Lomax '68 Named President of UNCF

MICHAEL LOMAX ‘68, president emeritus of Dillard University and former chairman of the Fulton County (Ga.) Commission, was recently named president of the United Negro College Fund. He plans to build a massive endowment that will ensure the organization’s continued support for its 39 member schools by raising $1 billion.

The fund is the nation’s oldest minority higher education scholarship program and contributes significant financial support to private historically black colleges and universities.

Lomax had been president of Dillard University in New Orleans since 1997. He helped double enrollment at the historically black school and spearheaded a $60 million renovation campaign. He also taught literature for 20 years at Spelman and Morehouse colleges and Emory University. He ran twice for mayor of Atlanta and founded the city’s National Black Arts Festival.

Lomax said he intends to divide his time between the UNCF headquarters outside Washington, D.C., and Atlanta, where he and his wife, Cheryl, still own a home.

He said his ties to Atlanta and the schools within the Atlanta University Center will serve as a fund-raising advantage. “These schools have a long, rich and powerful history,” he said. “Morehouse and Spelman, especially, are exemplars of the very best in higher education. The city of Atlanta has long been a generous supporter of the fund. I’m hoping I can continue that trend.”

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Morehouse Well Represented at Caltech

MOREHOUSE GRADUATES HAVE MADE their mark at the California Institute of Technology (Caltech) for more than 40 years. Pictured below at a Caltech event are Terrell D. Neal ‘99 (left), Christopher Boxe ‘99 (right) and Caltech graduate William D. Hutchinson, Ph.D ‘60 (center).

Terrell Neal completed the Dual Degree Program while at Morehouse, earning a bachelor’s in mathematics from Morehouse and a bachelor’s in electrical engineering from Georgia Tech. He entered Caltech in September 2000, earning the masters’ in electrical engineering in 2001. He is continuing his studies for the Ph.D in Electrical Engineering, as a David and Lucille Packard Foundation Fellow, where he is working to develop nanofabricated devices for optical, fluidic, and electrical analyses and applications. He anticipates receiving the Ph.D in 2005.

Christopher S. Boxe received the bachelor’s in chemistry with a minor in mathematics from Morehouse in 1999. He entered Caltech in the fall of 1999 and began the master’s program in planetary science, receiving his degree in 2001. Transferring to the Environmental Science and Engineering Department in 2001, he received the M.S. in 2002 and now is in the Environmental Science and Engineering Ph.D program. He anticipates completing his studies in the fall of 2004.

William D. Hutchinson received a bachelor’s in chemistry from Morehouse and completed the doctorate in chemistry with a minor in physics at Caltech in 1960, where he studied the chemistry of abnormal hemoglobin. This work focused principally on sickle cell hemoglobin and culminated in his identifying that portion of the hemoglobin molecule that produces the well-known clinical manifestations of sickle cell disease. In this work, he was associated with Nobel Laureate Linus Pauling. Entering the aerospace industry after graduate school, Hutchinson worked 40 years in rocket propulsion, nuclear and laser weapons effects, and optics. He retired in 1999 as manager of the Advanced Research Labs at the Rocketdyne Division of Boeing. Over the years, he has maintained contact with and provided support to many generations of African American students who have matriculated at Caltech. He has worked closely with the Caltech administration to increase the ethnic diversity of the faculty and student body.
A Long Life of Firsts: Oldest Alum, Samuel Nabrit '25, Dies at 98

SAML NABRIT '25, prominent educator, scientist and scholar, died on December 30 in Atlanta. At age 98, he was the College’s oldest living alumnus. Nabrit was eulogized at Friendship Baptist Church in Atlanta. The Rev. William Guy officiated.

Nabrit’s long life included an impressive roster of firsts. He was the first Morehouse graduate to earn a doctorate and the first African American to receive a doctorate from Brown University in 1928. He also became Brown’s first black trustee. He was the first African American to serve on the Atomic Energy Commission, as well as several other national committees.

“Dr. Nabrit was the quintessential Morehouse Man,” said Henry L. Goodgame ’84, director of Alumni Relations at Morehouse. “He was an academician, statesman and scholar.” Goodgame came to rely on Nabrit’s ubiquitous presence at some of the College’s most significant events, including New Student Orientation, Commencement and Founder’s Week. “He had a rich history with the institution and could remember every detail,” he said. “It was a joy to get to know him.”

Nabrit devoted his distinguished career to helping educate black students. A developmental biologist, he spent several decades as a college professor and administrator. From 1927 to 1932, he headed the biology department at Morehouse. He also taught at Atlanta University, where he was dean of the graduate school of arts and sciences, and—at age 86—served as interim director of the Atlanta University Center for 15 months.

He once said that he adopted his paternal grandmother’s “yearning to develop functional literacy.” Among the accomplishments he was most proud of as an educator was training black doctorate recipients. “The 30 Ph.D.’s I turned out, I relish,” he was quoted as saying. “I’m so delighted to see them become successes.”

In 1955, Nabrit began an 11-year term as the president of Texas Southern University in Houston. It was an era where, throughout the South, student protestors were staging sit-ins and other demonstrations. Before long, TSU students staged their own demonstrations in an effort to integrate Houston. Unlike some of the other schools that were paving the way to integrated facilities, however, TSU was a public school and Nabrit was an employee of the state. As he prepared to speak in chapel before his students, some of whom had recently participated in a sit-in, Nabrit was forced to make a conscious choice about the stance he would take.

“I said, ‘If all the other black students in this country have come to the feeling that racial discrimination and segregation are wrong, and if they are making an effort to do something about it, and if our students don’t feel the same way, well, then there is something wrong with our teaching at TSU,’” he is quoted as saying.

Nabrit knew that the speech could cause him his job. He and Mrs. Nabrit had earlier decided, however, that “…With frugal living, we could make it to the end of our lives with what we had. I had no fear of my position being taken away, or of reprisal from the state.”

Nabrit did not lose his position, but instead a year later was appointed by President Dwight Eisenhower to a six-year term on the National Science Board. He also went on to serve as the president of the Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools from 1960-61 and on the board of directors of the American Council on Education in 1961.

Nabrit’s tenure at TSU came to an end in 1966 when he was nominated by President Lyndon Johnson to serve a four-year term on the Atomic Energy Commission. A third president, John. F. Kennedy, named him representative to Niger.

A tireless advocate for education, Nabrit founded and operated the Southern Fellowship Fund for nearly 15 years, disbursing more than $22 million to assist African American students who were pursuing doctoral degrees.

The Nabrit name has become legendary at Morehouse. Samuel Nabrit was the son of a Morehouse Man, the late Dr. James Madison Nabrit Sr., class of 1898, and the brother of two Morehouse pillars, the late Dr. James M. Nabrit Jr. ’23 and the late Rev. Dr. Henry C. Nabrit, JD ’37.

Now, his own name, Samuel Nabrit, has become legendary in its own right: as a scholar called to serve his country under three presidents; an education pioneer credited with championing more than 30 African Americans to receiving doctoral degrees; a college president who was willing to sacrifice his career for the cause of justice; as the recipient of numerous honorary degrees (including from Morehouse in 1960); and as a devoted Morehouse alumnus.

“I have no regrets, having gone to Brown, or having taken any of the forks in the road I took,” he was quoted as saying.

“If I had to sum it up, I’d say that no kite can rise unless it’s going against the wind.”
Thornton Named Secretary of the General Staff

MAJOR OTHA THORNTON ’89 has been tapped to serve as secretary of the general staff for Major General Bennie Williams, commanding general of the 21st Theater Support Commander in Kaiserslautern, Germany.

The 21st Theater Support Command is the largest forward logistical support command in the United States Army with over 7,900 soldiers, civilians and local nationals. Currently, this support command is involved in ongoing Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Thornton’s duties will include managing the commanding general’s calendar and special events. He will also manage military, civilian, and foreign dignitary official visits, including United States Congressional visits. Major Thornton will also be responsible for managing a protocol, security, and transportation staff for the commanding general. This position is equivalent to that of an Executive Assistant to a Chief Executive Officer of a 7,900 person corporation. Thornton has served in the U.S. Army since 1989.

Walter Massey ’58 To Receive Honorary Degree from Tufts

DR. WALTER E. MASSEY ’58, the ninth president of Morehouse College and former National Science Foundation director, received an honorary doctorate of science degree at the 148th commencement exercises held on May 23. Other honorees included an astronaut, singer, senator and businessman.

Apollo 11 astronaut Neil Armstrong received an honorary doctorate of engineering; musician and Tufts graduate Tracy Chapman received an honorary doctorate of fine arts; and Chairman of the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee Richard Lugar (R-IN) received an honorary doctorate of laws; and former University Board of Trustees Chair Nathan Gantcher received an honorary doctorate of business administration.

Region I Conference in Atlanta

Charlie Moreland ’51, Joseph Arrington ’58 and Clyde James ’62 enjoy a moment of camaraderie at the Region I conference May 1, 2004, in Chivers Dining Hall.