



A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT ROBERT MICHAEL FRANKLIN '75

SEPTEMBER 2008

The final days of September ushered in an economic crisis that in a short period of time has undermined public confidence in our longstanding financial institutions and processes. We are slowly coming to understand the full dimensions of the crisis and how the nation and world will move forward in light of it. Naturally, at the College we are very concerned about the impact of this macroeconomic downturn on our fiscal health, especially our students' access to credit and the impact on our endowment.

As we adjust to the new economic reality that has been imposed upon us, we should all remember that we will pass through this turbulence and emerge stronger and wiser on the other side. The Morehouse community has a special outlook on adversity. During the Great Depression, Morehouse faced its most difficult financial challenges, and many feared that she would not survive. The board of trustees, President Mays, the faculty, staff, alumni, students, and stakeholders, however, had a different view. With dogged determination and faith, they marched forward. In fact, it was during those years that Morehouse produced some of its greatest alumni, including Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. '48.

So, to those who would despair amidst difficult times, I say remember our worst years, remember when we almost closed our doors, remember when the world had written us off. And, now look at Morehouse with her star shining bright and her rays (alumni) spreading hope and justice and enlightenment throughout the world. We are not mere survivors. We demonstrate our best when amidst adversity. Obedient to the Creator's command, the sun always breaks through the darkest clouds. *Et facta est lux.*

A West Coast Classic to Remember

For the past three years in Los Angeles, community and corporate leaders have sponsored the Angel City Classic football game to draw attention to the nation's 105 HBCUs. For the second time, Morehouse was fortunate to participate, this time against Prairie View A&M University. On Saturday, September 27, the great contest occurred in the Los Angeles Coliseum before 40,000 fans and a national television audience. The Maroon Tigers played a great game and made us all proud. We lost the game by a couple of plays but established our national profile as a football powerhouse to be reckoned with. We are grateful for the many Morehouse family members who traveled from

around the country to L.A. for the game, and for the numerous local Morehouse families and friends. I was pleased that Morehouse Man and dad Denzel Washington spent part of the game on our sidelines and expressed his appreciation for the team's strong performance.

I'd also like to thank Regional Vice President Don Long '64 for convening alumni at the First A.M.E. Church, where the Rev. John Hunter '79 is pastor. The men who gathered for breakfast and those who gathered after the game for a great party presented several impressive financial gifts to the College. Henry Goodgame '84, director of Alumni Relations, emphasized how important it is now for every alumnus to give. We are preparing for the month of November

(just a few weeks away!) when Morehouse will be the Tom Joyner Foundation School of the Month. The Morehouse brotherhood remains strong, and I look forward, in the upcoming months, to sharing some of the ideas and initiatives that were birthed during this winning weekend.

Morehouse Men: Masters of Music

En route to Los Angeles, I sat next to the Spanish director of the Los Angeles Opera. After he spoke of the evening's performance, I began to talk about the extraordinary musical talents of the Morehouse community. He seemed impressed with the range of our musical excellence. While I'm on this subject, let me expand the point.

The College is fortunate to have an accomplished Department of Music that teaches and performs in a variety of genres reflecting the genius of what Dr. Asa Hilliard called our "cultural wealth." In addition to the Glee Club—which completed its fourth international concert tour last spring—the Music Department sponsors performance ensembles for both music and non-music majors. They include the Maroon Tiger Marching Band, the Morehouse College Jazz Ensemble, the Morehouse-Spelman Concert Band, and the Atlanta University Centerwide Orchestra.

Dr. Uzee Brown Jr. '72, now chair of the department, has been committed to formal music education at Morehouse since he joined the faculty in 1973. During that time, he also has held the presidency of the National Association of Negro Musicians—a position currently held by Glee Club director Dr. David Morrow '80—and given world-class performances

in Luxembourg (*Porgy and Bess*); Paris; Granada; and Caen. Please join me in thanking Dr. Brown and Dr. Morrow—who was recently appointed conductor of the Atlanta Singers—for continuing to expand their professional horizons, while promoting musical brilliance on our own stage.

You will be pleased to know that the Morehouse College Center for the Arts is now under construction. The site is cleared, bulldozers are turning dirt, and the air is filled with dust. It is exciting and inspiring to know that in about 18 months, we will be prepared to invite the world to hear our musical geniuses in a brand new arts center that will further enhance the cultural offerings of the West End community.

A Maroon and White Flag in Germany

I remind you of the five attributes of Renaissance manhood as Morehouse is defining it (see NSO address, www.morehouse.edu). Last week, one of our Renaissance men in the making contacted us. Mr. LaSean Brown '08, a Fulbright scholar—who is representing Morehouse in Dortmund, Germany—reported on his first impressions of his new home away from home, Martin Luther King Gesamtschule: Schule Ohne Racismus (translated, The Martin Luther King Comprehensive School: School Without Racism). He told us that he was selected for service at that school because he was a Morehouse alumnus and presumed to be well prepared to speak about Dr. King's tenets and the elimination of racism. Mr. Brown wrote of the revelation, "Gargantuan, is it not?"

It is indeed gargantuan—for the College, as well as for Mr. Brown. Not only does Morehouse have a representative voice in a valuable global conversation, but Mr. Brown has the rarely granted opportunity to represent the ideals of a great College and a great nation on the international stage, something America desperately needs to display more. May he and many others carry the Morehouse Renaissance to the farthest edges of the world.

Excellent Service Rewarded

In early September, I had the opportunity to participate in the annual White House HBCU Week Conference. During the opening plenary session, a distinguished educator, Stephanie Monroe—Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights in the Department of Education—shared a personal testimony about escorting her high school son to various East Coast schools, including an HBCU. As she relayed details of her son's campus tour at the undisclosed institution, she emphasized that the tour was conducted by an articulate and well-informed student who was unaware of her identity. She went on to brag about how the institution's dean of admissions spent 45 minutes with her son in an unscheduled visit. He assumed a fatherly perspective and challenged the young man to rise to his obvious potential. I quietly thought, "That would have happened at Morehouse, but I wonder where this occurred?"

Moments later, she echoed my thought. "Now this could have happened at any HBCU, but it happened at... Morehouse College." The dean of Admissions was indeed Sterling Hudson, who was also in the audience and was asked to stand for recognition. I, too, applaud Dean Sterling Hudson and the countless other Morehouse ambassadors whose excellence is unsurpassed and whose commitment to Morehouse helps us consistently to rise to our potential.

Alumni of Detroit: Aiming for 100% Giving in November

Following a very promising visit to the Kresge Foundation in Troy, Mich., Vice President of Institutional Advancement Phillip Howard '87 and I met with the Detroit area alumni, led by President Curtis Kilpatrick '69 and Regional Vice President Charles Neal '64. After learning that Morehouse has set a fundraising goal of \$220,000 during its Tom Joyner Foundation month, they began pledging gifts and declared their intent to be a 100% active alumni chapter. I commend the men of Detroit for this. And, I challenge the entire alumni association nationwide to embrace this same attitude. It is absolutely important that everyone gives something, no matter what amount. But, in order to exceed the goal, we will need as many as can to make a meaningful gift toward this effort. We will provide 'shout outs' to those who step up in exceptionally generous ways.

"He who starts behind in the great race of life must forever remain behind or run faster than the man in front."

--Dr. Benjamin E. Mays



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