

"It is these intimate encounters I've shared that inspire me towards service, so that the quiet voices of the famished, poor and oppressed can still be heard during the pivotal discussions on our society's future."



By Michael Young '06

'MOREHOUSE INSPIRED

Although some would define 'diverse HBCU' as an oxymoron, it was the breadth of cultures, interests and values flowing throughout the Morehouse student body that most inspired me to travel. After graduation, I found myself at the London School of Economics, a well-blended community reputed for vaulting across the typical racial and religious divides of Europe. London was full of ethnic enclaves permeating nearly every Metro stop; but my journey spilled over to France, Scotland and Spain, where I discovered entirely new worlds of food, music and art. A new, broader perspective awaited my return home.

My mother, Dr. Joyce Young, was the first of her humble Kittitian family to graduate high school. Needless to say, the value of education was well-respected at home, which is why the pursuit of a degree in physics brought me to none other than Morehouse College. It was during my time in Atlanta that I realized how the absence of educational opportunity could cripple a community. Watching unemployment and despair run parallel through the streets of the city hailed as the black mecca genuinely moved me.

It was late in the fall of 2006 in Durham, N.C., when I linked this Morehouse inspiration with meaningful action. My father, a life-time educator and engineer, lent his experience to help me incorporate an academic-enhancement non-profit established to serve our metro communities. Although the services offered have evolved since that time, Osborne Educational Services still rests on a basic devotion to delivering science and math tutorials for students in need, at flexible, affordable rates.

Young on the campus of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.



The following year, I was blessed with even further opportunities to live out the servant-leader ethos imbued by our alma mater. As a University of North Carolina (UNC) master of public administration student, I became part of the largest, university-based government advisory organization in the United States. Presenting an opportunity to master the principles of public service management, organizational leadership, and policy analysis, the coursework was riveting. The program also provided a field of student development activities, such as public-sector consulting projects. My first consulting assignment: To draft a housing development bid procurement

responsible for his case translated his language and the legal question into something I could understand. No sooner than I left the office, the heavy weight of this new duty descended on me. Only a newly developed sense of urgency allowed me to plow through the murky field of immigration law to deliver some much-needed answers to the client. Over the following weeks, we filed the appropriate papers.

The summer I clerked at the North Carolina Court of Appeals brought multiple lessons on how the rule of law is truly the cornerstone of our society. In the chambers of the second most senior judge of what was reverentially referred

the subsequent years, it couldn't possibly be overstated how influential my time at Morehouse College was in molding the image of the man I am today, as well as the one I hope to be tomorrow. ■

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ME TO BECOME A SERVANT-LEADER'

policy for the Town of Chapel Hill's Housing Department. Following months of research, countless meetings and tireless effort, I helped design a plan aimed at creating local jobs and enhancing the businesses of minority and women entrepreneurs. Ensuring alignment with HUD federal guidelines, North Carolina law, and local community needs was certainly challenging, but it piqued my interest in the legal field, and I began forming my own notions of social justice. Then, I took the next step.

A year later, while jointly enrolled at UNC's law school, I was confronted by an unexpected challenge. An Eastern European immigrant, recently convicted of a state felony, saw the refugee status he rested upon the past four years quickly receding from beneath his feet. This *pro bono* matter was the first time I had to wrestle a legal question with more at stake than my grade in a course. It was eerily exciting. I met him at the local office of an international law firm.

There, his wife and the partner

to as "the working court," there was no space for an idle mind. I spent that summer buried in memos, briefs and opinions. But in a generous exchange, almost daily, Judge Wynn provided a bounty of invaluable judicial gems. Judge Wynn worked as a JAG officer and was chair of the ABA Judicial Committee. The passion with which he advocated for justice throughout his several stations was monumental. As a parting gift on my final day, an aged copy of *Simple Justice* accompanied an inspirational, but sober charge: "They will try, but don't let them stop you."

With all of these inspirational memories fixed in my mind, the concept of public service has gradually evolved from the abstract onus it once was to a more comfortable, unassuming fixture in my life. It is these intimate encounters that inspire me towards service, so that the quiet voices of the famished, poor and oppressed can still be heard during the pivotal discussions on our society's future. Although this essay reflects mostly upon

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**Taking the Road
Less Traveled?**

*If so, we want
to hear about it.*

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