

President H. Patrick Swygert
Howard University Opening Convocation
Washington, University
Sept. 28, 2006



DEAN RICHARDSON—OUR KEYNOTE SPEAKER

REV. A. KNIGHTON STANLEY

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

STAFF

FACULTY

SPECIALLY INVITED GUESTS

ALL

WELCOME TO OUR 139TH ANNUAL OPENING
CONVOCAATION.

WELCOME ESPECIALLY TO THE CLASS OF 2010--
MORE THAN 1500 STRONG.

WE ARE PRIVILEGED TO HAVE SOME OTHER VERY
SPECIAL GUESTS AMONG US TODAY, AMONG THEM:

--MINISTER OF EDUCATION FOR THE AFRICAN NATION
OF BOTSWANA, Mr. JACOB D. NKATE, AND HIS
COUNTRY'S AMBASSADOR TO THE UNITED STATES,
MR. LAPOLOGANG (LA-PO-LO-GANG) LEKOA (LE-KOA)

THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE SINGING SERGEANTS
ARE ALSO HERE-- CAPTAIN CRISTINA M. MOORE
CONDUCTING.

WE LOOK FORWARD TO THEIR PERFORMANCE LATER
WITH THE VERY TALENTED HOWARD UNIVERSITY
CHOIR AND ORCHESTRA.

CONGRESSMAN ELIJAH CUMMINGS IS HERE.

AND, MRS. THERESA COMBS RICHARDSON, WIFE OF
DEAN RICHARDSON AND THREE OF THEIR FOUR
SONS ARE HERE TODAY.

WELCOME AGAIN, ONE AND ALL

FOR NEARLY A CENTURY AND A HALF NOW,
SUCCESSIVE ADMINISTRATIONS OF HOWARD
UNIVERSITY HAVE LOOKED FORWARD TO THIS
CEREMONY, OFFICIALLY CONVENING THE NEW
ACADEMIC YEAR.

WE LOOK FORWARD TO IT BECAUSE IT IS A GREAT WELCOME BACK AFTER THE PASSAGE OF THE LONG SUMMER MONTHS. AS WELL, IT SIGNALS THAT ANOTHER ACADEMIC YEAR IS SERIOUSLY UNDERWAY, AND WE MUST, ALL OF US, GET ON WITH THE BUSINESS AT HAND—THAT OF EDUCATING African AMERICANS AND OTHER YOUNG PEOPLE OF COLOR FOR LEADERSHIP IN AMERICA AND THE GLOBAL COMMUNITY.

TOO, OPENING CONVOCATION IS A WONDERFUL WAY TO PUT THE EXCLAMATION MARK ON THE FACT THAT HOWARD UNIVERSITY IS HERE, GROWING STRONGER AFTER NEARLY A CENTURY AND A HALF, AND WORKING MORE ASSIDUOUSLY TO REMAIN TRUE TO OUR VISION AS A COMPREHENSIVE RESEARCH UNIVERSITY, UNIQUE AND IRREPLACEABLE, DEFINED BY ITS CORE VALUES, THE EXCELLENCE OF ALL ITS

ACTIVITIES IN INSTRUCTION, RESEARCH AND SERVICE, AND BY ITS ENDURING COMMITMENT TO EDUCATING YOUTH, AFRICAN AMERICANS AND OTHER PEOPLE OF COLOR IN PARTICULAR, FOR LEADERSHIP AND SERVICE TO OUR NATION AND THE GLOBAL COMMUNITY.

AS WE HAVE DONE IN THE PAST, WE CONTINUE TO EMPHASIZE ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE. AND, WE CONTINUE TO EMPHASIZE LEADERSHIP AND SERVICE AMONG OUR STUDENTS SO THAT THEY CAN HARNESS THEIR SKILLS AND ABILITIES IN THE QUEST FOR A BETTER WORLD FOR ALL OF US.

THE RECENT UNITED STATES PRIMARIES OFFERED AN EXCELLENT EXAMPLE OF HOW SERIOUSLY OUR

ALUMNI TAKE THIS CALL TO LEADERSHIP AND SERVICE.

IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY, ONE OF THE WEALTHIEST, MOST DIVERSE AND MOST POPULOUS IN THE NATION, ALUMNUS AND SCHOOL OF LAW PROFESSOR, ISIAAH LEGGET (LAW SCHOOL CLASS OF 74), WON A CONVINCING VICTORY OVER HIS OPPONENT FOR THE RIGHT TO BE THE DEMOCRATIC REPRESENTATIVE FOR COUNTY EXECUTIVE IN THE NOVEMBER ELECTIONS.

THE PUNDITS SAY HE WILL BE THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE AFTER THE NOVEMBER ELECTIONS.

IN PRINCE GEORGES COUNTY, INCUMBENT COUNTY EXECUTIVE, JACK JOHNSON, ANOTHER HOWARD GRADUATE, SUCCESSFULLY STAVED OFF A CHALLENGE FROM FELLOW BISON RUSHURN BAKER. AND, IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, MAYORAL PROSPECT, ADRIAN FENTY, HELD OFF LINDA CROPP FOR THE DEMOCRATIC NOMINATION.

BOTH ARE HOWARD GRADUATES.

AT 35, MR. FENTY IS POISED TO BECOME THE YOUNGEST MAYOR OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, AND EVEN BEFORE THE ELECTIONS, HE IS EMPHASIZING HIS BELIEF THAT PROGRESS FOR ANY PEOPLE BEGINS WITH A GOOD EDUCATION, AND

SIGNALLING HIS DESIRE TO ENSURE SAME FOR THE CHILDREN OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA.

INTERNATIONALLY, OUR ALUMNI ARE DOING JUST AS WELL. THEY ARE DIPLOMATS, ARTISTS, JOURNALISTS, ATHLETES, BUSINESSMEN AND PROFESSIONALS IN AFRICA, ASIA, EUROPE, THE MIDDLE EAST, THE CARIBBEAN AND ELSEWHERE.

ASK ANY OF THEM AND THEY WILL TELL YOU, THAT HOWARD UNIVERSITY WAS THE TRAINING GROUND NOT JUST FOR THEIR SPECIFIC CAREERS, BUT TO LEAD AND SERVE THEIR COMMUNITIES.

IN FACT, A LOOK BACK JUST ONE SEMESTER REVEALS SOME VERY IMPRESSIVE

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AMONG OUR STUDENT BODY
THAT AUGUR WELL FOR THE STUDENT BODY.

MAXINE MOFFETT, A LEGAL COMMUNICATIONS
GRADUATE FROM THE JOHN H. JOHNSON SCHOOL OF
COMMUNICATIONS, RECEIVED A FULBRIGHT
SCHOLARSHIP TO STUDY AT THE YAOUNDÉ
UNIVERSITY IN CAMEROON A YEAR BEGINNING IN
OCTOBER 2006.

NAEESA AZIZ, A 2006 ENGLISH GRADUATE OF THE
COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES ALSO RECEIVED A
FULBRIGHT. SHE BEGAN HER STUDIES IN GHANA THIS
MONTH.

AND, JASON HIGHTOWER, A 2006 GRADUATE IN
RADIO, TELEVISION FILM, WAS ACCEPTED AS AN
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR IN TRAINING WITH THE

DIRECTOR'S GUILD OF AMERICA, A RARE
OPPORTUNITY FOR A YOUNG AFRICAN AMERICAN
MALE.

AND, THIS MARCH, 250 OF OUR STUDENTS
DEMONSTRATED LEADERSHIP AND COMPASSION BY
GOING TO THE GULF COAST DURING THEIR SPRING
BREAK TO ASSIST VICTIMS OF HURRICANE KATRINA.

OUR SPECIAL GUESTS, THE CLASS OF 2010 IS
BLESSED BY THE FACT THAT A PATH HAS BEEN
PAVED FOR THEM.

NOT ONLY DO THEY HAVE CERTAIN HEROES TO LOOK
UP TO, BUT THEY HAVE A WEALTH OF
OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN WHICH THEY WILL NURTURE
THEIR OWN TALENTS AND ABILITIES.

THIS SEMESTER, FOR EXAMPLE, HOWARD WILL BE A PARTICIPANT IN THE ROLLOUT OF THE NOBEL LAUREATE LECTURE SERIES SPONSORED BY HONEYWELL INTERNATIONAL.

AS ONE OF ONLY ABOUT A DOZEN UNIVERSITIES WORLDWIDE , WE WILL WELCOME A NOBEL LAUREATE IN THE SCIENCES TO OUR CAMPUS THIS SEMESTER FOR MASTER CLASSES AND DISCUSSIONS WITH OUR STUDENTS AND FACULTY.

WITH YOUR INNATE ABILITIES AND THE OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE HERE, I HAVE NO DOUBT THAT YOU CLASS OF 2010, WILL BLAZE YOUR OWN TRAIL AND MAKE YOUR OWN CONTRIBUTION TO THE HOWARD LEGACY.

ALREADY, ONE OF YOUR OWN, MISS SABRINA A. SIMONS, A BIOLOGY MAJOR WITH A SAT SCORE OF CLOSE TO 1300 IS THE RECIPIENT OF AN AMERICAN *SMART* (SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS ACCESS TO RETAINING TALENT) GRANT FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION.

AMONG YOU AS WELL, THERE ARE 44 NATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT SCHOLARS AS I AM SURE THERE ARE MANY TALAENTED AND HIGHLY ACCOMPLISHED STUDENTS THAT WE WILL GET TO KNOW IN THE YEARS AHEAD.

INDEED, THIS SOLID ENROLLMENT OF DIVERSE DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS, REPRESENTED BY THIS INCOMING FRESHMAN CLASS, ENSURES THAT WE CAN CONTINUE TO CARRY OUT THE UNIVERSITY'S HISTORIC MISSION.

THIS MISSION HAS NEVER BEEN JUST ABOUT
EARNING A DEGREE, BUT ABOUT PROVIDING A WELL-
ROUNDED EDUCATION AND INSPIRING YOU TO FIND
YOUR PLACE IN THE WORLD.

WE PLEDGE NO LESS TO YOU CLASS OF 2010.

IN CLOSING, LET ME SAY THAT IT IS MY DISTINCT
PLEASURE TO HOST OPENING CONVOCATION FOR
THE 11TH YEAR, AND TO SHARE WITH YOU THE SENSE
OF PROMISE AND HOPEFULNESS IMPLICIT IN THE
BEGINNING OF YET ANOTHER ACADEMIC YEAR AS
WELL AS THE OUTSTANDING, AND VERY VISIBLE
SUCSESSES OF MANY OF OUR GRADUATES, LOCALLY
AND INTERNATIONALLY.

I REMAIN DEEPLY HONORED AT THIS PRIVILEGE I
HAVE TO CONTINUE TO SERVE AS THE UNIVERSITY'S

15TH PRESIDENT, ESPECIALLY AS WE CONTINUE TO
GROW IN SO MANY WAYS.

THANKS AGAIN TO ALL OF YOU, AND MY VERY BEST
WISHES FOR A PRODUCTIVE SEMESTER.