

THE

HOUSE



REPORT

A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT ROBERT MICHAEL FRANKLIN '75

AUGUST 2008

August at Morehouse. A quiet transition occurs at the end of July as hundreds of Summer Academy students conclude their programs and the men of Morehouse begin to return. The thing I love most about this season is the early arrival of the athletes who begin football camp and track practice, and band members (the House of Funk) who commence practice. The sound of the Morehouse drumline filling the evening sky alerts us all that another school year has arrived. That's when I realize again how magical it is to live on a college campus. One early morning, I walked past the band practicing their marching formations without instruments. Director Melvin Jones led them in a rousing chant to inspire greater precision in the execution of complex formations. "It ain't right until it's right!" he roared as they repeated. As I walked over to my office, that chant echoed in my mind. I have tasked the senior management team with reviewing and improving our enrollment process. Already this committed team has identified and begun to implement process redesigns for greater efficiency and customer satisfaction. And, as we continue to institute changes there and throughout the College, the chant from the band will goad and inspire us..."It ain't right until it's right."

Gift from the Robinson Family

During a visit to New Jersey for an annual UNCF fundraiser, the College was honored to address the audience at an event hosted by philanthropist Tamara Robinson. I reminded the audience of the historic aspirations of black people to acquire literacy and an education by quoting Booker T. Washington's riveting observation that coming out of slavery, "We were an entire race trying to go to school." I also relayed the story of too many Morehouse students who excel academically for two or three years only to run out of money during years three or four. I celebrated how Morehouse alumni and other stakeholders have stepped up and given generously and will continue to do so. However, despite our community's generosity, we still have a

gap, and we are still losing Morehouse students to more affordable institutions. After the event, I received a gift of \$150,000 for our Board Opportunity Fund. We thank the Robinson family for this generous gift that will both immediately assist students in need and contribute to the Board Opportunity Fund endowment match we are completing with the Mellon Foundation. The bottom line is that in order to solve this challenge long term, Morehouse will need approximately \$20 million in endowment to provide the extra \$750,000 we need annually to assist our juniors and seniors. You will hear more of this in the weeks ahead, and I hope that you will make a decision about how you and your family will help meet this critical challenge to Morehouse excellence with a meaningful gift or pledge.

First Morehouse Family Picnic

The Office of the President was pleased to host our first annual faculty and staff picnic. The brainchild of the First Lady, it was a wonderful way to prepare for the beginning of another exciting academic year. More than 350 colleagues and their families gathered for hot barbeque, cool treats and warm camaraderie. The great drama of the day was the threat of a major thunderstorm passing through. This forced us to relocate from the Century campus to the Forbes Arena. Among the many highlights of the day were hearing each member of the Maroon Tigers football team introduce himself, along with Coach Rich Freeman and the rest of the coaching staff. In addition to door prizes and music spun by DJ Capricorn Kid, we were treated to video highlights of this year's Faculty and Staff Follies talent show. We intend to do this each year as it afforded us an opportunity to meet spouses, partners, children and parents of our valued employees.

Men of the Morehouse Renaissance Multiply

During the third week of August, we welcomed about 770 freshmen, along with more than 150 other new students. We had a good week of introducing these men to the standards and conduct that are becoming of men of Morehouse. Once again, we reiterated what I have begun to call the five pillars of the Renaissance man with a social conscience: He must be well read, well traveled, well spoken, well dressed and well balanced (i.e. healthy minds within healthy bodies governed by healthy values.) I urge you to take a look at the address in the link: www.morehouse.edu

Fabulous Joint Spelman and Morehouse Freshman Convocation

This was the first time I have experienced a joint freshman convocation since that Sunday morning in 1975

when I was a freshman. This was an important opportunity for Spelman President Beverly Daniel Tatum and me to articulate our goals and hopes for the year. Henry Goodgame '84, director of Alumni Relations sang one of the classic spirituals, "Hold On Just a Little While Longer" that brought people to their feet. We concluded by leading the students in a stirring litany that included the pledges, "Will you do all you can to uphold the name and reputation of your school?" They responded in unison, "*Yes, we will!*" "Will you register to vote and do all you can to urge others to vote in this historic election?" And, "Will you do everything you can to lead the renaissance of the African diaspora?" We believe that we have admitted an exceptional group of freshmen who will carry the torches of Morehouse and Spelman with distinction.

Unveiling the Purvis Young Art Collection at Morehouse

As you may have heard or read from the extensive media reports, Morehouse accepted a stunning 109-piece art collection, valued at more than \$1 million, from the Rubell Family Collection in Miami. On August 28th, Don and Mera Rubell were on hand, along with senior executives of Northern Trust Bank, to dedicate and view the collection that is now permanently mounted in the African American Hall of Fame in King Chapel. This art of urban folk master, Purvis Young, has transformed the space and makes it one of our campus centerpieces. During the dedication, Dean Carter shared a poignant anecdote about Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. being asked to sit in a segregated section of a restaurant behind a curtain where he would be unable to view a collection of art in the restaurant. It was a fitting memory on the 45th anniversary of King's "I Have a Dream Speech" at the March on Washington (August 28, 1963). I invite the entire Morehouse family to come and view this spectacular new asset of the College.

Witnesses to History

Another significant event occurred on August 28th as Sen. Barack Obama (D-IL) accepted the Democratic Party's presidential nomination at the Democratic National Convention. Whatever your partisan political loyalties might be, it was an historic event for all Americans and, perhaps, especially for African American men who, so often, are portrayed in negative terms. I hope that Obama's candidacy will mark a turning point in how this society regards black men and in how we regard ourselves, our potential, our intelligence and our ability to make enormous contributions to the common good.

Preparing for SACS Reaffirmation of Accreditation Visit

This October just after Homecoming, we will welcome the Visiting Committee of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) to campus to review our compliance with standards of excellence in higher education. Thanks to the hard work of scores of faculty, staff, and board members, we appear to be in good shape and welcome the visit. One new feature of accreditation is the requirement that every school now identify a single project that the entire college engages to demonstrate excellence in student learning outcomes. This is called the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP). Some schools take up the use of technology in the classroom, increasing student capacity for research, or improving communication skills. Morehouse has selected the topic of internationalization, specifically, "Enhancing the Global Competence of Morehouse Students." Morehouse has a long track record of accom-

plishment in global awareness and leadership, including the international roles of President John Hope, President Benjamin E. Mays, Howard Thurman '23, Martin Luther King, Jr. '48 and many others. We now aim to ensure that in the future, all Morehouse students will have the knowledge, practical experience, and aptitude to understand the historical, political, economic, cultural, demographic and environmental realities of one or more other countries thereby equipping them to be good citizens and potential leaders in our shrinking global community. In short, we want the men of Morehouse to become globalists early in their college careers. To accomplish this, we will need partnerships with other organizations that possess global reach for the purpose of establishing internships, travel and research opportunities, faculty and student exchanges, etc. And, we will need our alumni, board of trustees and other friends to help us pay for this ambitious but critical undertaking. If you have additional ideas for us, please send them to the Office of the Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Homecoming Preparations

We are only a few weeks from our October 24-26 Homecoming weekend. Let's make this a record-breaking year for attendance. We're working on the 'House—come and see our attractive new Welcome Center and extended parking deck, and come cheer on the Fighting Maroon Tigers to victory. For more information on Homecoming, see the link at: www.morehouse.edu.

"Though no one can go back and make a brand new start, anyone can start from now and make a brand new ending."

--Carl Bard



MOREHOUSE
COLLEGE