



2008 FALL SEMESTER
OPENING CONVOCATION
ADDRESS
(September 26, 2008)

AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY

2008 FALL SEMESTER OPENING CONVOCATION ADDRESS

CONVOCATION AT HOWARD HAS THE MEANING OF THE CORPORATE EXPRESSION OF INTENTION CONCERNING ADVANCEMENT OF LEARNING AND SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY, AN INTENTION THAT EMBRACES BOTH THE APPRECIATION OF LABORS ACCOMPLISHED AND THE ACCEPTANCE OF LABORS TO BE DONE.

THE HISTORY OF HOWARD UNIVERSITY IS RICH AND IMPRESSIVE. THIS HISTORY INCLUDES PEOPLE OF ALL AGES, ETHNICITIES AND BACKGROUNDS. HOWARD IS AND HAS BEEN FERTILE GROUND FOR SUCCESS FOR THOUSANDS OF INDIVIDUALS.

- MAYOR OF RICHMOND, VIRGINIA AND FORMER GOVERNOR OF VIRGINIA, L. DOUGLAS WILDER;
- NOBEL LAUREATE AND PULITZER PRIZE WINNER TONI MORRISON;
- US SUPREME COURT JUSTICE THURGOOD MARSHALL;
- CURRENT PREMIER OF BERMUDA EWART BROWN;
- THE CHAIRMAN OF MICROSOFT AFRICA, CHEICK DIARRA;
- PRESIDENTIAL ADVISER, INVESTMENT BANKER AND POWER BROKER VERNON JORDAN;
- MAYOR OF ATLANTA SHIRLEY FRANKLIN;
- FORMER CHAIRMAN OF ALLIANCE CAPITAL MANAGEMENT INTERNATIONAL AND OF EQUITABLE CAPITAL MANAGEMENT CORPORATION, FRANK SAVAGE;
- CO-FOUNDERS OF FAIRVIEW CAPITAL PARTNERS, JOANN PRICE AND LAURENCE MORSE;
- CURRENT CNN ANCHOR, FREDERICKA WHITFIELD; AND
- OPERA STAR JESSYE NORMAN

IN ADDITION TO THESE FAMOUS HOWARD GRADUATES, I WANT TO HIGHLIGHT THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF ONE OF OUR ESTEEMED

GRADUATES WHO HAVE ALSO SERVED ON THE FACULTY OF THIS UNIVERSITY FOR MORE THAN 30 YEARS, DR. LASALLE LEFFALL. DR. LEFFALL, A GRADUATE OF HOWARD'S MEDICAL SCHOOL AT THE AGE OF 22, IS A PRIMARY EXAMPLE OF HOWARD'S BEST AND BRIGHTEST. DR. LEFFALL IS A WORLD-RENOWN SURGICAL ONCOLOGIST WHO HAS THE DISTINCTION OF SERVING AS PRESIDENT OF NUMEROUS ORGANIZATIONS, SUCH AS KAPPA PI HONORARY SOCIETY, THE AMERICAN COLLEGE OF SURGEONS, THE AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY, THE SOCIETY OF BLACK ACADEMIC SURGEONS, JUST TO NAME A FEW.

DR. LEFFALL AND THE OTHER PEOPLE THAT I'VE JUST MENTIONED ARE INDEED MOST IMPRESSIVE IN THEIR ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND PROFESSIONAL ENDEAVORS, BUT WHAT I FIND MOST COMPELLING ABOUT THEM ALL IS THEIR SENSE OF COMMITMENT TO THE GREATER GOOD OF HUMANITY, AND THEIR CONCERN FOR OTHERS. THEY ARE ROLE MODELS, EXEMPLARS IN THEIR FIELDS WHO HAVE PAVED A WAY FOR THOSE BEHIND THEM.

AS YOU KNOW, THEIR ACCOMPLISHMENTS HAVE HELPED TO ESTABLISH HOWARD'S LEGACY. HOWEVER, IT IS ALSO THE PERPETUATION OF THE SPIRIT OF HOWARD BY MEMBERS OF THE CURRENT GENERATION – THE STUDENTS OF TODAY THAT CONTINUE TO SHAPE OUR STORY AND LEGACY. THIS UNIVERSITY CONTINUES TO ATTRACT AND EDUCATE THE BEST AND BRIGHTEST – THOSE INDIVIDUALS WHO WILL CONTINUE TO MAKE US PROUD. WE CURRENTLY HAVE STUDENTS ON THIS CAMPUS WHO, IN THEIR OWN RIGHT, ARE DESTINED FOR GREATNESS BEYOND MEASURE. ONE IS A SOPHOMORE FROM NEW YORK, KIRIN DAVIS.

KIRIN IS ALREADY WELL-KNOWN BECAUSE OF HER AWARD-WINNING DOCUMENTARY, A GIRL LIKE ME, WHERE SHE REPLICATED THE INFAMOUS DOLL TEST ORIGINALLY CONDUCTED BY DR. KENNETH CLARK IN THE

1940S. THE DOLL TEST IS AN EXPERIMENT IN WHICH CHILDREN BETWEEN THE AGES OF 3-7 WERE SHOWN BLACK AND WHITE DOLLS, AND ASKED WHICH THEY PREFERRED. THE DOLL TEST WAS USED AS EVIDENCE FOR THE DESEGREGATION IN THE 1954 BROWN VS. BOARD OF EDUCATION CASE, ARGUED BY HOWARD'S OWN, THURGOOD MARSHALL.

KIRIN'S DOCUMENTARY, WHICH SHE DIRECTED AT AGE 16 HAS RECEIVED NATIONAL NOTORIETY: EBONY MAGAZINE HAS DUBBED HER AS ONE OF THE 150 MOST INFLUENTIAL BLACKS IN AMERICA, AND ONE OF THE 25 MOST INFLUENTIAL IN 2007 BY ESSENCE MAGAZINE. SHE HAS APPEARED ON OPRAH AND OTHER NATIONALLY TELEVISED BROADCASTS. WHEN ASKED WHY HOWARD, SHE APTLY STATED, "WHEN I BEGAN RESEARCHING THE AFRICAN AMERICANS WHO HAVE SUCCEEDED IN THE INDUSTRY, THEY ALL WERE FROM HOWARD..."

AND THEN THERE IS ANDRE JEFFERS, A SENIOR MAJORING IN FINANCE, FROM TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO. HE IS AN HONORS STUDENT, WHO SERVES IN MANY EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES, CAME TO HOWARD BECAUSE HE BELIEVES THAT HOWARD IS KNOWN FOR ITS LEGACY AND REPUTATION. HE TOLD US THAT "HOWARD PREPARES STUDENTS FOR THE GLOBAL COMMUNITIES AND PROVIDES AN OPPORTUNITY TO WORK WITH SCHOLARS FROM ACROSS THE NATIONS AND HOWARD REWARDS ITS STUDENTS FOR ACHIEVEMENT." THIS IS AN EXAMPLE OF THE FUTURE, THE LEGACY LIVES ON.

ANOTHER STUDENT I WOULD LIKE TO MENTION IS TEISHA DUNCAN, A MUSICAL THEATER MAJOR. SHE IS A SENIOR THIS YEAR, AND A CAST MEMBER OF HOWARD'S PLAY PRODUCTION, THE BLUEST EYE.

SHE WAS A 2008 SUMMER PARTICIPANT IN THE COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES STUDY ABROAD PROGRAM IN EGYPT AND A MUSICAL THEATER INSTITUTE IN SWITZERLAND.

THE LEGACY CONTINUES. THIS IS MERELY THE BEGINNING FOR THESE STUDENTS. THESE AND COUNTLESS OTHER STUDENTS ARE ON A PATH TOWARD SUCCESS, CARRYING THE HOWARD NAME AND CONTINUING THE LEGACY EXCELLENCE FOR YEARS TO COME.

ALL OF THE FOLKS THAT I'VE MENTIONED, SOME NATIONALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY KNOWN, ARE JUST A SAMPLING OF HOWARD'S TREASURES LIKE THE RECENT OLYMPIC BRONZE MEDALIST AT THE BEIJING GAMES, DAVID OLIVER.

THERE ARE MANY OTHERS SITTING RIGHT HERE WITH US TODAY THAT I CAN NAME, BUT TIME WILL NOT ALLOW FOR SUCH A PRESENTATION, THE LIST IS LONG AND THE HISTORY IS RICH.

THE COMPETITIVE ENVIRONMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION THERE IS, FOR EXAMPLE, A TREMENDOUS INTERNATIONALIZATION OF THE EDUCATION SECTOR RESULTING IN SERIOUS COMPETITIONS FOR OUR BEST FACULTY AND STUDENTS FROM PLACES IN EUROPE, AUSTRALIA, SAUDI ARABIA, INDIA AND CHINA, AMONG OTHERS.

-- AMONG THE RESEARCH UNIVERSITIES WITH GROWING INTERNATIONAL REPUTATION ARE PEKING UNIVERSITY IN BEIJING

-- INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY IN BOMBAY; AND THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY IN SINGAPORE;

-- THE UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, SLATED TO OPEN IN SEPTEMBER 2009 (LED BY KING ABDULLAH) IS THE 6TH RICHEST UNIVERSITY IN THE WORLD, BEFORE IT OPENS. IT RECEIVED A \$10 BILLION START UP, AND \$10 MILLION FOR COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH AND \$10 MILLION FOR PARTICIPATING DEPARTMENTS (BERKLEY, UT, STANFORD).

OUR VISION

-- HOWARD WILL BE ONE OF THE TOP 50 RESEARCH UNIVERSITIES IN THE U.S. AND UNIQUE IN ITS RESEARCH POSITION AMONG HBCU'S (I.E., MORE

DOLLARS, MORE AREAS INCLUDING THE HEALTH SCIENCES, HIGHER IMPACT RESEARCH).

-- THIS WOULD PROPEL THE UNIVERSITY INTO A POSITION OF LEADERSHIP ALONGSIDE MEMBERS OF THE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES (AAU) OR FORESEEABLE, A MEMBER OF THE ORGANIZATION.

-- WE WILL TAKE ADVANTAGE OF OUR LOCATION IN CONGRESS' BACKYARD AND BE RECOGNIZED FOR OUR CRITICAL ROLE IN THE DC AREA IN HEALTH, AND EDUCATION, AND PUBLIC POLICY.

-- TRAINING HEALTH AND OTHER PROVIDERS FOCUSED ON SERVING AFRICAN AMERICAN AND OTHER UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES

-- INDISPENSABLE RESOURCE IN PREPAREDNESS AND FOR HEALTH EMERGENCIES

-- TEACHER TRAINING, EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH TARGETING URBAN AND UNDERSERVED ENVIRONMENTS, ASSISTANCE AND SUPPORT FOR DC AREA SCHOOLS, OPERATION OF A MODEL SCHOOL (HU MIDDLE SCHOOL FOR MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE), DIRECT INVOLVEMENT WITH OTHER SCHOOLS INCLUDING INNOVATIVE MODELS ADDRESSING SOCIAL ISSUES SUCH AS DROPOUT RATES AND EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATIONS

-- HOWARD WILL BE RECOGNIZED FOR THE IMPORTANT ROLE WE PLAY IN THE REGIONAL ECONOMY THROUGH INNOVATION; DEVELOPMENT OF NEW TECHNOLOGIES, PRODUCTS AND SERVICES; ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND THE FORMATION OF NEW COMPANIES/EMPLOYMENT; EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT AND CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION. AND OUR PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES WILL MAKE IMPORTANT CULTURAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE DC AREA.

-- HOWARD WILL BE THE PRIMARY SOURCE OF INSTITUTIONAL ROLE MODELING AND SUPPORT FOR OTHER HBCU'S, PROVIDING RESEARCH AND PRACTICAL SUPPORT IN PEDAGOGY; CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT; FACULTY DEVELOPMENT; COOPERATIVE RESEARCH ENDEAVORS; AND WILL LEAD IN NETWORKING AND POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT.

-- ADDITIONALLY, HOWARD WILL SERVE AS THE “TRANSFER SCHOOL” OF CHOICE FOR THE TWO YEAR HBCU’S, THEREBY BROADENING ITS BASE OF SUPPORT TO THESE SCHOOLS

VIA DISTANCE LEARNING AND OFF-CAMPUS DEGREE PROGRAMS, HU DELIVERS EDUCATION DIRECTLY TO A MORE DISPERSED COHORT OF STUDENTS, PARTICULARLY IN SPECIALIZED FIELDS (AFRICAN AMERICAN HEALTH, RURAL HEALTH, COMMUNICATIONS, EDUCATION, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND INTRAPRENEURSHIP, ETC.)

-- HOWARD WILL PROVIDE AN IMPORTANT U.S. NATIONAL CONNECTION AND CHANNEL FOR EDUCATIONAL AND GOVERNMENT INTERACTION WITH A BROAD SPECTRUM OF COUNTRIES BUT WITH SPECIALIZATIONS IN AFRICAN COUNTRIES AND THE LESS DEVELOPED WORLD

-- HOWARD WILL BE RECOGNIZED AS A NATIONAL RESOURCE FOR EXPERTISE ON THE AFICAN AMERICAN POPULATION AND SEEN AS A RESOURCE FOR REACHING, EDUCATING AND CONSTRUCTIVELY WORKING WITH THE AA POPULATION ON ISSUES OF NATIONAL AND CULTURAL IMPORTANCE.

-- HOWARD CONVINCINGLY DOCUMENTS OUTSTANDING LEARNING OUTCOMES AND SUCCESS OF ITS UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS (IN THE JOB MARKET AND IN GRADUATE SCHOOL ACCEPTANCE)

HOWARD WILL BE A NATIONAL LEADER IN ACADEMICS, ATHLETICS, COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT, AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF TOMORROW’S PRINCIPLED LEADERS.

THANK YOU.