Congratulations and commendations to our scholar-athletes for their accomplishments and for consistently making us proud. At Morehouse, of course, we expect nothing less.

Black Journalists Speak on Obama

In partnership with the Chrysler Foundation, the Morehouse College Journalism and Sports Program sponsored “Covering Change: How Black Journalists Reported on Obama’s Rise to Power.” The program, launched in the spring semester of 2007 under the leadership of Professor Ron Thomas, hosted five renowned African American journalists who covered the campaign and election of President-elect Barack Obama. The participants included Les Payne, Derrick Jackson, Corey Dade, April Ryan, and Athena Jones, each representing major publications and media outlets. They shared their perspectives on our new president’s rapid journey from obscurity to worldwide recognition. It was a substantive session that provided attendees another opportunity to reflect on the significance of the outcome of the recent election. On behalf of the Morehouse family, I offer thanks to Professor Ron Thomas for his leadership in the Journalism and Sports Program, to the journalists for their professionalism in the pursuit of the truth, and to the Chrysler Foundation for its support of meaningful educational programming.

Casey Foundation Joins forces with Morehouse in Recruiting Effort

We are grateful for the ongoing support of the Annie E. Casey Foundation and are once again indebted to the organization for its partnership in a November

recruiting event in Baltimore, Md. At least 25 area Morehouse alumni joined me at a reception attended by more than 50 prospective students and their parents to share the Morehouse message and to answer questions about the College. Thanks to the invitation of the foundation president, Douglas W. Nelson, and the facilitation of Senior Program Associate Carole Thompson, I had an opportunity to address the entire staff of the Annie E. Casey Foundation. Morehouse and the Foundation are committed to continuing a conversation about the College’s funding priorities. I look forward to updating the Morehouse community as details become available.

Alumni and Faculty Authors

One of my ongoing messages to our students is the importance of being well-read. To that end, I have reiterated to them that the faculty members are among the best resources for identifying definitive or classic texts to explore within each discipline. During the last 30 days, I received three fascinating books from a faculty member and two alumni. I am pleased to recommend the following: *Above Our Heads: The Making of a Morehouse Man* by alumnus Spencer Gibbs '69; *Holy Change: A Systematic Approach to Transforming a Community* by alumnus Dr. Joseph C. Parker Jr. '73; and *Proceedings of Dynamic Systems and Applications*, co-edited by Dr. Masilamani Sambandham of the Morehouse College Department of Mathematics. Although I am neither a math scholar nor did I stay in a Holiday Inn Express last night, I did plunge into Professor Sambandham’s important text with great relish and reward. Our alumni authors have penned very insightful and inspiring works.

Reclamation of Family

While the Morehouse family always regrets the passing of our alumni, many of their wives desire to re-

main connected to the Morehouse mission. We are grateful for their loyalty, and we are renewing our commitment to reaching out to our treasured sisters. We have made this reclamation a priority and are excited about including the widows of departed alumni in our many campus-wide and community activities. First Lady Cheryl Franklin is especially looking forward to hosting the Morehouse wives during the Founder's Week activities in February. To that end, we need your help in identifying Morehouse widows who wish to participate more meaningfully in the life of the Morehouse community. And we ask you to be an ambassador to these important women whose love and support has helped sustain Morehouse for 141 years. In each city I visit, I meet one or two of them, and nothing compares to the twinkle in their eyes as they speak fondly of departed husbands and the love of Morehouse (and often, Spelman) that each couple possessed.

Tom Joyner School of the Month

As of the last official report, Morehouse College and the Tom Joyner Foundation have generated more than \$22,000 in scholarships. Your generosity has been overwhelming and, as a result, 11 deserving students will be able to continue their Morehouse education. While our campaign officially ended as November drew to a close, donations will be accepted through December 31. We thank you for your contributions thus far and ask those who can to dig a bit deeper to

support this effort. You can make your donations in person at the Office of Communications or the Office of Alumni Relations, or you can log onto www.morehouse.edu and click the "Tom Joyner School of the Month" link. Needless to say, we are striving to maintain quality amidst a global economy in crisis. We need your support now more than ever before.

Morehouse and Spelman Singers Usher in the Season

Few things mark the arrival of the Christmas season in the Atlanta University Center like the Annual Spelman-Morehouse Glee Clubs Christmas Carol Concert. For 82 years, these combined chorales have lifted their voices to usher in the season and to bring holiday cheer to our extended community. Dr. David Morrow '80, director of the Morehouse Glee Club and the combined choir, raises the bar each year and brings us a musical message that enchants listening audiences around the world. I look forward to several evenings of magic and invite you to join me for one of the three concerts to be held on December 5 (King Chapel), 6 (Sisters Chapel), and 7 (King Chapel). You will not be disappointed. Also, contact us about having a wonderful excerpt of the Glee Club's rendition of "Dear Old Morehouse" downloaded to your cell phone as a ring tone.

"It is the personal thoughtfulness, the warm human awareness, the reaching out of the self to one's fellow man that makes giving worthy of the Christmas spirit."

--Isabel Currier



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