

THE

HOUSE



REPORT

A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT ROBERT MICHAEL FRANKLIN '75

JULY 2008

Recently, I read an article that examined why relatively few small businesses have become billion dollar companies. The author noted that the key factor that enables the growth of the successful companies is that they offer breakthrough value propositions. Instead of simply offering products or services, they change people's lives and offer higher order, emotionally resonant benefits. That is what Morehouse does. In addition to providing a stellar education to almost 3,000 young men, we also participate in changing their lives and, thereby, aim to change the world. Looking forward, I am determined to see Morehouse's fiscal assets move in line with the healthy endowments of some of our sister HBCUs who, not unlike us, offer breakthrough value propositions. I believe that if we work together, the fruit of our labor will be manifest in increased academic offerings, more College-community collaborative initiatives and fewer students who—for financial reasons—leave school without a degree. Can I count on you to make this goal a reality?

**Commencement**

On July 19, Morehouse College held its summer Commencement exercises, graduating 55 students into the ranks of Morehouse Men and raising the number of degrees awarded in 2008 to 508. I congratulate them for this first of many successes and entreat you to join with me in wishing them well in all future endeavors, coupled with the fullness of character that will serve them and their communities for a lifetime.

I commend Newark (N.J.) mayor Cory Booker, a Stanford alumnus, for his inspiring presence and his message that did exactly what a Commencement address should do: challenge the graduates to reach for greater heights, speak truth to power, and inspire students to “lift as

they climb.” I thank him for his invaluable addition to the Commencement exercises.

Mayor Booker and Dr. Ronald Carter '71, the newly elected president of Johnson C. Smith University in Charlotte, N.C., were presented with presidential awards of distinction. Both of these gentlemen have achieved significant recognition for contributions made to the political and educational arenas, respectively. We are pleased to have them as part of the Morehouse College family and applaud them for setting fine examples of professional integrity and intelligent leadership.

Finally, we all congratulate Mr. Ellis Barney Freeman, who was named an affiliate member

of the Class of 1933 and inducted into the National Alumni Association as a lifetime member just days before his 97<sup>th</sup> birthday. Mr. Freeman entered Morehouse as a freshman in 1929 during President John Hope's administration but was forced to leave school in 1931 because of the Great Depression. He was unable to return but has always upheld the ideals of the College. His life story connects us to one of the most difficult periods in the history of Morehouse. Still, he thrived, as did this great College. It was a thrilling moment to observe Alumni Association President Philip McCall '69 confer this much deserved public recognition. Join me in congratulating Mr. Freeman and in welcoming him back into the fold.

### **Summer Academy: The Morehouse Mission of Reaching Young People**

Each summer, Morehouse presents a series of programs designed to engage middle school and high school students who excel in a variety of academic areas—the sciences, mathematics, health professions, foreign languages as well as leadership, college preparation and athletics. Under the direction of Dr. Anne Watts—who has provided stellar leadership of the Summer Academy since its inception—nearly 1,100 students participated in the 2008 summer experience on our campus.

Many of the students who participated in the Summer Academy's 17 various programs will join us in a few weeks as freshmen. More exciting is the well documented fact that the vast majority of young men who enroll in our Summer Academy go on to graduate from Morehouse in four years. We welcome those students and anticipate great things from them.

### **Faculty Makes the College**

At the end of the academic year, three professors in the Department of Political Science—Abraham Davis, Hamid Taqi and Sharon Vaughan—left the College to pursue other endeavors. The College family wishes them well and, at the appropriate occasion, will celebrate their contributions to the College.

This summer, the Division dean, department chair and senior faculty in the department have been diligently working to hire new faculty for the fall semester.

Fall classes will be properly staffed, students will be enriched by our new professors, and the high quality of that department will be upheld.

### **Strong Alumni Response**

In June, I appealed to the alumni community to support the College with an end-of-year donation. Morehouse Men, please accept my sincere thanks for rallying to support our alma mater in such a generous manner. Your gifts are always greatly appreciated, but you should draw additional inner gratification from the fact that your gift makes possible the education of young men who are committed to excellence in academics and service, as well as the College's noble tradition of producing outstanding leaders.

Recently, I met with Luis Ubina, president of The Ford Foundation. His enthusiasm surrounding the College's progress and upcoming 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary inspired me to begin developing what I think will be an important initiative for our sesquicentennial anniversary. Additionally, I am consider-

ing the level of alumni support that will be vital to making the anniversary a milestone in the history of the College.

Finally, I continue to be grateful for the gracious hospitality that is afforded me and my staff by alumni as I travel across the fruited plain. In recent weeks, I visited Houston, Dallas, San Francisco, Los Angeles and South Orange, N.J., and was met with a warm, Morehouse welcome each time. I extend humble thanks to the Alumni Association chapter presidents who organized opportunities to meet with fellow alumni enabling me to receive their much valued input. I also offer spe-

cial thanks to Michelle and Kevin McKesson (parents of Jason McKesson, a current Morehouse College student), who opened their Los Angeles home for a wonderful reception on behalf of the College, and to Dr. Mack Roach '75, who convened a group of Bay Area alumni for good conversation, dinner and Morehouse fellowship. These men, like those whom I meet and hear from each month, continue to affirm the fact that Morehouse offers its students a breakthrough value proposition. When you graduate, you depart as a member of an international brotherhood that loves and supports dear old Morehouse. May this never die.

*“In the attitude of silence, the soul finds the path in a clearer light, and what is elusive and deceptive resolves itself into crystal clearness. Our life is a long and arduous quest after truth.”*

*Mohandas K. Gandhi*



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