

JOHNSON: Good morning and welcome to the 22nd Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration. My name is Yvette Johnson. I am from Guaynabo, Puerto Rico, and I am currently a senior pursuing a degree in chemical engineering. It is certainly my pleasure to be your mistress of ceremonies for today.

For the morning's events, we will start with the invocation by Reverend Jane Gould of the MIT Chaplaincy. We will then move to the breakfast part of the morning's program. And after breakfast, we will have two students-- Kareem Howard, class of 1999; and Simonetta Rodriguez, a graduate student-- guide us in a reflection on the life and legacy of Dr. King.

Following this, Dr. Charles Vest, president of MIT, will present the 1995, 1996 Martin Luther King Leadership awards for alumni, faculty, and student or student group. After the recognitions by Dr. Vest, Provost Joel Moses will recognize our MLK visiting professors for the past academic year. Then we will hear some remarks from Dr. Vest, and he will have the distinct pleasure of introducing our world-renowned keynote speaker, Dr. Julius L. Chambers, chancellor of North Carolina Central University and past executive director of the Legal Defense Fund of the NAACP.

As a conclusion to our program, we will all join voices in singing "Lift Every Voice and Sing" by James Weldon Johnson. I would like to take this moment to thank President and Mrs. Charles M. Vest for hosting this morning's event. And I would like to give a special, special welcome to Dr. Julius L. Chambers and his wife, Vivian. It is a pleasure to have you here with us this morning.

At this point, I would also like to thank all of the members of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Committee, to whom we owe this wonderful morning. I would like to call out the names of all the committee members, and please stand up when I do so. Maureen Costello, Ronald Crichlow, Robert [? d'Oreo, ?] professor Michael Feld, who is one of our co-chairs, professor Jerome Friedman, Reverend Jane Gould, Dean Arnold Henderson, Jr., professor Melvin King, [? Yvette ?] Lane, professor Philip Morrison, Dean Leo Osgood, Jr., and [? David ?] Shaw, Dean Margaret Daniels Tyler, professor Cardinal Warde, and Dr. Clarence Williams.

Also, we would like to thank our student volunteers-- Jason [? Daily, ?] [INAUDIBLE], [? Navis ?] Johnson, Simonetta Rodriguez, and Christina [? Villareal. ?] Thank you all so much for all your contributions and for making this morning possible.

Well, we hope that you will sit back and enjoy the food, enjoy the opportunity to recognize each other, and most of all, enjoy our keynote speaker. Now we will have the invocation from Reverend Gould. Right after Reverend Gould's invocation, we will begin breakfast. Thank you. [LAUGHS]

[APPLAUSE]

GOULD: "Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me. Guide me, lead me, hold me, shape me. Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me." The Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. opened himself to the power and presence of God.

He knew well the words of the prophet Isaiah, who announced to the people of Israel, "Is not this the fast that I choose? To loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thong of the yolk, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor into your house? When you see the naked, to cover them and not to hide yourself from your own kin. Our forebears founded this country on the ideal of liberty and justice for all. One war and many marches in the street later, we still are far from living into their ideal."

Marian Wright Edelman, president of the Children's Defense Fund, writes, "It is a spiritually impoverished nation that permits infants and children to be the poorest Americans. It is a morally lost nation that is unwilling and unable to disarm our children and those who kill our children. It is an ethically confused nation that has allowed truth-telling and moral example to become devalued commodities. There is a hollowness at the core of society if its members share no common purpose, no mutual goals, no joint vision, nothing to believe in except self-aggrandizement."

Martin Luther King, Jr. challenged America to be true to the promises made in the Declaration of Independence. He lamented that America had given African Americans a bad check. The check for liberty, the check for equality, the check for justice came back marked "Insufficient Funds." King joined with his fellow citizens in churches, at great monuments, on picket lines, on buses, in marches, in prisons, in cotton fields to demand that America be true to her word and provide liberty and justice for all.

Today the struggle is ours to continue as the political debate at the national, state, and local levels scapegoats those who are poor, immigrants, people of color, single mothers, people on welfare, those with HIV infection and AIDS. We must redouble our efforts.

Dr. King wrote, "Darkness cannot drive out darkness. Only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate. Only love can do that. May we be beacons of light and manifestations of love capable of envisioning and striving toward the new Jerusalem. And as we gather on this day, we give thanks for the bounty before us, the abundance of good food that nourishes our bodies, the dazzling array of bright minds that stimulate our thinking, the presence of committed individuals who inspire us to be the light and love so desperately needed in our community, our nation, and our world. Amen."

JOHNSON:

Well, ladies and gentlemen, I hope you've enjoyed your breakfast as much as I have. That was sure of an energy booster. Now don't fall asleep on me, because the best is yet to come. We will now continue with the rest of our program. I have the pleasure of introducing two of our very own students-- Kareem Howard, class of 1999; and Simonetta Rodriguez, a graduate student. They will guide us in a reflection on the life and legacy of Dr. King. Kareem?

[APPLAUSE]

HOWARD:

Good morning. My name is Kareem Howard. I'm from Detroit, Michigan and a member of the class of 1999. It gives me great pleasure to reflect on the life and legacy of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. No longer must African Americans face arrest for sitting in the White Only section, threatened with lynchings for registering to vote, or kidnapped, beaten, and shot for allegedly whistling at a white woman. We, as a nation, have made great progress in advancing from those days towards the dream Dr. King possessed of freedom and equality.

Despite what some say, we are not there yet. We have not reached the mountaintop. Some believe that since the lynchings have stopped, this nation has reached Dr. King's dream. I ask you-- if this nation has reached its dream, why can I not walk through a department store without being followed? If this nation has reached his dream, why did a 1995 Justice Department report indicate that 2/3 of African American children still attend segregated schools?

If this nation has reached his dream, why did the 1990 US Census show a poverty rate among African American children four times higher than that of whites? And why did a 1993 University of Chicago report reveal that even with college degrees, African Americans continue to earn less than whites? It's time for America to realize that we have not yet reached Dr. King's dream.

Those who believe this nation has reached Dr. King's dream fail to realize that he was not only talking about an end to the brutality that faced African Americans, but also of equality. For the absence of brutality does not imply a sense of justice and equality. Why is this not true? Dr. King wrote that while America was ready to demand that African Americans be spared the lash of brutality, it has never been truly committed to helping him out of poverty, exploitation, or all forms of discrimination.

The recent backlash against the affirmative action programs by, quote, "angry white men" has made this more apparent than ever. But why are these white men angry? According to the Labor Department, white men make up 41% of the population. Yet they own 64% of the businesses, are 70% of judges, and 95% of senior managers.

If anyone should be angry, it should be the other 60% of the population-- African Americans, Hispanic Americans, Asian Americans, Native Americans, and women. If America plans to reach the ideals put forth by Dr. King, then she must not regress to her former state of blatant discrimination and exploitation. Instead, she must bring forward new ideals to secure equal rights for all Americans.

Who said it better than Dr. King himself, who I shall quote from his last book, *Where Do We Go From Here-- Chaos or Community*, authored in 1967. "America owes a debt of justice which it has only begun to repay. If it loses the will to finish or slackens in its determination, the country that would be great will lack the most indispensable element of greatness-- justice." Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

JOHNSON: Thank you, Kareem Howard, for those thought-provoking remarks. Now we'll proceed with Simonetta Rodriguez. Simonetta?

[APPLAUSE]

RODRIGUEZ: He's a little bit taller, isn't he? Good morning. I am a first-year PhD student in the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering in the Information Technology group of the department. We're the civil engineering computer geeks. This morning, I would like to draw your attention to a curious fact. We are all human beings. We all know this, of course. I draw your attention to this mundane fact while asking each of us to reflect on whether we know this fact in our hearts as well as in our heads.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. tried to draw our attention to this fact. I believe it is the most salient aspect of his message. We are one species. As scientists, we know this. As educated adults, we know this. Our children know this. But do we truly accept this fact in our hearts? Do we accept its implications? It means that we are all cousins. All of us are cousins. Please look at the other people at your table. Say "hello" to your cousins.

[MURMURING]

It means that Africa is our home. All of us. Africa is our home, the motherland, the place where we formed, the womb. Do we honor our home? Do we hold it precious in our hearts? The answer may be, in many cases, no. I contend that, in one sense, this is understandable even if it is sad, because if humanity has a collective development process-- and I believe it does-- then we are, as a sentient species, at the stage of adolescence.

In adolescence, we do not honor our mother. Indeed, we are often ashamed of her and annoyed by everything she does. I have a 13-year-old. I can attest to this. It is part of the maturation process to reject that from which we sprang before learning to honor that source, the first springboard.

Mother Africa, Mother Earth, mother nature. Mother cannot protect us anymore. We must step up to the responsibilities of species adulthood, to our collective responsibility for ourselves, for each other, and for our home. Mother's oceans and mountains no longer serve as protective barriers, protecting us from each other. We fiddle with the very core of Mother's designs. We smash her atoms to see what is in them. We dice and snip her DNA. We throw around things in mind-boggling quantities into her air, water, and soil.

I see this as similar to the situation when a teenager first gets behind the wheel of a car, legal to drive, with gas in the tank, foot on the accelerator pedal, hands wrapped firmly around that steering wheel. Maturity will be the teen's only possible savior at that point. When we are mature collectively as a sentient species, we will grasp that the essential oneness of the human species is its beauty and its power.

We are the leaves of one tree and the fruits of one branch. Our rich variety and diversity in the face of our oneness cannot be any longer a source for hatred and violence. No one plants a garden such that all the leaves and all the blossoms are the same size, and the color, and the same shape, and scent.

If we do plant for such a result, we call it a crop, not a garden. No one goes out of their way to see a crop even it's a crop of roses. A 100-acre crop of roses-- who cares? A 100-acre rose garden with flowers of every color, well, we'll all drive 100 miles to see that for it is beautiful.

We must look upon every human gathering as an opportunity to partake of the beauty in our diversity in the face of our oneness. We must find ourselves restless and dissatisfied when we are forced to be surrounded by people who look and think exactly like us. Let me point out that we are one in another way, which emphasizes our relationship to mother, the earth.

With every breath, we inhale chunks of each other. Think about it. We must breathe, eat, and drink the same recycling set of atoms and molecules on our pale, blue dot, as Carl Sagan calls the Earth. Here on the dot, without any doubt, I am breathing in some of the very atoms and molecules that formed part of another person's life.

Not only am I related to every other living human being, the stuff of my body is the stuff of all human beings of the past. Science makes it clear. By breeding, B-R-E-E-D-I-N-G, and breathing, B-R-E-A-T-H-I-N-G, the oneness of humanity, indeed, the connectedness of all life is indisputable. Our task, our challenge, our hope, our future is to accept this in our hearts and instill its effect in our behavior. Thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]

JOHNSON:

Once again, I would like to thank both cousin Kareem Howard and cousin Simonetta Rodriguez for those insightful remarks and for letting the words of Dr. King be heard once more. I hope that everyone here today has really had a chance to listen carefully.

Now I have the honor of introducing the 50th president of MIT, Dr. Charles Vest, who is also the chairman of the Board of Directors of GEM, the National Consortium for Graduate Degrees for Minorities in Engineering and Science, Incorporated. This is only one of the many significant roles that Dr. Vest has played on a national level. President Vest will present the recipients of the 1995, 1996 Martin Luther King, Jr. Leadership awards for alumni, faculty, and student or student group. Dr. Vest?

[APPLAUSE]

VEST:

Thank you, Yvette. I think that even our main speaker today, my distinguished colleague, Dr. Chambers, will forgive me for offering the following thought, which comes to me every time I speak at an event where I am preceded by students.

I think the best thing we could do is listen to our students and then just be quiet and contemplate for a bit what they've said. But unfortunately for you, we do have some other things to do this morning that I think you will find very exciting. But I do want to thank both of you from the bottom of my heart for those really quite wonderful thoughts and remarks that you have shared with us.

I also want to thank everyone for coming out this morning on a cold winter morning that, in many ways, underscores the significance of this day when, as we do annually, we gather together to reflect on the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King and its meaning for both our personal and our institutional lives.

I want to recognize and thank for their attendance a few people who are here representing the officialdom of our city of Cambridge and to thank them for this support of this event, I would like to recognize City Councilor Frank [? Duhey, ?] who currently is serving as our acting mayor. Frank, welcome and thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

We also have with us this morning a member of the Cambridge School Committee, Ms. Denise Simmons. Denise, you here?

[APPLAUSE]

And also, an old friend of the Institute, a former city councilor, Jonathan Myers, who I believe has attended every one of these breakfasts since I've been here. John.

[APPLAUSE]

It is now my pleasure to present the 1996 Martin Luther King, Jr. Leadership awards. These awards recognize members of the MIT community whose activities exemplify the ideals of Dr. King. The awards are being presented this year to three individuals. The first is Mr. Matthew Turner, a senior with a double major in architecture and mechanical engineering. Matt, could you come up, please?

[APPLAUSE]

You can tell they know you. Matt was selected for this award because of his sustained efforts in making MIT a better place for students and in promoting better relations between students from different groups and from diverse backgrounds. He is an eloquent and effective leader, one who cares about his community. He has vision, and he knows how to bring others together to achieve a common vision.

Matt, your fostering of better communications between the IFC and the historically black fraternities, your work with the Faculty Policy Committee, your service as president of your fraternity, president of the senior class, your dedication as an associate adviser, and your work as a volunteer in the wider Cambridge community all carry the mark of a true leader.

By your vision and leadership, you have brought people together and enhanced the quality of life for all of us at MIT. In doing so, you represent the very best of what Dr. Martin Luther King expected of himself and of others. Congratulations.

[APPLAUSE]

TURNER:

I was asked this morning to give you a speech of what Dr. King means to me. And as you see, you see what he means to me.

I would like to thank the Martin Luther King Committee for selecting me. And I would like to share with you something that Dr. Martin Luther King said in one of his sermons. The sermon was shared with me by one of my good friends, Dean Margaret Tyler.

In his sermon "A Tough-minded and Tender Heart," Dr. King began his sermon by saying, "No man is strong unless he bears within his character antithesis strongly marked." When he said that a man should be tough-minded, he said a man should have incisive thinking, realistic appraisal, and decisive judgment, that the opposite of a tough mind is a soft mind. And a soft-minded person is a person who is very gullible, a person who fears change. And for that person, the greatest pain is a pain of a new idea.

Finally, he said that soft-mindedness is one of the basic causes of race prejudice. A tough-minded person examines facts. They post-judge. A tender-minded person, they reach conclusions before they even examine the first facts. They're prejudiced. Excuse me.

Now, a tough-minded person must be complemented by a tender heart. They must not be hard-hearted. They must be humble, they must be compassionate, and they must be sensitive. A hard-hearted person or the opposite misses the beauty of friendship and lacks compassion for fellow man.

In conclusion really quickly, he said that a good life combines toughness of a serpent and a tenderness of a dove. And I'll leave you by saying, to have serpent-like quality devoid of dove-like qualities is to be passionless, mean, and selfish. To have dove-like qualities without serpent-like qualities is to be sentimental and aimless. We must combine strongly marked antithesis. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

VEST: Our second award recipient this morning is Professor Leon Trilling of the Department of Aeronautics and Astronautics. Leon, would you come up, please?

Professor Trilling was chosen to receive this award because of his deep and enduring commitment to improving the quality of education for people of color. His longstanding and steady efforts have ranged from pioneering work with Boston's METCO program over 30 years ago to his ongoing work here at MIT to articulate and nurture the benefits of diversity in our learning environment.

For three decades, he has worked to create more effective ways to introduce young minority scholars to advanced science and engineering, and recruit and serve as a mentor to minority faculty members. His leadership in such activities as the Office of Minority Education, the MIT Second Summer program, and the Course 16 Outreach Committee all testified to his commitment and ability to help make MIT a more enriching and better place for all of its members.

Leon, as an engineer, educator, role model, and mentor, you have incorporated the notions of inclusion and diversity not simply as theoretical constructs, but as day-to-day practices in your life. In doing so, you represent the essence of Dr. Martin Luther King's philosophy and visions. Our thanks and our congratulations.

[APPLAUSE]

TRILLING: Thank you very much. I am deeply moved. And I want to first express my gratitude to the selection committee and to my friends and colleagues who saw fit to nominate me. It is a great and moving honor to have received this award.

I want to continue on the theme of diversity, which Simonetta Rodriguez began and which Mr. Turner continued with. As a member of the faculty, as a teacher here for many years, I also observed that, as our student body has become more diverse, as we have been forced to work with young people of a wider variety of backgrounds, we have learned ourselves that people learn and grow in a variety of ways.

And we are all enriched by trying to adapt our work to the different styles of learning of the students who come here. The more variety, the greater range of human services our graduates will perform. And it is a wonderful situation that the Institute has broadened as much as it did. And may it broaden its student body and its faculty more. Thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]

VEST: The third person we recognize this morning with a Dr. Martin Luther King Leadership award is Dr. Shirley Jackson. Shirley, could you come up here, please?

Shirley received her bachelor's degree in physics from MIT in 1968. And in 1973, she became the first African American to receive the PhD from MIT. Her career as a physicist has been conducted in both industrial and academic settings. For 15 years, she was a research physicist at the AT&T Bell Labs and later became a professor of physics at Rutgers University.

In addition, she has served in numerous advisory capacities for the profession and for the federal government. She is also a life member of the MIT Corporation, which is our board of trustees, and has been a member of its executive committee.

During the past year, she has had to take leave from these responsibilities, much to my chagrin, I must say, in order to serve as chair of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, the federal agency which is responsible for the civilian use and disposal of nuclear materials in the United States. Throughout her career, Dr. Jackson has demonstrated a distinguished and unwavering commitment to physics, to higher education.

And she has served as a leader, a role model, and mentor to so many people at MIT and throughout the scientific community. Shirley, your dedication to excellence in all that you do is certainly a fitting tribute to Dr. King's legacy. Congratulations. Again, thanks so much.

[APPLAUSE]

JACKSON:

Thank you, Chuck. And I would like to express my appreciation to the selection committee. It's hard to express how deep an honor this is for me. As I've told many people throughout my life, I am truly a child of the King era. I grew up during the heart of the Civil Rights Movement.

The March on Washington occurred when I was a high school student. And the vision that Dr. King expressed at the time of that march was a vision that I've always believed in [AUDIO OUT] times when it's been difficult to continue to believe in that.

And Dr. King's death in 1968 happened in the same year that I graduated from MIT. And I was going to leave MIT, but I decided to stay and try to work with an institution like this to open the doors for those who, historically, had not had the opportunities that I had to be here. And so all that he did was always an imprinting experience for me.

And even today, when our public discourse is sometimes very nasty, I try to remember some of what Dr. King said. And he spoke of having seen the promised land. And even though he felt, at the time, that he might not live to see us all get there, he believed that we would. And so do I. Thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]

VEST:

I would like to make a very slight departure from the program at this point to make, to me, a very meaningful announcement. Each year at this breakfast, I've had the privilege of making the announcement of some modest thing that MIT, as an entire institution and community, has done in some way to foster the professional or student careers of minority members of its community.

This year I want to make the opposite kind of announcement and inform you all of something quite wonderful that a minority member of our community has recently made possible for MIT as an entire institution and for generations of students and faculty ahead.

I am referring to the recent receipt of a \$1 million gift from Charlotte Nowak Bowman. She was the widow of William Dabney Bowman, class of 1944. Mr. Bowman spent most of his career as a pioneer in aerodynamic design at the Ford Motor Company, where he was head of that section prior to his retirement.

We are always grateful, of course, when we receive a gift of this magnitude. But this one carries special significance. It is the largest gift that MIT has ever received from an African American alumnus. In his 50th reunion class notes in 1994, Mr. Bowman indicated that he had three highlights of his life were, one, when he was admitted to MIT; two, when he received his MIT degree from Karl Taylor Compton; and three, when he married Charlotte in 1953.

Mrs. Bowman, who died shortly after making this gift to us in the end of December, established the William Bowman Fund in the memory of her husband and in honor of his admiration for MIT. This fund, which will provide an endowment for research in cancer, diabetes, and heart disease, is a magnificent leadership gift reflecting the vision of an MIT graduate who made a big difference in his world and is now making a big difference for MIT. And I'd like us to pause just for a moment in memory of both Mr. And Mrs. Bowman.

Thank you very much. I now would like to call on MIT's provost, Professor Joel Moses, who will introduce to us the Martin Luther King visiting professors for this year. Joel.

MOSES:

I am very pleased to introduce the inaugural group of Martin Luther King, Jr. visiting professors. This concept and program was begun by my predecessor, Mark Wrighton, following the recommendation of the committee chaired by Dean Osgood and Professor Feld.

It is funded by the MIT departments by foregoing 10% of the salary associated with faculty who go on sabbatical and leave. And I want to thank the MIT department heads and deans for agreeing to do this. I think it's a wonderful way of increasing the presence of minority faculty in this institution.

And let me introduce the four distinguished MLK, Jr. visiting professors. Professor Wes Harris. I have a hard time calling you Wesley Harris. Wes Harris, a member of the National Academy of Engineering, holds a BS degree in aerospace engineering from the University of Virginia and a master's and PhD in aerospace and mechanical science from Princeton University.

He was a member of the MIT faculty from 1972 until 1985. From 1975 to 1979, he was director of the MIT's Office of Minority Education. He left MIT to become Dean of Engineering at University of Connecticut, a post he held till 1990, when he became vice president of the University of Tennessee Space Institute. He most recently was NASA's associate administrator for aeronautics. Wes Harris.

[APPLAUSE]

Professor Richard Joseph has the AB degree from Dartmouth College and a bachelor of philosophy from New College, Oxford University, and a doctor of philosopher from Nuffield College in Oxford. From 1979 to 1988, he was a member of the faculty at Dartmouth. And since 1988, has been the Asa G. Candler Professor of Political Science at Emory University.

He has worked closely with the Carter Center. And his teaching interests include African politics, comparative democratisation, political theory, sociopolitical thought, and politics in literature. Professor Joseph.

[APPLAUSE]

Professor Steve Lee holds a BS degree in applied mathematics from Yale University and a PhD in computer science from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. His research interests include differential algebraic equations, groundwater modeling, and computational fluid dynamics. In addition to this post in a mathematics/science section at Oak Ridge National Laboratory, he's an adjunct assistant professor at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville in the Department of Computer Science. Professor Lee.

[APPLAUSE]

Professor Oliver McGee holds calls a bachelor's degree from Ohio State University, a master of science, PhD from University at Arizona. At Georgia Tech, he's associate professor in the School of Civil and Environmental Engineering. The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching recently named him the 1995 Georgia Professor of the Year. His interests include computational mechanics and interdisciplinary design optimization of civil and aerospace structural systems. He visited MIT in 1993 as well. Welcome back. Professor McGee.

[APPLAUSE]

And I'm sure you'll agree this is an outstanding group. And working with the departments and deans, we hope to have an equally outstanding group next year. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

VEST: Thank you, Joel. Before introducing Dr. Chambers, I would like to make a few remarks about a theme that has really flowed through both the comments this morning and certainly through the lives of each and every person who has been recognized. And that is leadership, something that we have just celebrated through these awards and something that the country is focusing very much on at the moment.

Actually, I think it's what the country is not focusing on at the moment. The negative campaigning among presidential hopefuls that we have been witnessing in the past few months is evidence that we are suffering from a distinct lack of leadership. The candidates are not presenting visions of what our society can be, could be, or should be. Rather, most are feeding the fears, increasing the gulfs among us. That is not leadership in my book. And when there is no leadership, whoever is willing to jump into the vacuum fills it.

MIT's own Professor Steve Ansolabehere has recently published a highly acclaimed book showing that, in fact, negative campaigning simply drives citizens out of the political process. They tune out, and they drop out. But leadership and jumping in is where those of us in this room command.

It is the special responsibility of colleges and universities to exercise leadership and to prepare the next generation of leaders. What does that mean in today's world? We expect our graduates to play pivotal roles in society, to become leaders in a rapidly changing nation and world. It is a time of change, and it is a time for change.

Today, about 1/3 of the students who come to MIT as freshmen grew up in homes where at least two languages are spoken. Over 40% of them are women. At the graduate level, almost 1/3 of our students come from other countries. And slowly but, nonetheless, increasingly, our students come from a wider variety of racial and ethnic backgrounds. Over 40% of our undergraduates are members of US minority groups. And over 15% are members of so-called underrepresented minority groups.

After MIT, where do these students go? Many of them, as is traditional, go on to become faculty members in other colleges and universities. Many become physicians or lawyers, and a few enter government service. But most enter business and industry. And while it used to be that the manufacturing industry looked for and attracted the largest portion of our graduates, last year 45% of the companies recruiting our students were from the service sector or the software industry, many in financial services.

But whatever their professions, however, all of our students become citizens in a world of growing contrast and complexity. We are experiencing both scientific progress and economic advancement at the same time, as you have heard so eloquently from our students this morning, that there is a growing stratification of wealth division among peoples both between nations and within nations, certainly including our own.

We are coming to understand our common stake in the global environment and in the global economy. Yet simultaneously, there's a terrifying resurgence of nationalist and ethnic conflict all over the world. It is a world where the health of individuals, of society, of the economy, of the environment itself needs our urgent attention. We all have a common stake in the solution to such problems.

In such a world, most of the major problems cannot be addressed without science and technology. The people of MIT and particularly our students have the talent to discover the new sources of energy, to unlock the workings of the mind, to find the cure for AIDS, to heal and preserve the environment, and much, much more. That is the mission of MIT-- to apply our talents to the problems posed by contemporary society whether in industry, commerce, arts, healing, or politics.

Our core strength, of course, lies in technology and in the natural sciences. And clearly, scientific and technical breakthroughs will always be needed to improve our world. But more is required. There is an old saying that a leader is one who takes us elsewhere. That is, a leader is one who produces change in his or her society. Obviously, Dr. Martin Luther King was such a leader. We need more such leaders, men and women with the ideas, the vision, and the ability to inspire others, individuals who can employ the tools of economics and diplomacy, the powers of communication, the ability to integrate the effort of many to achieve a common goal.

This last quality, the ability to bring people together to work towards shared goals, will be even more critical in an increasingly complex and global society. The most successful leaders will be those who not only have the ideas and vision, but the ability to draw on the talents of women and men from the full spectrum-- national, economic, cultural, and racial backgrounds. These are qualities that we must emphasize in our educational programs and, especially, in the way we live and work together at MIT.

In many ways, these are hard times. They certainly are challenging, but they also are times, I believe, of great opportunity. MIT is in a period of transition financially, intellectually, socially. How we deal with these changes will say much about the role we can play as educational and institutional leaders. As we work through these changes, forge new directions in education research, and in the management of our own Institution, it is critical that we work together to form a common vision of our future.

And if we can do it here, it will be an important step toward achieving greater justice in society as a whole. If we can educate our students in these qualities of leadership and if we can embrace and build on the wealth of talent across all of our community, then we truly will have the opportunity to serve as the leaders that the world so badly needs. Thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]

Now it is a special privilege to introduce our keynote speaker. It's truly a great honor to have Dr. Julius J. Chambers with us today. Dr. Chambers, who has been the chancellor of North Carolina Central University for the past two years, gained a national reputation in the areas of school desegregation, voting rights, and fair employment during his years with the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund.

Among his first Supreme Court cases was *Swann versus Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education*. Argued in 1971, it put the Supreme Court's stamp of approval on busing as a means of achieving desegregation.

Dr. Chambers was director counsel of the Legal Defense and Educational Fund from 1984 until 1993 and served as president of the fund for nearly a decade before he became its senior executive. Prior to his work with the fund, he was in private law practice in Charlotte, North Carolina, where, in 1964, he opened the state's first interracial law firm.

He received his bachelor's degree summa cum laude in history from what was then North Carolina College at Durham in 1958. He received his master's degree in history from the University of Michigan in 1959 and his law degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1962, where he graduated first in his law class.

The following year, he received the LLM degree from Columbia University's School of Law. During his career, he has taught civil rights and constitutional law courses at the University of Virginia, Harvard, the University of Pennsylvania, Columbia University, and the University of Michigan.

He has served as a trustee of public and private universities and has been on the board of the Children's Defense Fund, the Legal Aid Society of New York, and the editorial board of the *American Bar Association Journal*. As a fellow university president, he knows firsthand the special trust that colleges and universities hold for our society. We are fortunate indeed to have him today as our keynote speaker. Dr. Chambers.

[APPLAUSE]

CHAMBERS:

Thank you, Dr. And Mrs. Vest, and all of the friends and supporters of MIT. I'm from the deep South, and one doesn't ever get away from one's own training. And I sat here really looking at this program, and listening to the people who preceded me, and listening at Dr. Vest collect his money from a very great donor, and then praying, [INAUDIBLE] sounds just like the Baptist church in the deep South.

[LAUGHTER]

We had some great speeches and moving speeches. And we collected some money, and then we prayed.

[LAUGHTER]

Jesse Jackson couldn't have done a better job. I enjoyed all of the presentations. You honor me today by permitting me to join you in commemoration of Dr. Martin Luther King. We meet at a critical time in our history, where the dreams of Dr. King of a world free of racial discrimination are very seriously questioned. I'm reminded of Dr. John Hope Franklin's *The Color Line*.

Quoting Du Bois Dr. Franklin feared that the problem of the color line would be with us not only throughout the 20th century but through the 21st century as well. The reason, he feared, was that America does not wish a colorblind society. How could we? It would eliminate the irrational basis now undergirding our individual and group efforts to be superior. Some believe we must maintain a class or a perceived inferior group in order for others to feel superior.

Moreover, we are not certain of the meaning of a race-neutral society. To some of us, Dr. Franklin wrote, it means the homogenization of our individual cultures to the point they are no longer recognizable or identifiable. To others, it means subordinating a group's aspirations to the interests of this nation as a whole.

Arthur Schlesinger suggests as much in *Disuniting America*. But Du Bois reminds us that both definitions are adverse to the interests of African Americans. Finally, Dr. Franklin tells us that we have not attempted earnestly, diligently, and conscientiously to achieve a colorblind society. We are long on talk and short on deeds.

I'm also reminded of Professor Derrick Bell in *Faces at the Bottom of the Well*, and of Andrew Hacker in *Two Nations-- Black and White, Separate, Hostile, Unequal*. They question whether we will ever achieve a colorblind society or achieve, I might add, the dreams of Dr. King.

Alexis de Tocqueville, many years ago, raised the same question. He didn't believe that African Americans would ever be treated as equal or fitted into the American society. "The progress that had been made in eliminating slavery," he wrote, "was not for the good of the Negroes, but for that of whites." Even where slavery was abolished or didn't exist, he found harsh treatment or exclusion of African Americans from the American mainstream.

So while we gather here today to commemorate Dr. King or to praise and endorse his teachings, do we seriously believe that America will ever eliminate race as a major factor in the lives of all of us? Are we simply commemorating an imagined memory, showing our faces here today to prove that we are not racist?

Are we giving lip service, as Dr. Franklin advised, with little or no commitment to the dreams of Dr. King? I would like to think that you and MIT are dedicated to a better world, one free of race and gender discrimination, free of religious discrimination, free of poverty. Our deeds, however, frequently belie that optimism.

For a few moments, I would like to raise with each of you the sincerity of your presence here today. Perhaps, as an invited guest, I should be loath to be so personal. I believe, however, that our failure to raise this issue, to be personal and direct, accounts for our refusal over the years to seriously address the issue of race.

We push the issue aside and declare victory. It's easier that way even while witnessing racial discrimination all around us. We employ different language. We erect barriers facially neutral, but with the same discriminatory effects as blatant racial expressions.

No, we should begin this journey with a brief review of our racial history. We should look at our limited efforts to grapple with the problems of race. And with its manifestations today in words and deeds, we will see then the justification for the concerns of Dr. Franklin and of Professors Bell and Hacker.

Even before the adoption of the American Constitution, we wrestled with the problem of race. Judge Leon Higginbotham tells us, in the matter of color, how we divided America on the issue of slavery and silently wrote into the Constitution our endorsement of race. Dr. Franklin describes how we continued our preferences of race and the color line after we abolished slavery.

Some hoped that we had eliminated the issue of race with the adoption of the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments. They thought the post-Civil War amendments had abolished slavery and had ensured equality of freed African Americans. But our treatment of these amendments in the late 1800s and even today points out that race is more ingrained in our hearts and minds than we would like to admit.

Plessy v. Ferguson in 1896 offered a great opportunity for our Supreme Court to give life and meaning to the 13th and 14th Amendments. Our court rejected the opportunity to write into the Constitution that we should be free and equal. Instead, the court adopted a separate but equal doctrine which segregated America for years to come. With *Plessy*, we rejected any opportunity to move to a colorblind society. Rather, we built on *Plessy* practices and laws that perpetuate the color line even today.

We find that in our presidential leadership. Shortly before Dr. King's death, political leaders found support in building a campaign based on race. They could gain support in opposing school desegregation or busing, and opposing affirmative action, or race-based remedies, or in plans designed to help the poor. Busing or special efforts to desegregate our public schools were deemed inappropriate.

So we left the schools segregated, or we re-segregated those that had been desegregated. For example, in Norfolk, Virginia; Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; Austin, Texas; DeKalb County, Georgia, we found that desegregation of schools, or bringing the races together, or building a colorblind society was not in the best interest of this nation. That position was adopted by our US Supreme Court.

Today, therefore, as Gary or Phil has noted, our public schools are more segregated or racially identifiable than 20 years ago. Who, therefore, in this audience or elsewhere can sincerely argue that we believe in a colorblind society? We don't even teach this goal to our children.

Our court has gone further, foreclosing any possibility of establishing racial discrimination. One must now prove intent or purpose in order to challenge successfully any practice that effectively disadvantage a racial or gender group disproportionately. We know that such requirements impose impossible burdens on victims of discrimination. Moreover, it requires proof of evil motives. And that it will set back black and white citizens, and will put them against each other, and practically eliminate any chance of black and white people working together.

Thus will stay practices which disproportionately or totally exclude African Americans from various branches of government, from an education, from a better job. The court would find no discrimination today, and it makes no difference whether the criteria used to exclude minorities measure anything relevant to an education or to a person's ability to perform a job.

Second, the court assumes, in effect, that all past discrimination has been eliminated. With schools segregated, with minorities excluded from preferable jobs, or from leadership, or meaningful positions from our faculties in our major institutions as presidents of universities or as leaders of corporate America, our US Supreme Court begins its consideration of cases today with an assumption that these conditions just happened adventitiously. No race at all was involved.

Our court closes its eyes to our sordid history of race to segregation and discrimination, and assumes, as Dinesh D'Souza that black people prefer an inferior status, or, as Hernstein and Murray would tell us in *The Bell Curve*, that black people don't have the natural ability to do better.

Third, we reject necessary and meaningful remedial steps to correct the past and move toward a race-neutral or colorblind society. For example, affirmative action and race-based remedies are believed to violate the 14th Amendment, a constitutional provision designed, we thought, to improve opportunities of African Americans.

We therefore decided in Maryland that despite Maryland's history of exclusion of blacks from its universities, Maryland could no longer use a race-based scholarship plan in order to attract minority students to its schools. Minority-targeted scholarships were deemed discriminatory even though they were necessary to recruit minority students.

California, like many other states, now bans the use of affirmative action even though less than 10% of its African Americans and Hispanic students will be enrolled or employed in its state colleges and universities. It is more important for California and, I'm afraid, for this country to ignore history than to impose race criteria in order to address that history and to improve opportunities for its minority students for a better chance in life.

In voting, we are engaged in an almost life-and-death struggle to preserve electoral districts that offer minorities meaningful opportunities to participate in the electoral process and to elect representatives of choice. Based on our history and our present practices of voting along racial lines, we felt it was necessary to establish minority-majority districts in order to give minorities a chance to have their votes counted in the electoral process. But just as in the past, these steps have now been seriously challenged.

Throughout history, African Americans have fought for the right to vote through court decisions like *Smith versus Allwright*, which enjoined all-white primaries and legislation like the Voting Rights Act of 1957, and '65, and '82. We sought to ensure some degree of effective voting strength.

And in 1992, we elected the largest delegation of African Americans to the United States Congress we've ever had. That, however, proved too much for many Americans, who began to challenge minority voting districts as violative of the rights of some mythical group.

It couldn't be white groups, because no one banned them from registering and voting. Nor could it be black groups, because they were finally able to elect representatives of choice. It still isn't clear who is being harmed.

But Justice O'Connor of the United States Supreme Court found, in *Shaw versus Reno*, that there was, indeed, some home and some violation, because it offended her notion of equal protection and prevented Americans from achieving a colorblind society. It was not material to her that African Americans would be excluded from the electoral process.

I couldn't help but think back, when I was arguing a case in the Supreme Court just this past December involving redistricting in North Carolina, to a period when my father wanted to register and vote, to the questionings of the register when he applied, and to the sadness he brought home when the register found him unqualified.

And I was asked, during an argument in December 1995, what do you people want, by the United States Supreme Court by Justice Scalia. And I responded, we want the same thing you want-- to be able to register and vote, to have our votes counted, and to be able to elect people who have some sympathy for the interests of minorities and others. Yes, judge, we also would like to be on the Supreme Court.

The assaults on affirmative action and race-based remedies for African Americans are clothed today in new language and, except for our racial history, might be appealing. We are told, for example, that Dr. King didn't seek racial preferences. He dreamed of a colorblind society, and if we introduce race in the remedies today, we will be acting contrary to everything Dr. King told us.

Even Governor Foster of Louisiana has advanced this theory. He proclaimed recently a state holiday for Dr. King and, at the same time, announced that he was eliminating affirmative action in Louisiana, again, because Dr. King didn't prefer or seek racial preferences.

Isn't that the kind of hypocrisy we see expressed today in many programs commemorating Dr. King? Dr. King was an advocate of affirmative action. And we also know that the Congress that passed the post-Civil War amendments also advocated affirmative action.

That same Congress passed the Freedmen's Bureau Act and incorporated race-based remedies for freed slaves that Congress knew-- as we know today and as Justice Blackmun, formerly of the Supreme Court, has constantly reminded us-- that we cannot ensure equality or a colorblind society without first considering and employing race.

No one expects that we will suddenly forget our history and become race-neutral. It is only through our constant struggle, our working together, sacrificing together, and striving to ensure respect for each other's contributions that we will begin to achieve a true colorblind society. Dr. King knew this but tempered his advocacy to the specific issues of the moment-- the pervasive, overt exclusion and segregation of African Americans and all walks of life.

Read his speeches and study his teachings. While he was a strong advocate for peace and love, he urged all people, black and white, to dedicate their lives to eradicating the evil scourge of race. You can follow him from Montgomery, the bus board cuts, and his advocacy that all people must seek freedom and equality.

You can follow him in the Birmingham jails, where he rejected unjust laws and practices, but pointed out the need and responsibility for accepting the penalties for violating those laws. "It is only through our sacrifices," he wrote, "and our nonviolent sufferings that people will begin to acknowledge the injustice of these laws."

We can follow Dr. King in Washington where he dreamed of a new America. And we can follow him to Selma and to Memphis, Tennessee. And in each instance, we will find Dr. King advocating the same kind of plans that we are advocating today in order to ensure freedom and equality for all people.

We today, even here at MIT, must acknowledge that we didn't get here in a race-neutral environment. We got here through our history. And in order to ensure that we address the problems of those excluded, we're going to have to employ the same kinds of remedies that brought the country to the sordid state we experience today.

We're going to have to desegregate our schools. We're going to have to ensure that African Americans will have a chance to elect representatives of choice. We're going to have to employ race in the process of ensuring that all people are free.

Some people ask, don't you really promote more division by advocating race considerations and remedies? I answer, yeah, we do. But you and I must acknowledge where we are today. And you and I must acknowledge that in order to get beyond that, we have to bring people on to the table with the same opportunities for affecting change.

I have advocated all the time that one of the best advantages of integration is that it teaches all of us that every person can make a contribution. I've also advocated that we can no longer just stick with the traditional mode of doing things. Otherwise, we will perpetuate that same disadvantage that has characterized us over the years.

I am not certain today where we will be in 15 or 20 years. Derrick Bell tells me I'm crazy to be advocating integration, that we aren't going to get beyond this point. Andrew Hacker tells me that we are divided. And he has grave doubts that we will ever see a race-free America. John Hope Franklin tells me that our history teaches us that we are a race-divided society and will likely be throughout the 21st century.

I'm impressed with this gathering today with people I hope are committed to a better society and a better world than that we have experienced over the years. I tell Derrick Bell and John Hope that I have been an optimist all my life and I have witnessed some major changes in this country. I have watched from the period when my father couldn't vote to a period where African Americans can now register and vote. And I know that we are still being challenged in terms of whether our votes will be counted equally. But we had to fight to get to vote.

I watched as a number of people today get jobs-- yes, even here at MIT-- who, a few years ago, wouldn't have been employed at MIT. I watched changes. I watched as a number of students come here, minorities, and enrolled and graduate from MIT, knowing, a few years ago, they wouldn't have been here. We have affected change. And it's that kind of what Howard Thurman calls, for me, creative encounter that convinces me that we can move and will move further with the commitment of people like you pushing, and never giving up, and carrying on with the struggle of Dr. King.

That's one reason I am pleased that you would allow me to come and join you today to remind all of us that we are still in a battle and are still expected, by those who say that they are believers in the teachings of Dr. King, that we have to continue with that battle. And I believe we will.

Ours is a great country. We have resources that can accommodate all of us, and we must appreciate what Langston Hughes, that the dreams of all of our people, whatever their color, their gender, their religion, their economic status in life, are the same. "Let America," Langston wrote, "be America again. Let it be the dreams it used to be. Let it be the pioneer on the plain seeking a home where he himself is free." Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

JOHNSON: Dr. Chambers, thank you once more for your inspiring words. Now I would like Reverend Gould to return to the stage. She will say the benediction to close this morning's program. Reverend Gould.

GOULD: Before I offer the benediction, I'd like to remind everyone that the Conference on Youth and Entrepreneurship, the Youth Conference being a part of the annual Martin Luther King, Jr. celebration, begins today at 5:00 with registration and continues through tomorrow. So if you get snowed in, there are wonderful things to do.

The Reverend Dr. Howard Thurman, dean of the Chapel at Boston University and mentor of Dr. King, wrote, "there is a sense of wholeness at the core of man that must abound in all he does that marks, with reverence, his every step, that has its sway when all else fails, that wearies out all evil things, that warms the depth of frozen fears, making friends of foe, making love of hate, and lasts beyond the living and the dead, beyond the goals of peace, the ends of war. This man seeks, through all his years, to be complete and of one piece within, without."

Martin Luther King, Jr. was such a man. Dr. Julius Chambers is such a man. Dr. Shirley Jackson is such a woman. Dr. Leon Trilling is such a man. Matthew Turner is such a man. And you and I are called to be such people. As we go forth from this place, let us be bearers of light, manifestations of love, and seekers of justice. Amen.

JOHNSON: Everyone, please rise as we sing "Lift Every Voice and Sing" by James Weldon Johnson. We will be singing the first two verses.

[PIANO PLAYING]

[SINGING]

That concludes our program for the morning. Thank you very much for joining us. And we hope to see you next year. Buh-bye.

[APPLAUSE]