

[MUSIC PLAYING]

[APPLAUSE]

[MUSIC PLAYING]

[APPLAUSE]

THOMAS:

Good morning. Good morning. My name is [? Huanne ?] Thomas. I'm a junior pursuing a degree in chemical engineering. And it is my sincere pleasure to be your mistress of ceremony this morning. In the spirit of the celebration of Doctor King, I'd like to ask all of you to please stand, go to another table, shake hands with someone, and introduce yourself to someone that you did not know before.

Thank you, thank you. I hope you've all had a wonderful time getting to know each other. It's hard to tear yourself away now, isn't it? Once we can all get seated, we'll begin our program again. It's always nice to meet someone new.

And now allow me to welcome you to the 27th annual Doctor Martin Luther King Jr. Breakfast Celebration. I would like to take this moment to thank President Charles Vest and his wife, Rebecca Vest, for hosting this event. I would also like to thank Dr. Lani Guinier, tenured professor at Harvard School of Law. It is a pleasure to have you all here this morning. Further more, I would like to thank all the members of the Martin Luther King Jr. planning committee, to whom we owe this wonderful morning.

[APPLAUSE]

When I call your names, would you please stand and be recognized. Professor Jerome Friedman. Professor Richard Millner. Reverend John [? Wozniak ?]. Assistant Professor Catherine [? Drenan ?]. Assistant Professor Larry Anderson.

Associate Dean Arnold Henderson Jr. Assistant Director Deborah Lieberman. Director Ronald [? Kutchlow. ?] Associate Director Robert Sales. Co-director, Paul [? Paravano ?].

House manager, Trudy Morris. Associate provost, Philip Clay. Special assistant to the president, Dr. Clarence G. Williams. And co-chairs Dean Leo [? Osgood ?] Jr. and Professor Michael Feld.

[APPLAUSE]

In addition, we would like to express our appreciation to the student volunteers who were here early to help with the preparations. Thank you all for contributing to the success of this event. Now I'd like to ask the MIT gospel choir to please come to the stage. We will have a selection, Lift Every Voice And Sing by James Weldon Johnson. We ask that you stand and join in singing the first two versus. The words are found on the back of your programs.

[MUSIC - "LIFT EVERY VOICE AND SING"]

Thank you, MIT Gospel Choir for leading us in that outstanding rendition of Lift Every Voice And Sing.

[APPLAUSE]

We will now begin the program with the invocation from Reverend John [? Wozniak ?]. Following the invocation, breakfast will begin. After breakfast, we will have two students. Maria [? Amotero ?], class of 2002, and Christopher M. Jones, a graduate student, guide us in a reflection on the life and legacy of Dr. King. Dr. Charles [? Invest ?] will then present the 2000, 2001 Martin Luther King Jr. Leadership Awards.

You will then have a musical selection from the South Central Mass Choir. Then, we will hear remarks from Dr. Charles [? Invest ?]. And he will have the distinct pleasure of introducing our keynote speaker, Dr. Lani Guinier, professor at Harvard Law School.

Following the keynote speaker, provost Robert A. Brown will recognize our Martin Luther King Jr. visiting professors for the 2000, 2001 academic year. Now let us begin our program with the invocation by Reverend John [? Wozniak ?]. Right after Reverend [? Wozniak's ?] invocation, we will begin breakfast. Reverend [? Wozniak ?].

[APPLAUSE]

[? REVEREND: ?] Good morning, and please join me in prayer. Oh mighty God, bring us from the cold and dark and our waking to this day. Energize our bodies and our minds but more our spirits together. Unite us as one people with many different talents, skills, ideas, and goals.

Bring us to a common purpose for the greater good. And show us, again, the privilege we have. And remind us it is a gift, not a right. Fill us with courage to confront power and might when oppress the poor and the needy.

Remind us how lucky we are to have food, and water, and roofs over our heads this day. Kindle our dedication as a people to help those who need assistance, whether it be from earthquake, mental illness, any situation. The list is so long. Nourish us with this food, remembering the people who worked to grow it and the folks who prepared it.

Recall the struggles of the people and the movement, especially Martin Luther King. For they call us together today. All these things and all the silent prayers yet emerging from our hearts we pray, oh God, Amen.

THOMAS: Now let's begin breakfast. I hope you have all enjoyed your breakfast as much as I did. And now, we will continue with the rest of our program.

I have the pleasure of introducing two of our very own students. Maria [? Amotero ?], a junior in mechanical engineering, and Christopher M. Jones, a graduate student double majoring in nuclear engineering and technology and policy. They will guide us in a reflection on the life and legacy of Dr. King. We will hear first from Mr. Maria [? Amotero ?]. Maria?

[APPLAUSE]

AMOTERO:

Good morning. My name [INAUDIBLE], and I am a junior in the Department of Mechanical Engineering. I have been asked to talk about Dr. Martin Luther King Jr's life and legacy this morning. And the [? show-some ?] theme is confronting the gap, building and sustaining inclusion.

The first question that came to mind when presented with this theme is, what exactly does confronting the gap mean? What gap is it that we are talking about today because, in today's world-- year 2001, almost 40 years after Martin Luther King's death-- we are not just talking about a gap between black folks and white folks.

No, in today's world, gap refers to a myriad of situations. There are gaps between a first generation Chinese in America and a third or fourth generation Chinese in America. There are gaps between [? Nuyoricans ?] and Puerto Ricans, the [INAUDIBLE].

There is a gap between the wealthy movie star living in Beverly Hills and the homeless trying to stay alive in the streets of LA. And yes, there is a gap between white America and black America. But there is also a gap between that African American living on the 40th floor in Manhattan and the one trying to live through the night in the streets of Brooklyn.

Ladies and gentleman, there are gaps right here in Walker this morning. Some of you got here this morning with large groups of friends, groups large enough to fill a table. But some of you came in smaller groups. How many of those smaller groups got here early enough to have a choice where to sit, gravitated towards a table already occupied with another group of unknown people, and how many of you sought an empty table?

For those that came later and had no choice but to sit at a table that was already occupied, how many of you actually went past a courteous good morning before returning to conversations amongst yourselves, instead of embracing those that you didn't know? Can you say the complete name and something about each person at your table. I ask that of everyone, including these reserved tables.

[LAUGHTER]

That, my friends, is a gap right here in MIT, our MIT world. Discover that gap and ask yourselves why. Why does that gap exist? Why did you not take the time to know another individual? Are we too comfortable in our own world's to entertain the idea of learning something new, a new way of doing things?

I think Dr. Martin Luther King Junior said it best when he said it's possible that those people were afraid. We are afraid of what could happen to us but we're not even afraid, like, physically. We are afraid that if we take the time to learn about another individual, about another way, another culture, we will understand. We are afraid to understand to be able to say, I see why he is this or that way.

We are afraid that we might be able to accept something outside of what we know. We are afraid to let go of our views. We are afraid to broaden the possibilities. We are afraid of the responsibilities of understanding.

You see, once you understand, you can't hide behind the [SPANISH]. I didn't know. No. Well ladies and gentlemen, I take that to be the second step towards confronting the gap, understanding. First, we must acknowledge the gap. Then, we must strive to understand what causes the gap.

Understanding is an amazing thing. I am sure that every professor in this room, every dean in this room, every person who has acted as a TA in this room, anyone who has ever tutored and has had the pleasure of seeing someone understand, truly understand, a concept he or she has battled with realizes how amazing understanding is.

The look on someone's face when they understand is unmistakable. Fear is no longer present where understanding lives. Fear is no longer present where understanding lives. A child is no longer scared to peek at his homework because he does not understand.

And we, as human beings, would not be afraid to handle one another once we each understood who we each are. Once we understand, we can see that we're all fundamentally the same. The things that make us different stem from the same common needs and wants.

The only thing that makes us different is the way that we individually choose to handle them. Understanding is not an easy thing. It takes time. And it takes security. It takes, first, understanding of oneself.

Then, it takes courage. It takes courage and stumbles to understand. But understanding is necessary if we really want to confront the gap, especially if we want to go as far as to build and sustain inclusion. What is inclusion? Inclusion is acceptance.

How can we attain this thing called acceptance? We can only accept if we understand. It is literally impossible to accept something that we do not understand. That phrase, I will accept but I do not understand, it's a lie.

You can think you accept. But it will keep gnawing at you, at your conscience, at your beliefs. Ladies and gentlemen, you will keep questioning it until you understand it or you eliminate it. And we cannot eliminate it.

We are not able to create a world of people who are just like us and understand us instantly. Our only choice is to understand, to take the time to understand. We are here this morning celebrating the life of a man who, basically, led many facets of the civil rights movement.

He was fighting for his people, the African American people. And he won battles not only for the African American people but for all of us sitting here today. If this were not true, the Hispanics would now have to lead another revolution to attain the same for our people.

Martin Luther King fought this for all of us. And let me say, he did a fine job. Fine job.

[APPLAUSE]

I do not know how many of you are familiar with the phrase [SPANISH]. It is a Latin phrase that means in law but not in fact. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. attained the [SPANISH] part of his battle. We now have laws that say there can be no discrimination because of the color of our skin.

Be that black, brown, red, yellow, or, yes, white, there can legally be no discrimination because of ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, et cetera. He did a great deed. Yet, we are not satisfied. We are not satisfied.

We all constantly agree that the de facto part of his battle is yet to be won in many circumstances. And so, we are unsatisfied. Let us be dissatisfied until integration is not seen as a problem but as an opportunity to participate in the beauty of diversity, said Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. And I agree that we should not be satisfied for this is, in fact, not true yet.

Well my message to you this morning is that if we are, in fact, to attain the de facto part of the battle, if we are, in fact, to build and sustain inclusion for all of us, it must start with you, and you, and you, you, and me. It must start with each and every one of us as individuals towards the rest of the individuals that surround us. It must start with understanding. It must start with understanding. Thank you, and good morning.

[APPLAUSE]

THOMAS: Thank you, Maria. We will now hear from Christopher M. Jones. Christopher?

JONES: Good morning. My name is Christopher M. Jones. And I am a second year graduate student pursuing a dual master's in the nuclear engineering department in the technology and policy program. I am also a proud graduate of Morehouse College, Dr. King's alma mater.

[APPLAUSE]

I am, both, honored and humbled at this opportunity to reflect on the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. The theme this year is confronting the gap. Building and sustaining inclusion. At first look, it seemed like a straightforward concept.

But then, I thought, sometimes the simplest things have the deepest meaning. Confronting as defined by Merriam Webster is the act of bringing face to face. In November of 1992, over 1,000 of the world's leading scientists, including a majority of Nobel laureates in the [? scientists ?], met to address humanities effect on the environment.

They looked face to face at stratospheric ozone depletion and the-- excuse me. They looked face to face at stratospheric ozone depletion and exploitation of groundwater supplies. They looked face to face at the irreversible loss of species. They looked face to face at many issues, the result a warning to humanity.

They urged that, if not checked, many of our current practices put at serious risk the future that we wish for human society. Fundamental changes are urgent if we are to avoid the collision course our present course of action will bring about. They challenge us to think about having to look into the eyes of our grandchildren, and say this is the world that I leave to you.

Now 30 years earlier, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. challenged us to look face to face at a parallel issue. He challenged America to look face to face at serious change. In his book, *Where Do We Go From Here, Chaos Or Community*, he pleads the practical cost of change for the nation, up to this point, has been cheap. The real cost lies ahead.

The discount education given Negroes will, in the future, have to be purchased at full price if quality education is to be realized. We already see the high cost associated with discount education and unfair standardized testing. We don't even have to leave our front yards to see it's effect.

White America makes up about 70% of the US population. And they make up, roughly, 60% of the graduate population at MIT, while African Americans make up 13% of the total US population and only make up 2.3% of the graduate population at MIT. 2.3%.

Hispanics also make up, roughly, 13% of the total US population and make up less than 2% of the population in the graduate students at MIT. This is an institutional embarrassment. We can also look in our front yard and see another institutional embarrassment.

Faculty of color are grossly under-represented. This also is an institutional embarrassment. So what are the implications? What do these disproportionate numbers mean? Some feel that it means more open slots for their sons and daughters.

But what does it mean for America? It means a reduction in the pool of qualified American citizens that the scientific community can pull from. Where have we gone wrong? Is it too much to ask that the educational system and the workforce be representative of society as a whole?

Is inclusion of all races, all classes, all face, and both genders an ideal to be relegated to philosophical text? Maybe the problem is too complex for us to solve. I mean, true, we can put a man on the moon. We've even linked the world via the internet. We can even clone humans.

But I guess there are some problems too complex, even for MIT. Some answers too deep, even for the minds of Harvard. Or maybe no one is trying to answer the question. Maybe no one cares. Maybe no one is really looking at the problem.

Maybe King was correct when he said that America has written a check to people of color that has been returned insufficient funds. So what is my role in this? How can I help? What can I do? How can I look at the problem and make a difference?

I'm sure that many, if not most of you, if not all of you, in this room have asked and are asking that very question. I'm glad you asked. As a graduate student, we learned that most of our work is improperly defining the problem. Properly defining the problem, hm.

Are we asking the right question? Are we properly defining the problem? So I contain that the question should not be how can I help, but how can we help. Not how can I help, but how can we help. Not how can I help, but how can we help.

Within the collective creativity of those who have access to resources lies the solution to the problem of sustainable inclusion. We each play a very different role. But without the help of all, inclusion is not possible. We each play a different role. But without the help of everyone in this room, inclusion is not possible.

When we talk about the gap, we're not dealing with a set of problems that can be solved by a few people one problem at a time. We're talking about a monster that can only be solved with the help of us all. A monster that has the created over centuries that can only be solved with the help of us all.

Some will attack this monster from the front. Some from behind. Some from the top, and some from the bottom. But we must all attack this monster together. Some will attack this monster from the White House. Some from the classroom. Some will attack this monster from MIT's president's office and some from the classroom.

But we must all attack this monster together. Our roles are different but our goal the same. Inclusion, our roles are different but our goal the same. Inclusion. Dr. Benjamin Elijah Mays-- King's mentor, teacher, and friend-- would say do whatever you do so well that no man living and no man yet unborn could do it better.

Do whatever you do so well that no man living and no man yet unborn can do it better. So as King said, if you're a street sweeper, sweep streets like Michelangelo painted the Sistine Chapel.

[APPLAUSE]

In doing so, we can create a collective creativity that cannot help but generate solutions. We live in the mecca of learning and creative thought, right here. Right here in Cambridge. Right here in Boston. We live in the mecca of learning and creative thought. The world looks to us for leadership and direction.

So I ask the engineers that are in the room this morning, what is the blueprint for sustainable inclusion? I ask the physicists that are here this morning, what is the Green's function for sustainable inclusive? I ask the medical doctors that woke up early this morning to have breakfast, what is the prescription for sustainable inclusion?

I even ask the economist who passed their classes at Sloan, what does the futures market look like for sustainable inclusion? But I don't stop there. I ask the lawyers, what is the legal precedence for sustainable inclusion? I asked the writers, what is the correct sentence structure? Does my subject and my verb agree for sustainable inclusion?

I ask the coaches, what is the play for a sustainable inclusion? I ask the ministers, what are the scriptures and prayers for sustainable inclusion? I ask God.

[APPLAUSE]

I ask God, what is your will for sustainable inclusion? Confronting the gap, and building, and sustaining inclusion is quite achievable. King called it the beloved community. The beloved community. The beloved community. The beloved community.

In this community, our loyalties must transcend our race, our tribe, our class, and our nation. This would be a community where love and justice prevail. Love here is not sentimental affection but the binding power that holds the universe together.

In this community, we would know that we are tied together in a single garment of destiny caught in an inescapable network of mutuality. In this community, we are not judged by the color of our skin but by the content of our character. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

THOMAS: Once again, I would like to thank, both, Christopher Jones and [? Maria Amotero ?] for those wonderful, wonderful remarks.

[APPLAUSE]

Thank you 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, to truly listen carefully, so that we can then act carefully so that we can understand so that we can move to the beloved community.

At this time, I have honor of introducing our 15th president, Charles N. Vest. President Vest will present the 2001 Martin Luther King Leadership Awards. President Vest?

[APPLAUSE]

VEST: Thank you very much, [? Huanne ?]. And thanks to all of you for turning out this morning for this great MIT tradition. It really has become one of the highlights of my year and also, believe me, my most humbling experience of the year coming here for the 11th time now to speak after such terrific an impressive young men and women. Thank you, very much.

[APPLAUSE]

I'm especially pleased that we are joined this morning by a number of friends and colleagues from the whiter Cambridge community. I think it's fair to say that MIT and the city of Cambridge are on a shared journey and that the ways in which we work together in education, development, and civic affairs is something that gives me great confidence in our future.

And I would like to extend a special welcome to Benjamin Barnes, chairman of the Cambridge Licensing Committee. Benjamin, you're here somewhere. I saw you earlier. Welcome.

[APPLAUSE]

To Marjorie Decker, member of our Cambridge City Council. Marjorie, good morning. And to Denise Simmons, vice chair of the Cambridge School Committee, welcome to you all.

[APPLAUSE]

Now this celebration not only gives us an opportunity to remember and celebrate the life of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr, it also gives us an opportunity to recognize members of our own community and of our own time. Men and women whose leadership and service make a real difference in our sense of who we are and who we can be as individuals and as a society.

It's my very great pleasure to present this year's Martin Luther King Leadership Award to three individuals. Our first award goes to architect, city planner, and civic leader Harvey Gantt. Harvey, would you come forward, please?

[APPLAUSE]

Mr. Gantt was a Martin Luther King visiting professor in our Department of Urban Studies and Planning last year, returning to MIT to teach in the department where he received his master's degree in 1970. A courageous and pioneering leader, he was the first black to attend Clemson University in South Carolina graduating, I note, with honors.

He served two terms as the first African American mayor of Charlotte, North Carolina during the 1980s. In the 1990s, he was twice a candidate for the US Senate running against long time incumbent, Jesse Helms, and served in the Clinton administration as chairman of the National Capital Planning Commission.

The founder of the award winning architectural firm of Gantt Huberman, Mr. Gantt has brought his talent and vision as an architect, planner, and citizen to addressing the problems of the nation's inner cities and working with many others to build an America that truly embraces the American dreams. Congratulations on this award, Harvey. It's a great honor to present it to you, sir.

[APPLAUSE]

GANTT:

Thank you, very much. Thank you, very much. I have so much I want to say, but I'm not going to say it following the eloquence of such wonderful speakers this morning. And Lani, you have quite an act to follow with what has already occurred.

I guess the only thought I want to share with you is that I'm old enough-- you can see the gray hair-- to have lived during a time of Dr. Martin Luther King and to have had the opportunity to meet him. And one of the things that I worry about is that we often deify him and make him so much larger than life.

But what was the genius of Martin Luther King was his humanness. The fact that he cared about people genuinely and that he was just like you and me with fears, and ambition, and concerns. But he had this thing about him, this gift.

This caring about society in such a way that he moved ordinary men and women. From janitors and maids, to professors, to people of wealth and stature to move beyond their personal space to do something to bring about positive change.

And that's the conviction that I moved forward coming to this school five months after his death, to decide to make my life a project in which we would try to bring about positive change. So the issue for us is what are you doing, today, to deal with many of the issues that these student spoke to earlier. Thank you, very much, for the award.

[APPLAUSE]

VEST:

Our second award this morning will be presented to Professor Wesley Harris, distinguished scholar, engineer and administrator, and I would like to say friend. Wes, could you come forward, please?

[APPLAUSE]

Member of the National Academy of Engineering, Wes was on our aeronautics and astronautics faculty from 1972 to 1985. He then served as dean of the University of Connecticut School of Engineering, as vice president of the University of Tennessee, and simultaneously as head of its space institute and later as associate administrator for aeronautics at NASA.

In the mid 1990s, he came back from that high NASA post to be a Martin Luther King visiting professor. We were fortunate that, subsequently, he returned to MIT as a full-time tenured professor. During his first faculty incarnation at the Institute, Wes was the founding director of our office of Minority Education and set a high standard of expectations and inspirations that have benefited, literally, generations of our students.

And he always has been an unrelenting and articulate advocate for a more inclusive, just community wherever he goes serving as a personal guide and a moral compass for individuals and institutions alike. Wes, we are delighted and honored to recognize you with this award.

[APPLAUSE]

HARRIS: Good morning.

AUDIENCE: Good morning.

HARRIS: There's a saying out in Phoenix where I'm spending my sabbatical. When I arrived in August, it was several weeks of triple digit temperatures. 110, 130, and one of the wise, very, very gifted colleagues said, Wes, remember this in February. Remember, you can never, ever shovel sunshine.

[LAUGHTER]

Chuck, thank you for that excellent introduction. You tell an excellent story. You make an old man feel good. In the spirit of Dr. King, I am, both, humbled and honored to have been selected to receive this MLK Leadership Award.

Having had an opportunity to serve on the MIT MLK Committee, I have a sense of the leadership award selection criteria and its selection process. This award, to me, means approval to join a community filled with compassion for humanity where there's justice and opportunity for all, and where the glass is always half full.

There are many that have supported me during my tenure at MIT. And therefore, I must recognize them. First, there's my spouse, Sandra, who has given me only three demands. Church on Sunday, dine together one night per week, and don't die for MIT.

[LAUGHING]

Second, Leon [? Trilly ?]. Leon [? Trilly ?] whom I met on this campus in the spring of 1968 during one of the international conferences on [? verified ?] gas dynamics. Leon continues to be my mentor, my champion, and my friend. Sandra and Leon, please, for a moment, defeat your modesty and stand. These are two people I, simply, have to recognize.

[APPLAUSE]

While an undergraduate third year student at the University of Virginia and 1963, I had a day in a half with Dr. King. Reflecting on that interaction with Dr. King, I asked myself, what is the positive residue that remains after that experience? Two concepts stand out more than others.

One, is [? courage. ?] The other is community. And following Harvey, I'd like to say that Dr. King is a strange looking person. To be close to him, to have dinner with him, to chat with him, he always seemed to have a heart bigger than his body. It was an amazing experience to be around him. And man of that stature in '63 come into the heart of the south alone. No body guards. No entourage. King came alone. This courage in this community. King's position on courage is contained in this statement during the siege at Selma.

He said, "I would rather die on the highways of Alabama than make a butchery of my conscious." And on community, Dr. King made the paraphrase as follows. "It is not what has happened to any of us as individuals, it is what the community has allowed to happen to its members that is important."

Here at MIT, I have observed courage and community existing simultaneously. The first is this group of five consistent of African American faculty and administrators that formed a sinecure of mutual support during the '70s and '80s. From the four of you-- some of them are here this morning-- I have gained a great deal. I can only hope that I've added value in return.

The second is my good fortune of working with a select body of graduate students. Whatever scholarly accomplishments have come to me is in direct proportion to the courage, community spirit, and intellect of the graduate students with whom I have worked. We were and remain thicker than thieves.

Yes, we generate scholarship, and the record is there for examination. However, equally important, these students, men and women, minority and non-minority, national and international, Christian, Jew, Muslim, and Buddhist closed rank. They respected each other, and they respected our community.

There are countless times, when speaking in code, the informed me that my colleague, Big Foot, had put sugar in the gasoline tank. They also constantly stated that [? hits ?]-- code for Professor [? Trilly ?]-- were standing firm with and for us.

This group of graduate students consisted of three dozen. 51% were white, 27% African Americans, 17% Asian, 7% Hispanic, and in terms of male, female, 89% male and 11% female. Each of these young people received an advanced degree here at MIT. I believe Dr. King would approve this or that community.

So in closing, my sincere appreciation and respect for the MIT MLK committee. President Vest, my graduate students, the group of five, Leon [? Trilly ?], and Sandra, each of you share this award. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

VEST: I take even greater pleasure in announcing our third recipient of the Martin Luther King Leadership Award to our wonderful MIT student Desiree Ramirez. Desiree, please come forward.

[APPLAUSE]

Desiree is a junior majoring in chemical engineering. And while she may major in course 10-- Lonnie, I'll explain that to you later-- while she may major in course 10, she is a civil engineer in the ultimate sense. Building bridges and promoting racial and cultural interaction within the MIT community.

Last year, she served as president of [? LUCHO ?] and together, with others, founded a new Latina sorority aimed at promoting relations among Latino women students and the broader MIT community. She is also an outstanding teacher and mentor.

Working with Clarence Williams as a TA and associate adviser in his freshman seminar on bridging racial and cultural differences, she has earned accolades for her skilled and sensitive ability to lead discussions and help others reach out and understand each other. In so doing, she sustains, indeed, the work and the vision of Dr. Martin Luther King. Desiree, congratulations.

[APPLAUSE]

RAMIREZ:

Hello.

[APPLAUSE]

First of all, I'd like to accept this award not for myself but on behalf of the entire Chicano community here at MIT. [INAUDIBLE], don't cry because I'm going to cry, too. This is such an honor for me to be up here.

Like myself, the Chicano community, many of us are here, the first of our whole families, to go to college. Working our way through school, and you know, working really hard to bring equality for the Chicano community on this campus. And like myself, our entire community has parents who don't know what MIT is, have no idea of what an engineer does and, to be honest you guys, probably doesn't even know where Massachusetts is.

So we're all from California, basically, and Texas. So we're here alone. And our parents have no clue what we're doing. But they're proud of us. And they know the reaction they get from professional people when they say that their child or daughter goes to MIT. Whether they're the janitor, and they go and tell their boss, and the boss can't believe them, but they're full of pride.

But what really hit me was that, although my family doesn't really know what MIT is or what I could possibly be doing here, it hit home when I told them that I got this award in honor Dr. Martin Luther King because that was something that they all knew. My five-year-old sister, my grandmother, my great grandparents, everybody knew of Dr. Martin Luther King.

And for them, that made them realize what I'm doing here, and what an honor and everything I must be accomplishing here because if I can get an award in his name, that's something pretty outstanding to them.

[APPLAUSE]

All I'd like to say and my dad, my stepfather, with a seventh grade education said it best is that if I'm, as a Chicana woman, Mexican American woman, can receive an award in the name of Dr. Martin Luther King, his dreams and reality are coming true because we recognize everybody as an individual and not necessarily just by the color of the skin or what ethnicity and culture they come from.

Lastly, I would just like to say thank you to, one, the entire Chicano community again for supporting and uniting together to work really hard to bring equality on this campus, make a mark on this campus, and bring administrators and faculty and staff, which we're trying to do right now to work as mentors for us. I'd also like to thank the brothers of Chocolate City for continually supporting our community and being there for us whenever we need them.

And lastly, this is going to be the hardest one of all, so I won't say much. But I'd like to thank Dr. Clarence Williams, who has been the only father that I've ever known. And I love him very much. So thank you, Dr. Williams, for your nomination.

[APPLAUSE]

THOMAS: Thank you, so much. And congratulations to all the recipients of the Martin Luther King Leadership Awards.

[APPLAUSE]

Program just seems to keep getting better and better, right? And now we'll have a selection by the South Central Mass Choir.

SOUTH Test, ah, there you go. Good morning.

CENTRAL MASS

CHOIR

PRESENTER:

AUDIENCE: Good morning.

SOUTH We're just so grateful that you've allowed us to be a part of this great celebration and that [? Trudy ?] and so
CENTRAL MASS many wanted us to come on out and try to help with the celebration. We're going to do two quick selections, and
CHOIR get out of your way and close.

PRESENTER:

But we just want to say that we are here to lift up the name of our God. God has been really , really merciful to us, to us all. You know, and we don't even deserve health, strength, and even the activities of our limbs.

You know, if you look around the community, a lot of people didn't make the choice for where they are. Circumstances and others [? did it ?]. So as our initial song, we're going to do a spiritual medley to commemorate the memory, the dream, and then we're going to move on to something more happy clappy, as we call it, to get everybody involved. Okay?

I'm so grateful I can say this. But we're probably the only gospel choir in the region that has a viola player. And she's going to start this with us.

[MUSIC - SOUTH CENTRAL MASS CHOIR]

[APPLAUSE]

Ezekiel saw him a wheel.

[APPLAUSE]

While the musicians get ready. I just want to let you know that we all have leaders. We all have men, or women, or mentors that we follow. And I appreciate what one of my leader says who's sitting over here, brother Frank [? Hines ?]. He says go with that you know.

And one of the things that, really, we know is that we've got joy. We've got joy. And that's what we're going to do. We're gonna sing a song so that we all can celebrate the joy. So [? Sandra ?] and Jerome wrote this for me. And we're going to sing it. Amen?

AUDIENCE: Amen.

SOUTH Come on.

CENTRAL MASS

CHOIR

PRESENTER:

[MUSIC - SOUTH CENTRAL MASS CHOIR]

Amen!

[APPLAUSE]

VEST: Well I said a while ago I was humbled. But I have to tell you there's humbled, and then there's, sort of, down beneath the carpet and under the table humbled.

[LAUGHTER]

And whatever's lower than that's about where I am right now. But never fear. This is MIT, and in a little bit, I have a graph. So it'll all be okay.

[LAUGHTER]

As we gather together to celebrate the life and accomplishments of Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, this years theme could not be more appropriate. Confronting the gap. Building and sustaining conclusion. There could also be no more difficult theme in America to address in a meaningful way at the dawn of the 21st century.

Throughout my life, I always looked forward to the passing of a number of dates made famous as, either, anniversaries, or books, or movies that, at each point in time, seemed so far in the future. 1976, our bicentennial year as a nation. 1984, the setting of George Orwell's political novel.

And of course, 2001, the year of Arthur C. Clarke's space odyssey. I hoped that as these milestones ticked by, they would be markers along the way to a bright an exciting future. And by and large, they have been.

Yet, as we gather here in 2001, the issue of race and inclusion in America remains one of our deepest dilemmas. The gaps in opportunity and participation and what is best in our country and in our institutions remain very much with us. I'd like to subtitle my ruminations this morning to books and a plateau.

The books present hope. The plateau is a difficult reality that we must, together, confront and overcome. The books, of course, are the shape of the river, and technology, and the dream.

Last year at this breakfast, I took the occasion to comment extensively on the shape of the river. This book then recently released as a detailed statistical study of the effects of affirmative action in admission of African American students to elite colleges and universities. It tracks the academic performance and experience and chronicles the resulting legacy of their education and their personal and professional lives and in the life of our nation.

To a large extent, it's a book about success. The inclusion of race as one of many factors in college admission decisions has clearly been an important element in building an ever increasing middle class of people of color. But the book also presents a stark and indisputable reality.

Students of color, as a group, had lower grades, overall, than the other students in these schools. But the important point is that that gap persisted, even when grades were corrected for factors such as high school scores, SAT scores, socioeconomic status, gender, school selectivity, et cetera.

There is, of course, a huge statistical variation. But the overall pattern is clear. While MIT was not included in this study, it was clear to me that we had to take a look at our own campus and make your own assessment of these same issues.

Subsequently, Professor Steve Lerman, chair of the MIT faculty, and I jointly appointed a task force on minority student achievement and success to assess how well minority students are doing at our institution and where problems are found to design new strategies for confronting them. I believe that as a task force identifies programs and strategies to enable all students to achieve their full potential, we will find that the entire student body benefits.

The task force is headed by John [? Essigman ?] and staffed very professionally by Carl [? Reed ?]. John is a highly visible faculty member, a house master, and a person with deep insights into the lives of students on our campus.

Carl is known to many of you-- perhaps, all of you-- as the director of our MITES Program. He is also the executive director of special programs in the School of Engineering and is a two time alumnus of MIT. The task force, since we met last, has been working steadily interviewing students, faculty, and staff, analyzing data on student performance trends, and assessing how well our current resources and academic support, financial aid, and counseling are meeting the needs of our students.

They are beginning to review how other schools, particularly those that emphasize science and engineering, are addressing the gap. On the basis of these investigations, the task force with input from our broader community will design programs to help MIT be made a more vibrant, stimulating, and supportive educational environment. Not only for our minority students but, thereby, for all students.

The task force is working on a fast track and expects to present their report and recommendations this summer. Group is operating in the classic MIT tradition. Working together to design solutions to tangible problems. In the case of this design project, the stakes could not be higher.

The shape of the river spurred us to appoint this task force, which will help current and future generations of students make the most of their MIT experience. The second book, *Technology And The Dream*, holds over half a century of wisdom and lessons for our future.

Last month, the MIT Press released this truly extraordinary volume authored and edited by our good friend and colleague, Dr. Clarence Williams. This volume chronicles the lives of 75 MIT alumni and alumnae, faculty, and administrators.

It is accompanied by a CD containing some 100 additional oral histories. In this book, you will find luminaries, such as UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, the RPI president, Dr. Shirley Jackson. Scholars, such as Professor James Gates and Professor James Williams.

Players in our national history, such as Louis Young, one of the famous Tuskegee Airmen of World War II. And many people who live ordinary lives or, at least, as ordinary as it gets for MIT graduates. This wonderful collection of oral histories is a fitting companion to the shape of the river because, unlike that book, it focuses largely on scientists and engineers.

But more importantly still, it presents the human side of the story. The memories, experiences, and reflections. The peoples whose lives have helped to shape and been shaped by MIT. It is a book about the experiences and accomplishments of these individuals. But more deeply still, it is about us. Is about MIT.

It is about, both, triumph and failure. It's about the complexity of life and race. It is about injustice and about thoughtlessness, and unintended injuries. But technology in the dream also is about the value of an MIT education. It is about life lessons, both, pleasant and unpleasant, that lead to growth.

It is about perseverance, pride, determination, and personal accomplishment. It is about how things look to a student and how they look to that same person many years later. It is a book that simultaneously gives us hope, and pride, and inspiration. Yet, also says to us how, slowly, very important things have changed.

It displays for all to see the gap between where we are and where we ought to be in our quest for an inclusive and just society. Clarence, we thank you for educating us, yet again, through this remarkable book. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

As Clarence's book demonstrates, we've worked hard and continuously in this institution to build a diverse community of scholars, professionals, and staff. One that truly represents the changing face of America and is truly inclusive. And I must say that it is simply exhilarating to walk down the Infinite Corridor amidst the wonderfully diverse sea of our students.

They come in every color and shade, every national origin, every conceivable culture. I often visit other campuses across the country. Campuses that-- if you will excuse the expression-- pale by comparison. And I return to MIT realizing that, despite all our faults, there are some wonderful things that are being accomplished by us and for us.

But we've reached a point here at MIT that leaves me terribly uncomfortable. Our progress in some very critical dimensions as, particularly, our student speakers have pointed out today, have stalled. It has hit a plateau in the last few years, a leveling off that cannot be allowed to stand.

But during my 10 years as MIT's president, I've maintained a personal database of measures of diversity at the Institute. And this morning, I want to share just one graph, as promised, with you. A graph that speaks volumes. If we can have that, please.

Many of us of my generation believed that if we worked hard to create substantial diversity in the undergraduate population of our institutions then, in due course, our graduate enrollments within our faculties would change. As you can see, that has not followed.

Neither graduate enrollments or faculty composition-- the lower two curves on the graph-- have tracked the very substantial progress that has been made here at the undergraduate level. You can find the same phenomenon with women at MIT. Although, their presence in the graduate student population is not this far out of whack.

We're still, we at MIT, are not alone. Indeed, we have roughly double the national average and percentage of African American, Hispanic American, Native American undergraduates who are enrolled in science and engineering. But the graduate level, however, we are slightly below the national average.

My real point is that our graduate enrollments have ceased to grow. They have plateaued. And as was said earlier, the number of African American and Hispanic American faculty members in our tenured and tenured track positions have doubled from 1990 to 1998. But they've been stationary from that point to the present.

This does not describe the leadership position to which we aspire. What are we doing? And what must we do? MIT has some 36 formal programs in support of diversity, according to an audit we undertook two years ago.

These range from the MITES program for promising high school juniors to project interface for incoming students to excel for curricular reform to the Sloan Minority Fellows program for graduate students to the provost minority faculty hiring initiative to the Committee on campus race relations, which works to realize the promise of inclusion in all elements of our community.

But these are not sufficient. During the current academic year, we have placed renewed emphasis on working through a new counsel to build and sustain diversity in our faculty. Just as in the case with task force and minority student achievement, we are asking tough questions and engaging minority faculty who know the score. We are trying to make a difference for the long haul.

The Council on faculty diversity was established to mount a focused and sustained effort, and increase the number of under represented minority and women faculty at MIT. Councils. That word, councils, in the sense used here deal only with issues that we believe are absolutely critical to our future.

They are comprised of, both, faculty and administrators so that thinking and implementation are intimately interconnected. We have only three such councils. In other words, this is serious business.

The council is led by Professor Nancy Hopkins, associate provost, Phil Clay, and our provost, Bob Brown. And it includes faculty leaders from all five schools of the Institute. It's examining every facet of university culture with the goal of achieving an MIT faculty that better mirrors the diversity in our student population.

This is the A team. And we are in this endeavor for the long run. Although the deliberations of the council are at a relatively early stage, three specific objectives have already emerged. First, putting in place an active programme to enhance the pipeline of young promising minority and women graduate students and postdocs into the academic profession.

Here, we hope that MIT will become a role model for other institutions. Second, getting all units at MIT to aggressively seek women and minority faculty members using best practice for identification and recruitment. And active monitoring and mentoring all stages of the career of all of our faculty.

Guidance and career advice are as important to young faculty as they are to students. We should make such mentoring and such monitoring the expected norm at MIT. By the end of the year, we hope to have programs in place to begin dealing with renewed energy in each of these goals.

In addition, the council is looking at the issues associated with balancing family and professional responsibilities within the context of a major research university. Now these are not new topics. But the thought, the leadership, and the hands on approach that Bob, and Phil, and Nancy, and their colleagues are applying give me faith that we can leave this plateau and begin, once again, to climb the trail of leadership.

Now I've talked about students and faculty. What about our staff? Here, again, we're at something of a plateau. The number of minorities in administrative positions at MIT is still low. While there's been some growth in the number and percentage of minority administrators between 91 and 99, there's been, virtually, no growth, for example, in the number of African Americans in administrative positions.

For under represented minorities at the support staff level, the picture is similar with a growth of only about 2% during that same period. In an academic institution, I believe that it is important that the staff, as well as the faculty, be able to understand and offer guidance and inspiration to our students.

And in order to do so, particularly in areas that support student life and learning, they need to reflect the character of our student body. And we have a long way to go. Last year, our Human Resources Department launched a diversity initiative, which quickly took as its initial focus the barriers to and opportunities for increasing the number of under represented minorities, the administrative and support staff of the Institute.

This group is collecting and reviewing data, past studies, and programs, and talking with people throughout MIT with the aim of developing a set of recommendations by the end of the spring. Triumph and failure, to me, that's the picture.

MIT was a pioneer. A pioneer in educating and advancing minority students. We do have a triumph in our wonderful undergraduates. Although, we have some hard work to do if we're going to continue to spiral even that success still higher.

But we are failing at leadership in diversity at the graduate level and within our own faculty and staff. We must expect more of ourselves. We must realize our goals and our vision.

Today, we are grateful to have such extraordinarily accomplished men and women as Wes Harris, Harvey Gantt, and Desiree Ramirez in our community. But we need more such leaders at all levels. We must create an environment that not only fosters professional success but one that eliminates marginalization and that extends respect in every dimension to talented people of color.

MIT is not about gaps and plateaus. It's about leadership. We want to be the best in everything that we do. And that must mean being the best in realizing our vision of a proud, accomplished, diverse, and mutually respectful community. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

It is now a great pleasure to introduce our keynote speaker this morning, Professor Lani Guinier. A civil rights attorney, she was the first African American woman to receive tenure at the Harvard Law School when she joined the faculty there in 1998. A graduate of Radcliffe College and Yale Law School, she worked with the NAACP Legal Defense Fund and served on the faculty of the University of Pennsylvania Law School for 10 years prior to coming to Harvard.

As most of you know, Professor Guinier came to great public attention in 1993 when then President Clinton nominated her to head the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice and, subsequently, withdrew her name without a confirmation hearing. That experience prompted her to write a book entitled *Lift Every Voice*, turning a civil rights setback into a new vision of social justice.

She has spoken and written widely on topics related to legal education, affirmative action, democratic theory, and voting rights. I wouldn't be surprised if she spoke to some of those issues this morning. We're very honored to have her with us at this breakfast. Please, welcome Professor Lani Guinier.

[APPLAUSE]

GUINIER:

It's a pleasure to be here. Although, I'm not sure you can call this a breakfast. It's moving into lunch time.

I want to speak about Dr. King's methodology, not just his dream. And I want to talk about his methodology, and try to use his ideas to illuminate what I think are some of the really important, really powerful voices that you heard from this stage this morning.

You heard, for example, Christopher talking about the importance of properly defining a problem. And you heard Maria talking about the importance of genuine understanding. And you heard people who had actually met Dr. King talking about his courage and his commitment to community.

And you could not possibly have missed the message of the choir talking about joy. And I think that all of this, in some way, is about joy. I am not here to deliver a prescription of medicine but, really, a joyful message about how we all need to change.

This is not, simply, about love. But it is a joyous message of transformation. Now most people think about Dr. King as a dreamer and as someone who had a dream that, one day, his children would be judged by the content of their character and not the color of their skin.

But I think that Dr. King was actually an even more profound thinker and strategist. And so I love the idea of speaking after graphs have been put up, and we've been exhorted to get the blueprints and the green plan, or all of the futures market and all of the terminology from all of you here in the audience.

But Dr. King's methodology was really about taking from the margin to rethink the whole. So in terms of thinking about closing the gap, I would challenge all of us to think not about how the problem is located in the people of color or the women who are underrepresented, but it is really a problem of this community and all of our communities in failing to deliver on their fundamental mission.

Dr. King, for example, said that the goal of the American Negro was perpetual engagement to make America live up to her stated ideals. And that, by freeing themselves, black people would be freeing whites, too. And that is the message of taking from the margin to rethink the whole.

It is a message that I try to capture with a simple metaphor, that of the miner's canary. The miners used to take a canary into the mines to alert them when the atmosphere in the mines was too toxic for the miners. And the canaries more fragile respiratory system would give way first, signaling that there was a problem with the atmosphere in the mines.

The argument that I am making and that I believed was Dr. King's methodology is that the experience of women, the experience of people of color and, particularly, the experience of African Americans is the experience of the canary. And the problem has been that we have pathologized the canary and tried to locate the problem in the canary when, in fact, the canary is signaling to us a much bigger problem with the atmosphere in the mines that is affecting all of us.

And so the challenge is not to pathologize the canary, not to outfit the canary with a little pint sized gas mask so that it can withstand the toxic atmosphere in the mines. The challenge is to fix the atmosphere in the mine so all of us can breathe cleaner air.

Now I'd like to try and apply this idea of the miners canary of taking from the margin to rethink the whole to some of the issues that we heard discussed earlier today about the question of higher education and the question of the continued under representation of people of color and women, particularly, here at the graduate level in the faculty, and also among administrators.

And I want to tell you a simple story before I get into what I think is an even more fundamental problem that no one has really addressed. And that is the problem of the testocracy. But before I get to the testocracy, let me tell you a story.

[? Ory ?] [? Triesman ?] is a professor of calculus. He is now a professor of calculus at the University of Texas. At the time of this story, he was a professor of calculus at the University of California Berkeley. And he noticed-- he was teaching first year calculus-- he noticed that his African American calculus students were not doing as well as his Chinese American calculus students.

And he consulted his colleagues to find out why. And his colleagues came forward with many of the predictable stereotypes. Many of the assumptions that, certainly, they would share with, I'm sure, many people in this room. They said, oh, well, the African American students are not studying as hard.

Oh, the African American students were not as well prepared. Oh, the African American students came from single parent families. And therefore, they have many other distractions. In other words, pathologizing the canary. The reason the African American students were not doing as well is a problem that was located specifically in the African American students that were recruited to the University of California Berkeley.

Well Professor [? Triesman ?] was not satisfied with these assumptions. And so he actually hired researchers to follow the African American students around, as well as the Chinese American students to, at least, test the hypothesis that the African American students were not studying as hard as their Chinese American counterparts. He found out that, in fact, his colleagues were wrong.

The African American students were studying harder than the Chinese American students if you count studying as sitting in your dorm room alone with a calculus book open in front of you. The African American students were putting in the time. But it turned out that they were not efficiently or effectively studying calculus when you compared what [? Ory Triesman ?] researchers found about the Chinese American students.

The Chinese American students were studying calculus together. They were talking calculus on their way to class. They were talking calculus in the library. They would talk calculus over lunch.

And it turned out that the process of understanding, and coming back here to the importance of understanding, a concept like calculus required intellectual engagement with your peers. And particularly, the willingness to ask questions when you don't know the answer. The willingness to ask questions when you don't know the answer.

Understanding that knowing what you don't know is a key to then learning what you need to know. So [? Ory Triesman ?] designed a peer workshop in which he invited the African American students to come to solve calculus problems together. He set the problems out on a table. He served food.

Seeing the Chinese American students studying calculus over lunch seemed to create an informal atmosphere. He invited recent past learners to come to be available so that, when questions came up, there would be people there who would in a position to help guide the students in thinking through the problem.

By the end of the first semester of attending this peer workshop, the African American students calculus scores went up. And by the end of the second semester, they were among the highest scoring students in the class. Now you say what does this have to do with the canary? He fixed the canary.

But it was at that moment that [? Ory Triesman ?] had an epiphany. He realized, after seeing the progress of his African American students that, in fact, the problem was not located in the African American students. The problem was located in the way he, [? Ory Triesman ?], was teaching calculus to everybody.

He was the sage on the stage. He stood in front of the room and spoke at all of the students who busily took notes. There was no engagement between him and the students or between the students and each other.

He then introduced the concept of group learning, group collaboration, into the classroom. And all of the students in his calculus class benefited. That is the theme of the miner's canary. And I believe that was Dr. King's most important contribution. It was not his dream but his methodology that, if we take from the margin, we can rethink the whole to benefit everyone.

Now that is a story that I think can move, or at least, I will try and move it into the argument as to why we need to think about the miner's canary metaphor and need to use Dr. King's methodology in considering what I think is a major problem coming back to Christopher's point that we have to properly define the problem with the gap and sustainable inclusion.

And that is our devotion, our new religion, called the testocracy. We are committed to the idea that we can objectively rank everyone in this room if we simply give them a paper and pencil test and time their performance on that test. And we believe that, somehow, we will get a ranking that will be something we can rely on. Something from which we can predict who, then, not only is going to do well when we give the test tomorrow. But who, somehow, is going to do well in their future?

We move from a paper and pencil test, which we rank and score, to a prediction as to who we will provide opportunity to. Who will be given opportunity it's based on who does well on a particular test.

Now why would I challenge this religion? Why would I challenge the testocracy? Well it turned out that when I was a professor at the University of Pennsylvania Law School I had a student who came up to me who actually was not interested in the testocracy at all.

She was interested in the fact that there weren't enough women professors at the University of Pennsylvania Law School. And she wanted to do a videotape in which she did a role reversal. She had seen one at a medical in which all of the professors were women, which the typical human body that was studied was that of a female.

And there were a few male students in the class in this videotape. And one of them tentatively raised his hand at one point. And he said, professor, what happens if a man gets this disease? And the professor, a woman, wheels around, turns to the young male student and says, well, you're smart. Extrapolate. Figure it out.

So Anne wanted to do this for the law school. And I said I would be happy to advise her, although I knew nothing about video. Seemed to me she needed a script. So she went out and wrote a script. And it was all about her.

It was all about the experiences that she had had at the University of Pennsylvania Law School. And I said, well now, Anne, if you're going to put all of this effort into making a video, it seems to me you want some assurance. I don't doubt that these experiences happened to you.

But you need some assurance that your experiences, if not typical, are, at least, representative of the experience of others. So she did a 70 question survey, put it in the mail folders of all the students at the University of Pennsylvania Law School, got over a 52% return rate, and found that the women and men seemed to be going to a different school. The men were participating in class. They had enormous self-confidence. They felt that the professors were available to them to mentor them.

2/3 of the women never raised their hand to ask a question and never went up to a professor after class. And the explanation that they gave us in subsequent interviews is that they were waiting for friendliness cues. I don't know how many of you have been to a law school, but they're still waiting.

Now having said all of that, I did exactly what [? Ory Triesman ?] did. I went to my colleagues and I said, these women do not seem happy at this law school. Many of the women came in. 1/3 of the first year women had an interest in doing public service. 10% of the first year men had an interest in doing public service.

Third year women, 10% wanted to do public service. 8% of the men wanted to do public service. There seemed to be a shift in the aspirations of the women. And yet, they still were not participating in class. 2/3 of the third year women still never raised their hand, never asked a question.

And yet, what was really important is that the first year women who never raised their hand in class were bothered by that fact. The third year women had come to accept this as normal. So I went to my colleagues. I said, what do you think is the problem?

And they said, well, maybe you should see if this is affecting their performance. So we went to the dean. It was a new dean. He figured if he gave us all of this data, it would reflect, if at all, on his predecessor. So he gave us all of the academic performance data of every single student then at the University of Pennsylvania Law School, as well as every student who had graduated the year before.

He also gave us the entry level credentials of all of the students. We found that the men had three times as great a chance of being in the top 10% of the class as the women and 1 and 1/2 times as great a chance of being in the top 50% as the women. And that this differential, which began in the first year, was sustained over the three years.

We then looked at the entry level credentials and, particularly, in law school, the LSAT because this commitment, this religion, this belief that you can give people a test, and then you can rank and score them, and then, based on their performance on that test, you can predict what kind of lawyers they're going to be is very deeply held in the law school community.

So we looked at the LSATs. And we discovered that there was a statistically insignificant differential between the LSATs of men and women. Men were a little bit higher. But it was statistically insignificant. Women actually had higher undergraduate GPAs. But again, it was statistically insignificant.

Went back to my colleagues with this information. And they said, well, you need to examine that statistically insignificant differential between the men and the women on the LSAT. That's probably where the answer lies. Another one of my colleagues said varsity sports.

Varsity sports. His theory was that the reason the men were doing better in law school and had not done as well as undergraduates is that, when they were undergraduates, they were distracted because they were involved in varsity sports. And when they got to law school where there was no varsity sports, then they could devote their full attention to their studies.

Now all of this was very disturbing to me. But at the time, I was untenured. And so I dutifully went and looked at this statistically insignificant differential in the LSAT. And I also kept in mind the idea of the varsity sports.

Okay now, having looked now, I'm now explaining how did I get into this understanding that we are misguided in our commitment to a testocracy. My colleagues believe in the LSAT. And yet, when we looked at the LSAT and its correlation with first year law school performance, we found that it was successful in predicting 14% of the differential in first year law school grades.

It was a little better second year. 15% of the differential. Now you may say as statisticians, oh, that's a really big and positive correlation. I was a civil rights lawyer. I was a voting rights lawyer.

I was a lawyer who went into the deep South and brought in political scientists, and other social scientists, to help me when we were trying to prove that, if you knew the race of a voter, you could predict the race of the candidate they were going to vote for in order to establish racial polarization, which was an essential element of our claim because we were trying to show that in many parts of Arkansas-- Mississippi, Georgia, Alabama-- that many of the white people in the community would simply not vote for a black candidate.

And therefore, it was hard for blacks to run and get elected. And I know Harvey Gantt is very familiar with this problem because one of the places where we litigated was North Carolina. And in North Carolina, we found that in the early 1980s, 83.7% of the whites in North Carolina would not vote for a black candidate, even if their choice was to vote for no one.

OK, so we're talking about using statistics to try and develop some correlations. We would go into court with very high numbers saying, if you knew the race of a voter, you could predict the race of a candidate 9 out of 10 times. And the judge would turn to us and say, well, where's the other 10%? Where's the other 10%?

So when I'm looking at statistics that are the absolute opposite of the statistics on which we were trying to rely and the court was skeptical, I become very skeptical. So I started to investigate. Linda Whiteman, who was one of the people who developed the LSAT, said, oh, well, the LSAT is 9% better than random in predicting first year law school grades nationwide. 9% better than random.

And yet, this is a test, somehow, that we rely on to predict performance. Following the [? Bach ?] and Bowen Study that President Vest referenced in his remarks, there was a study at the University of Michigan Law School. This was in response to an affirmative action lawsuit.

And they looked at 30 years graduates and were trying to see whether their affirmative action program had, in fact, yielded graduates who, somehow, were less successful than others. And therefore, they should reconsider their affirmative action program. So they came up with three goals, three measures of success, that they would use in trying to determine whether their graduates had achieved the mission of the law school.

Financial satisfaction, professional satisfaction, and leadership in the community. Mentoring younger attorneys, sitting on boards of public or community organizations. And they found, in fact, there was no correlation between entry level credentials and financial satisfaction. No correlation between entry level credentials and professional satisfaction.

There was a correlation between entry level credentials, particularly the LSAT, and leadership in the community. A negative relationship. The higher your LSAT, the less likely you were to be a leader in your community after you graduated.

So you may say, well, this only has to do with Michigan. It only has to do with lawyers. Harvard did a study of three classes of its graduates over a 30 year period. It was trying to determine, again, how well did its graduates fair in three areas.

Financial satisfaction, professional satisfaction, and contribution to the community. Otherwise known as, how much money do you make? How much fun do you have making the money? And do you give any of it back to Harvard?

[LAUGHTER]

One thing correlated with success as Harvard was measuring it. Actually, two things. Low SAT scores and a blue collar background. Low SAT scores and a blue collar background.

And what Harvard concluded from this study is that motivation and an opportunity to succeed when given to those people who are motivated to take advantage of it yields people who then can go on and be successful as Harvard was measuring it.

Now this suggests to me, if we're going to be serious about Dr. King's birthday, if we're going to be serious about celebrating his dream, as well as his methodology, that we have to rethink not only how we are treating the canary but how we are constructing the atmosphere in the minds to affect everyone.

This is not simply about lowering the SAT, or the LSAT, or the GRE requirements for students of color or for women. This is about rethinking the importance that we place on a single fixed paper and pencil test that we, then, use to predict performance over the course of someone's lifetime when it turns out that we don't necessarily have a basis for that reliance.

Not just the students of color but for white students, as well. And particularly for white working class and poor students who are not counted. I was very interested in Christopher's data that 70% of the population, he said, in the United States is white. And 60% of the graduate students here at MIT are white.

But I'd like to know what the socioeconomic data is on those 60% white students. It's anything like University of California Berkeley, for example, a disproportionate number of the white students here at MIT come from families where the income is over \$100,000 a year. So we are using the testocracy as a proxy for privilege.

William Julius Wilson has done research showing that if you want to know someone's SAT, the best predictor of their SAT is to look at their grandparents socioeconomic status. Their grandparents socioeconomic status. There is a strong correlation, in fact, a stronger correlation between your grandparents socioeconomic status and your SAT score than there is between your SAT score and your first year college grades.

But I'd like to broaden the conversation because this is not simply about how well you do first year at MIT or how well you do first year at Harvard Law School, or how well you do first year at the University of Pennsylvania. If all we were worried about is how well you did the first year at this institution, we would not have a four year college. We not have a three year law school.

This is not, simply, about how well you do in this environment but how well is this environment preparing all of its graduates to do well in our larger democracy. This is really a question about democratic citizenship. And we abolish the literacy test. And we abolish the poll tax. And we abolished many of the arbitrary prerequisites that had been used to determine who can participate in our democracy.

And I think we need to reconsider the testocracy and some of the tests that we are using as gatekeepers to determine who can participate in our democratic polity now, in the same way as what we were doing in the 1960s. Now let me just say, I'm a professor. I give exams. I grade them.

I'm not opposed to all tests. This is about high stakes testing that is being used to predict from one domain to another how someone is going to perform in the future. This is not about how well did you do in this particular class based on what it was that I expected you to learn. This is misusing a test to try to predict someone's future performance.

Now the last point I want to make has to do with some research of Claude Steele who is a professor of psychology at Stanford. I think his research is really important. And it comes at the issue of the testocracy from another angle.

Claude Steele, as I said, is a psychologist. He administered the same very difficult verbal test, a 30 minute verbal test, to selected groups of black and white students. And these students were statistically equated on their ability level.

When he gave the students a prompt that this is a test of your aptitude, the black students did much worse than the white students. Although, they had been grouped based on what researchers thought was the same ability level. Same test. Same ability level. And yet, the black students did worse on a test when the prompt was this is about your aptitude.

He then assembled another group of black and white students, again, statistically equated on ability level. Instead of saying this is about your aptitude, the prompt was we are giving you a problem solving task that has nothing to do with your ability. Black and white students did the same.

He calls this the stereotype threat. And he says that when a test, or when an environment, or when an experience prompts anxiety about how one is perceived in an unfamiliar environment, it can reinforce self-esteem issues.

And it goes back to that [? Ory Triesman ?] example where some of what seemed to help the black students when they were brought together in the peer workshops was enhancing their self-confidence that they were learners. That they could ask questions and reflect the fact that they didn't know the answer. And they could still learn.

This suggests it's not just about the criteria we use to admit people. It is also about the way in which we conduct the environment in which we teach people. It has to do with our expectations, not only of our students, but of ourselves. And just as a footnote, Claude Steele gave a very similar test to white males and Asian males statistically equated for ability, a math test.

He said to both groups, this is a test of how well you do in math compared to each other. Meaning, excited their competitiveness. And said, we're trying to find out how well white males do compared to Chinese or Asian American males. And the white males scores on this test went down compared to that of the Asian males.

This is not just about reinforcing stereotypes regarding African Americans. This is about trying to use more creative, more experiential, more innovative ways of teaching that accommodate everyone's learning styles that motivate people to do their best and that open up opportunity to all Americans who can take advantage of it and who will then use that opportunity to give back, not only to the school that educated them, but to the society at large.

And I want to just end with a story about how this can happen. Not just about race, not just about gender, but about diversity in which we learned from each other and don't assume that the best way of doing something is the way we, alone, would do it.

My son, when he was eight years old, wanted to be an astronaut. He had us watch the movie, Apollo 13, several times. You must remember, if you've seen it, the scene where they summon NASA.

The astronauts are in a capsule. They are choking on their own carbon dioxide. There is leakage between a round tube and a square opening. And they are in desperate shape. Houston, we have a problem!

Now the NASA administrator, in trying to deal with this tangible problem, did not say, well, get me the person with the highest SAT scores on their physics, or science, or engineering test. He assembled a diverse group of people with different kinds of expertise.

He put them in a room. He gave them a reproduction of everything that the astronauts had on that capsule. And he said, now you have to solve this problem by working together. And they did. And they were able to convert what could have been a tragedy into a triumph.

And I believe if we take the methodology of Dr. King, if we remember the lesson of the miner's canary, that we, too, can avert what could be, otherwise, a tragedy and turn it into a triumph. Thank you, very much.

[APPLAUSE]

THOMAS: Everyone, again, please join me in thanking Dr. Guinier for her heartfelt words. Thank you, so much.

[APPLAUSE]

And now it is my pleasure to introduce Provost Robert A. Brown. Provost Brown will recognize the 2000, 2001 Martin Luther King Jr. visiting professors.

[APPLAUSE]

BROWN: I'm not quite sure how I feel. In some sense, I think I'll use a baseball metaphor. I feel like the closer. But luckily, the speakers have a huge lead. So hopefully, I won't blow it in the last few minutes.

I have, actually, the distinct pleasure to introduce a group of people who have joined our community as visiting professors. A number of years ago, the Institute made a commitment as part of our plan and strategy to have a more diverse faculty to bring to MIT a group of world leading scholars each year to enrich our community, both, in teaching and research.

I'll introduce each of the fellows who are here and also mention those who couldn't be with us today. Will you hold your applause until each one has been introduced? First, is Professor [? Raul ?] [? Lahano ?] who is visiting department of Urban Studies and Planning since this fall.

[? Dr. Lahano ?] earned his PhD in environmental health science and environmental science and engineering from UCLA. He has a BS in civil engineering from the University of the Philippines and an MS in environmental engineering from the University of California Berkeley. He has taught in the department of urban planning at UCLA and in the school environmental science and management at the University of California at Santa Barbara.

Second, I'd like to introduce Professor Alfred Noel who's visiting in the math department this year. He received his PhD in pure mathematics and his MS in applied mathematics, both, from Northeastern. And he's on the faculty of the UMass Boston. He's teaching in the mathematics department this year and is, in fact, teaching linear algebra this spring.

Next, I'd like to introduce Professor [INAUDIBLE]. Professor [INAUDIBLE] is visiting in the Department of Material Science and Engineering. He has his PhD MS, and BS in material science and engineering, also a Berkeley graduate. He's been on the faculty of Penn State University since 1976 and is chair of the science and engineering program there since 1995.

Lastly, Professor Steve [? Roofen ?] who's visiting in the Department of Aeronautics and Astronautics. Steve has his BS in engineering from Princeton, an MS from MIT, and a PhD from Stanford. All his degrees are in aeronautics and astronautics. He's been teaching at Georgia Tech since 1993. He's visiting in the combustion research facility or gas turbine lab here and is teaching compressible fluid mechanics this year.

There are several MLK visiting professors who could not be with us today. Let me mention Professor Phillip Thompson, who's visiting the Department of Urban Studies and Planning. Professor [? Relva ?] Buchanan, who was a visiting professor in material science and engineering, whose term ended in December.

And finally, Professor Arthur [? Mutambara ?] who was also a visiting professor in AeroAstro. And his term also ended in December. Let me ask for a round of applause to thank this people for joining our community.

[APPLAUSE]

THOMAS: We will now close the program this morning with the benediction. I would like to ask Reverend Constance Parvey to come forward to give the benediction. And following that, we'll have another selection from the Mass Choir as we're departing.

PARVEY: Let us pray. Gracious God, we have been to the mountain. And we have seen and felt the burning bush. Help us to take that vision with us, and those feelings, and that compassion with us to continue the work that was set before us through the life and death of Martin Luther King.

We have indeed experienced joy in the morning. May we live it again every day. Amen.

THOMAS: I hope you've all enjoyed this morning's program. As the choir comes forward, I'll make you aware of a few events that are going to be continuing. There will be the dedication of the installation.

That will take place tomorrow, February 9, in Lobby 10 of The Infinite. And there will also be a concert on Friday in Kresge Auditorium with [? Samenia ?] McCord and associates. I hope you've all enjoyed this morning's program. It's been a wonderful event, which I'm sure will remain in our thoughts for a very long time.

Thank you all, so much, for coming. And I hope to see you out next year. This concludes our 27th Annual Martin Luther King Jr Celebration. Farewell.

[APPLAUSE]

SOUTH We're gonna-- test, test, test, test. Here, somebody take this. Test. Hello, test. Awesome. We gon' close right on
CENTRAL MASS out with some real quick, an old song that's been changed around. Let's just sing Pass Me Not, O Gentle Savior.

CHOIR [INAUDIBLE]. Come on. Let's go.

PRESENTER:

[MUSIC - SOUTH CENTRAL MASS CHOIR, "PASS ME NOT, O GENTLE SAVIOR"]

Amen! Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]