

Black College celebration

informs...enlightens...encourages...

By Jane Fleming,
Director of Development
The Association of
Episcopal Colleges

"This is the world you and I are going to inherit. It is a small world and a world with many problems; it is a world I am not over-anxious to be responsible for. And yet, I am already responsible for it. In as far as I make no effort to right what I see as wrongs, in as far as I remain silent when I know I should speak out, I am responsible for the wrong and in as far as I squander my education, I squander part of my inheritance."

These words, spoken passionately by Ms. Mpho Tutu, Howard University student and daughter of Bishop Desmond Tutu, captured the attention of over 500 people at the noon-time celebration at the first Black College Celebration held at the Riverside Church in New York

City on Saturday, September 14, 1985. Ms. Tutu's comments, addressed to the youth present at the celebration, fell on the ears of many adults as well.

Although she prefaced her words by saying that she was not going to speak to the topic in the program, this listener found her meaning to clearly exemplify the topic and theme for the day: "Lifting Your Sights".

To this predominantly Black audience, she said: "Somewhere along the line Black people in this country seem to have forgotten what a treasure an education is. The battle your parents and grandparents fought to gain access to the type of education you have available today seem, to a large extent, to have been forgotten."

"If you gain, as you must, a knowledge of your own history, you will come to understand that your education places upon you an obligation to be a dues-paying member of your community."

Her challenge to the young harmonized with the message from Dr. John Q. Taylor King, President of Huston-Tillotson College. Dr. King dispelled myths that historically Black colleges are segregated institutions or institutions perpetuating segregation and emphasized the advantages many Black colleges offer.

"Since 1954 when the Supreme Court outlawed segregated educational facilities, the percentage of the total Black student population enrolled in historically Black colleges has dropped drastically. Despite this decline over 70 percent of all Black college graduates come from historically Black colleges."

"Black colleges have a much lower attrition rate than do White colleges. Seventy-five percent of all Blacks holding Ph.D. degrees, 75 percent of all Black Army officers, 80 percent of all Black physicians and dentists have received their undergraduate education at historically Black colleges. Also, Meharry Medical College and Howard University produce more than 50 percent of the physicians and dentists who are Black."

What do historically Black colleges provide? Dr. King made several points:

- Historically Black colleges provide students with healthy role models, thereby enhancing their chances of succeeding socially and academically.

- Promote more positive intellectual development among Black students than do White colleges.

- Are closer to the problem of Black people and poor people and have already established patterns of dealing with them.

- Support personal development without the level of conflict and isolation experienced on many predominantly white campuses.

- Provide an atmosphere in which the concerns of social consciousness are very active.

- Tell their students that "You are Somebody" and together we will prove it to the world.

Hence, instead of being overwhelmed by frustration, students develop appropriate coping mechanisms in preparation for the more difficult challenges they will face. They (Black colleges)

provide students with aspiration, inspiration, information, motivation, celebration and with the confidence and the ability to enjoy competition in the larger inclusive society.

Sponsors of the Black College Celebration included: American Baptist Churches, USA; The Association of Episcopal Colleges; The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ); Christian Methodist Episcopal Church; The United Methodist Church; Presbyterian Church (USA); United Church of Christ; The Riverside Church; The Council of

Churches of the City of New York; New York City Mission Society; and the United Negro College Fund.

Over 30 historically Black, church-related colleges were represented at the College Fair and talked with parents, students, and youth group leaders about their colleges.

Mr. David Mitchell, representative from Saint Augustine's College, said of the day: "It's been marvelous. Holding a Church-related celebration and college fair like this gives our purpose much more meaning."

*You've
gotta
believe*

By Desmonde Thomas

Goals are dreams
and wishes
that are not easily
reached.
You have to work hard
to obtain them,
never knowing when
or where
you will reach your goal.
But keep trying!
Do not give up hope.
And most of all...
never stop
believing in yourself.

For within you
there is someone
special...
someone wonderful
and successful.

No matter what you
achieve,
as long as you want it
and it makes you happy.

You are a success.

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CONTEST RULES AND RESTRICTIONS:

1. Any student is eligible to submit his or her verse.
2. All entries must be original and unpublished.
3. All entries must be typed, double-spaced, on one side of the page only. Each poem must be on a separate sheet and must bear, in the upper left-hand corner, the NAME and ADDRESS of the student as well as the COLLEGE attended. Put name and address on envelope also!
4. There are no restrictions on form or theme. Length of poems up to fourteen lines. Each poem must have a separate title. (Avoid "Untitled"! Small black and white illustrations welcome.
5. The judges' decision will be final. No info by phone!
6. Entrants should keep a copy of all entries as they cannot be returned. Prize winners and all authors awarded free publication will be notified immediately after deadline. I.P. will retain first publication rights for accepted poems. Foreign language poems welcome.
7. There is an initial one dollar registration fee for the first entry and a fee of fifty cents for each additional poem. It is requested to submit no more than ten poems per entrant.
8. All entries must be postmarked not later than the above deadline and fees be paid, cash, check or money order, to:

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