



A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT ROBERT MICHAEL FRANKLIN '75

JUNE/JULY 2009

Morehouse is a living, dynamic institution that thrives on the energies of both departing graduates who have accomplished something noble and each incoming class of hopeful freshmen. On Saturday, July 18, 62 Men of Morehouse became full-fledged Morehouse Men, increasing the final count for the Class of 2009 to 481. Alumnus Jamal Simmons '93, distinguished political commentator for CNN and principal of the Raben Group, challenged the men to read, think and serve their way to the top. We are very proud of these new graduates and know that each of them will go forth to pursue the high aims of which Dr. Mays so often spoke. The day before the Summer Commencement, I participated in two additional campus ceremonies that underscored the power of the Morehouse talent pipeline. The John Hopps Program celebrated 16 young men who excel in science, math and technology (including the sons of two Morehouse professors, Drs. Duane Jackson and Willie Rockward). Then there was the parting ceremony for 60 students in the Pre-freshmen Summer Program (PSP), a six-week academic challenge and skill-building experience. Nearly all of these young men will be part of the freshman class next month. Great achievers depart while great promise arrives. That is the lifeblood of Morehouse College. *Et facta est lux.*

Morehouse and the Obama White House

In recent weeks, we have learned of President Obama's appointments of several outstanding Morehouse Men to serve the nation. Dr. John Silvanus Wilson Jr. '79 was recently named executive director of the White House Office on Historically Black Colleges and Universities. Alumnus Wilson is a distinguished educator and fundraising expert who will provide strategic leadership for the 105 HBCUs in America. Alumnus James Hudson '61 is a prominent Washington, D.C., attorney and the College's former Board of Trustees chairman who has been appointed director of the European Development Bank. Also Alumnus Jeh Johnson '79 serves as general counsel to the Department of Defense. There may be others and we are cataloguing that now. But I call attention to these three exceptional men who are representing Morehouse in high offices of the United States government. All three have provided me with wise counsel during the past two years, and we will continue to seek their assistance going forward. Contrary to first impression, it is not necessary to be a Morehouse Man with a first name beginning with the letter 'J' to be appointed by President Obama.

Morehouse Celebrates Reaffirmation

On my desk is a letter dated July 13, 2009, from Dr. Belle S. Whelan, president of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. It reads, in part: "The following action regarding your institution was taken at the June 2009 meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Commission on Colleges: The Commission on Colleges reaffirmed accreditation."

We worked earnestly for this achievement and expected this great news. SACS will make its announcement publicly to the College Delegate Assembly in December at its annual business session. As you know, only students at accredited institutions are eligible for federal financial aid; however, accreditation

also ensures the public that we continue to meet quality standards for faculty, educational programs, student affairs, finances, planning and assessment, physical structures, administration and governance. This is a momentous accomplishment for the College, and I commend all of the board members, faculty and administrators who enabled this achievement.

Fund Raising Success Stories

Despite a very distressed economy, Morehouse continues to seek, earn and receive significant grants and investments. This summer, we were awarded the following gifts:

- UNCF notified us of a \$300,000 implementation grant to strengthen our institutional advancement program (IAP) with a focus on alumni giving and building the annual fund.
- We also received a UNCF/Ford Faculty Enhancement Initiative Action Grant to strengthen academic programs and curriculum growth. It will total \$111,000 over two years.
- We received a \$50,000 planning grant from the Lilly Endowment that will enable a proposal for a seven-figure award to focus on a subject dear to the Morehouse legacy: using theology as a resource for encouraging all students to reflect on their vocation or "calling" in life.

I commend professors Belinda White and Bryant Marks, Lawrence Carter, Roy Craft and the Office of Institutional Advancement for smart thinking and strategic grantsmanship.

Howard Thurman Papers Project News

The Papers of Howard Washington Thurman, Volume I: My People Need Me, June 1918 – March 1936 is scheduled for release by the University of South Carolina Press

in November. The first of a four-volume edition on the career of Dr. Howard Thurman '23—internationally renowned theologian and author and esteemed alumnus—this written documentary will focus on Dr. Thurman's education and early career, featuring sermons, letters, essays and other writings. Additionally, the Howard Thurman Papers Project (HTPP) received a \$140,000 "We the People" award. This grant, an initiative of the National Endowment for the Humanities, is aimed at encouraging and enhancing the teaching, study and understanding of American history, culture and democratic principles. The HTPP team deserves kudos for its diligence in advancing the illuminating works of Dr. Thurman.

Men of the 'House, Accept No Excuses

I have written before about the campus impact of President Obama's election. The day after the groundbreaking event, King Chapel was filled with students who declared that there are now "no excuses" for academic underperformance and unethical behavior here or in the community at large. Inspired both by their expressions and by the president's example, we are organizing a community outreach campaign that will occur a week before Homecoming 2009. Though the program is still evolving, I am excited to share with you my ideas for the "No Excuses" campaign. I envision a student-led walk through the community, during which the students (dressed in signature blazers) and other members of the Morehouse community would knock on doors, bearing College gifts, sharing energy efficient light bulbs and conservation tips, offering academic tutorial services and collecting names of those seeking employment. Those names—along with résumés and

other relevant information—would, in turn, be shared with the mayor and CEOs of other organizations who agree to serve as partners in this effort to rebuild the community and provide meaningful support to our neighbors. Ultimately, our goal is to present Morehouse students as neighbors who wish to stop community violence and provide hope in the neighborhood.

OIA and Students Launch "Thank You" Campaign

On June 8, the Office of Institutional Advancement (OIA) launched a Thank-a-thon. Some of our best and brightest students are making phone calls to designated friends of the College (specifically, those who have made gifts during the last year or have made consistent gifts for the past five, 10 or 20 years) simply to thank them for their support.

The response to this first-time campaign has been overwhelmingly positive. The students report that donors are enthusiastic about receiving personal calls and that some donors have requested periodic updates from the students with whom they spoke. I am particularly excited by this exercise in gratitude, as it connects the College's advocates with the most direct beneficiaries of their generosity.

If you have ever made a gift to the College, please accept my personal thanks. If, however, you have made a gift that falls into one of the designated categories and have not been contacted by phone (or email in the absence of a valid phone number), please call OIA at (404) 653-7881 to update your contact information. You are valued by the College, and we want to be in touch.

Knowing is not enough; we must apply. Willing is not enough; we must do.

— *Johann Wolfgang von Goethe*

