



A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT ROBERT MICHAEL FRANKLIN '75

DECEMBER 2007

In “This Christmas,” a new film in theatres now, two of the characters are students from Morehouse and Spelman. Without giving the plot away, one segment provides a wonderful free commercial for the 'House. Students who have seen it tell me that when the 'House was mentioned (in a way that would have made Dr. Mays smile), people in the theatre cheered. That was certainly the case in my theatre audience. I hope you will see the film and urge others to do likewise. Apart from the favorable mention of Morehouse, the film also contains a positive message about the possibility of healing broken relationships and pursuing personal dreams.

The Season and Reason for Giving

As we ponder gift giving, the responses of those who receive them, and the motivation that guides giving, consider the wisdom of the medieval rabbi Maimonides. He taught that there are eight levels of righteous giving. Beginning with the least commendable up to the most praiseworthy form of giving, he says:

- Level 8 occurs when “a person gives charity with a scowl.”
- Level 7 describes the person who gives to the poor less than what is appropriate, but gives it in a friendly manner.
- Level 6 is the person who hands charity to the poor after the poor have requested it.
- Level 5, one who gives charity to the poor before they ask for it.
- Level 4 is when the poor know the identity of the donor but they remain unknown to the donor, thereby sparing them humiliation.
- Level 3 occurs when the donor knows who receives the gift, but the recipients do not know the donor.
- Level 2 is mutual anonymity where the donor doesn't know the receiver and the receiver doesn't know the donor, who gives as a pure form of spiritual obligation.
- Level 1, the highest form of philanthropy, is when the donor forms a partnership with the poor so that they never again have to beg for assistance. It is described as holding the hand of the other.

As we approach the end of the year, bear in mind that there are approximately 150 Morehouse students who will not be able to graduate unless we provide them with additional financial support. That is the purpose of the Opportunity Fund. I am asking each of you to go to our

website at www.morehousealumniandfriends.com or send a gift today. You will help a Morehouse student keep the flame of learning aglow, and you will feel the profound gratification that comes only to those who become partners with those in need.

To that end, the first lady and I are pledging a substantial gift to be evenly divided between the Opportunity Fund and the current drive to purchase the Coat of the Mystique for all members of the senior class.

This Thanksgiving

During the Thanksgiving holiday, Davidson House was filled with family and students, including a group of our very impressive international students. Laughter and lively conversation permeated the air as young and old enjoyed the village celebration. Before dinner, ROTC Masterchief Hutchinson and I led a stimulating conversation with the students about their Morehouse experience. They spoke in glowing terms about the quality of our faculty and highlighted several current and former teachers who have made remarkable contributions to their intellectual and personal development. Earlier in the same week, faculty and staff donned their festive holiday garb and served a delicious turkey and dressing dinner to students in the beautifully decorated Chivers Dining Hall.

Transitions

Many great Morehouse Men transitioned from time into eternity this past year. And, sadly, we recently acknowledged the passing of a well known and much beloved alumnus, Clarence “Kappa” Brown '40. Thinking of Maimonides' words concerning those who become phil-

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anthropic partners with others, alumnus Brown did something noteworthy to demonstrate his love for this College. Since 1940, he gave a percentage of his annual income each year to the school. The College is grateful for this track record of loyalty and generosity and will miss brother "Kappa" Brown. May God bless every memory of him and all of our brothers who passed away this year.

Making a Big Deal About Little Things

Recently, I had the privilege of spending a morning with a very special group of local principals, teachers and staff in the Atlanta Public Schools. School superintendent Dr. Beverly Hall invited us to speak to more than 1,500 leaders of the high achieving schools in the city. I emphasized the importance of going out of our way to acknowledge and celebrate the academic and ethical achievements of young people, especially African American boys. We must not simply take their good grades or good deeds for granted. We should make a big deal of these seemingly little things. Let them know that we notice when they do the right thing and that we are willing to encourage more by giving the gift of recognition or even a token of appreciation.

At Morehouse, the staff and faculty recognize students who go the extra mile to show hospitality to others and who excel in their academic and moral development. In the spring, we will welcome to campus principals and headmasters of the all-male elementary and high school academies across the country. This will be part of our message and our practice.

Christmas Concert

I assume that most readers have experienced a Morehouse/Spelman Christmas Carol Concert. Once again, music directors David Morrow '80, Kevin Johnson and organist Dr. Joyce Johnson led our extraordinary young people in three days of free concerts for the public. Some people drove several hours from neighboring states just to experience the concert, support the students and enjoy their families.

Morehouse Sunday

National Alumni Association President Phil McCall '69 has reminded us of a great tradition started by President Mays known as Morehouse Sunday. We would like to

restore this tradition and will be asking all Morehouse Men who are pastors to designate a Sunday in their church as Morehouse Sunday, during which an alumnus can share part of our history and mission, perhaps a personal testimony on how Morehouse changed his life, and raise a generous offering to send to the College in support of the Opportunity Fund. I know that some pastors still do this and the College is very grateful. We will have more to say about this as we attempt to revive and coordinate a noble practice that invites the larger community to support our beloved institution.

Morehouse Books and Blazers Make Perfect Gifts

As you think about your shopping for loved ones, consider giving books by Morehouse alumni and faculty authors. These are just a few titles to consider:

- Benjamin E. Mays (Hon '67), *Born to Rebel*
- Lerone Bennett '49, *What Manner of Man: A Biography of Martin Luther King, Jr*
- Charles V. Willie '48, *Black College Mystique*
- Eddie S. Glaude '89, *In a Shade of Blue: Pragmatism and the Politics of Black People*
- John A. Eaves '84, *Speakers of the House: Morehouse Men Share Their Journey*
- Derek Watkins '97 (a.k.a. Fonzworth Bentley), *Advance Your Swagger: How to Use Manners, Confidence and Style to Get Ahead*
- Ira Joe Johnson '73 and William Pickens '48, *Benjamin E. Mays and Margaret Mitchell: A Unique Legacy in Medicine*
- Barry Hallen, *A Short History of African Philosophy*
- Walter F. Fluker, *The Stones that the Builders Rejected: The Development of Ethical Leadership from the Black Church Tradition*
- Robert M. Franklin '75, *Crisis in the Village: Restoring Hope in African American Communities*

Morehouse brothers, don't forget the opportunity to purchase a Morehouse blazer for yourself and for a deserving Morehouse student. I'd like to see all men of Morehouse with blazers by next year. Please review Henry Goodgame's recent email on how you can participate in this program.

And finally, visit our website and give us your feedback on what you'd like to see there.

"Make all you can, save all you can, give all you can."

—John Wesley (1703-1791)

Have a wonderful Christmas season and New Year!