

Inside Morehouse is about the people who make up the Morehouse College community. To tell those stories, **WE NEED YOU** to send us your ideas, comments and thoughts, along with your news, information about your new books or publications and your commentary for sections like My Word. To send us your information, contact **Inside Morehouse Editor Add Seymour Jr.** at aseymour@morehouse.edu

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Inside Morehouse is published monthly during the academic year (with a combined November/December issue) by Morehouse College, Office of Communications. Opinions expressed in *Inside Morehouse* are those of the authors, not necessarily of the College.

MY WORD

BEACONS

'It is both a privilege and responsibility that we, the faculty and staff at Morehouse, have to make men'

By ALISON LIGON

When I drove by the Morehouse campus on my daily commute, I craned my neck to catch a glimpse of the recognizable, angular, Graves Hall bell tower. Illuminated by a soft hue at dawn, it seemed to beckon me. On the days that I was unable to see it, I felt off center.

Maybe there was some inherent truth within the books that I read during my spare time: the motivational bestseller, *The Secret*, and Rene Descartes' philosophical treatise, *Discourse on the Method*. Drawing inspiration from both books, I crafted small notes and secured them inside of my wallet. Each note articulated my heart's desire – to be *there* – near *that* bell tower, teaching on *that* campus where I *belonged*, not just simply riding by, wishing and hoping.

Now, my inspirational notes sit on my desktop at home, adjacent to a framed picture of my "firstborn sons" – the students whom I taught during my first year at Morehouse. Daily, this image inspires me to become a better person, teacher, researcher and mentor.

Although we do not share a natal tie, my commitment to the academic achievements of these young men remains just as firm and unwavering as if we did share such a

bond. Every semester, I have the honor of working closely with individuals who have a natural affinity for seeking and meeting academic challenges. As well, I work closely with students who, upon enrolling at Morehouse, must move through the barriers of self-doubt and uneasiness in order to realize their beautiful, inherent potential. It is both a privilege and responsibility that we, the faculty and staff at Morehouse, have to "make men."

Unfortunately, due to circumstances often beyond their control, many of these talented, viable young scholars must defer their visions of graduating and becoming Morehouse Men. To help address financial challenges faced by approximately 150 students each year, the Board of Trustees Opportunity Fund was created. It is marvelous to have such a sustaining vehicle to help bring to fruition the dreams of many deserving students.

Nonetheless, much more can be done to help persons, such as the junior who tearfully shook my hand and said in a crackling voice, "Thanks for everything you've taught me, Dr. Ligon. Maybe I'll see you next year."

I also recall the e-mail message marked "Urgent" sent by a rising junior who asked for me to "hold a place" for him in one of my courses, as he cobbled together personal



loans to pay for the following year's tuition.

Therefore, it would be a boon to the spirits of the young men whom we serve if we, the members of the greater Morehouse College family, would support The Board of Trustees Opportunity Fund. I am proud beyond measure to be an educator at such a fine institution. I am honored to help shape the minds and bolster the strong character possessed by my dear students. Their intellectual and social prowess is intrinsically handsome.

Often, when I depart from the campus, I catch a glimpse of the

Graves Hall bell tower in my rearview mirror. Just as the sight of it once encouraged me to become a part of the Morehouse College faculty, today it reminds me of the young men of Morehouse who are ripe with potential. They will one day serve as beacons of inspiration for those who will follow in their footsteps. ■

Alison Ligon, assistant professor of English, joined the Morehouse faculty in 2007. Her most recent and forthcoming publications are focused upon works of contemporary fiction from the Anglophone Caribbean.

Renowned Historian Clayborne Carson to Lead College's King Collection

(continued from the cover)

"I've always felt that connection, ever since the first time I came to this campus," Carson said. "Morehouse is part of what made Martin Luther King Jr. So this is a very special place."

Since 1971, Carson has been in the history department at Stanford University, where he has been the director of the Martin Luther King Jr. Research and Education Institute, as well as director of the King Papers Project.

But it was as a teenager who sneaked off to Washington, D.C., for the 1963 March on Washington that he first became influenced by the civil rights movement. Seeing dedicated young civil rights workers like John Lewis and Stokely Carmichael decked out in overalls and work boots inspired him.

Carson joined the civil rights and anti-war movement when he went to college at UCLA. He later became a journalist, writing mainly about the black power movement. His first

book, *In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakenings of the 1960s*, became the definitive history of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee.

Carson's other writings include *Malcolm X: The FBI Files and African American Lives: The Struggle for Freedom*, which he co-authored. He also has been a senior adviser for the award-winning, public television series on the civil rights movement, "Eyes on the Prize," and the editor of the companion reader for the series.

Carson takes over the Morehouse King Collection – which features King's personal writings, sermons, speeches and other works – at an exciting time. For the first time, researchers and even the casual scholar will have digital access to the Collection, as well as King's works at Stanford and Boston universities. Carson also plans to start other programs that feature the Collection.

"When the College began looking for someone to manage over-

sight of the Morehouse College Martin Luther King Jr. Collection, we knew that the ideal candidate would be able to develop and implement a strategic plan for the Collection and raise the visibility in the local and national community," said President Robert M. Franklin Jr. '75.

"We are thrilled to welcome Dr. Carson to the Morehouse College faculty. He is a preeminent King scholar and brings to Morehouse time-proven expertise and vitality around this project."

Carson said heading the Collection is part of his calling.

"To me, the responsibility is about the legacy – how do you convey a legacy of someone who helped change the world as we know it?" he said. "King did his work in about a dozen years. It has taken me nearly 23 years to get halfway through his public life...so I know the immensity of it."

"All I can do is say this is my mission," Carson said. "This is what I was put on Earth to do."

For more information about the King Collection, go to <http://www.morehouse.edu/kingcollection/index.html>. ■

Gloomy Economy

(continued from the cover)

Morehouse administration expect enrollment will drop up to 15 percent from the fall semester.

"These enrollment challenges, when coupled with the impacts on our other means of financial support, require our prudence in the use of our resources to ensure the health and viability of the institution during these trying times and beyond," said President Robert M. Franklin Jr. '75.

Moody's senior analyst Roger Goodman told *The Chronicle* that colleges and universities nationwide are appropriately "taking a cautious approach to planning," according to the Jan. 9 story.

With the measures Morehouse is taking, Franklin is confident things will get better.

"We're going to come back in a strong way," he said to staff on Jan. 14. "This college is going to be as strong as ever before." ■