

**CORINA
SETINA:**

Good morning, and welcome to the 24th annual Dr. Martin Luther King Junior breakfast celebration. My name is Corina Setina. I'm currently a junior in the Department of Management Science, and it is an honor to be your mistress of ceremonies this morning.

I would like to begin by thanking President Charles M. Vest and Mrs. Rebecca Vest for hosting this morning's event. Thank you president and Mrs. Vest. And I would like to welcome Lezli Baskerville esq, our keynote speaker. It is a pleasure to have you with us this morning.

I would like to thank the members of the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration Committee who have helped make this morning's event possible. Please stand as I call your names, Corina [INAUDIBLE], Professor Philip Clay, Maureen Costello, Ronald Critchlow, Dean Anne Davis Shaw, Professor Jerome Friedman, Reverend Jane Gold, Professor Kenneth Hale, Professor Wesley Harris, Dean Arnold Henderson Jr, Evette Lane, Professor Philip Morrison, Professor Melissa Nobles, Richard O'Bryant, Paul [INAUDIBLE], Roberts Sales, Laurie Smith, Professor Cardinal Ward, Dr. Clarence Williams, and the co-chairs of the Committee Professor Michael Feld and Dean Leo Osgood Jr. Thank you all.

[APPLAUSE]

Also I would like to welcome the Dr. Martin Luther King Junior visiting professors and this year's Leadership Award recipients. We will now begin this morning's celebration with an invocation by Dr. Alice Brown-Collins, advisor to the Black Christian Fellowship at MIT. Dr. Brown-Collins?

**DR. ALICE
BROWN-
COLLINS:**

Good morning. I'm a black preacher, but this morning we would like for you to hear the voice of Martin Luther King. Many of you are familiar with his speeches and his writings, but most of us have not heard him pray in particular kinds of ways. And this morning I am going to ask you around the tables if you will hold each other's hands, and if you wish you may bow your heads as we listen to our brother Martin pray this morning.

Oh God, our Heavenly Father, we thank thee for this golden privilege to worship thee, the only true God of the universe. We come today to praise thee, grateful that thou hast kept us through the long night of the past and ushered us into the challenge of the present and the bright hope of the future. We are mindful, oh God, that man cannot save himself. For man is not the measure of things and humanity is not God.

Bound by our chains of sin, we know we need a savior. We thank thee, oh God, for the spiritual nature of man. We are in nature, but we live above nature. Help us never to let anybody or any condition pull us so low as to cause us to hate. Give us strength to love our enemies and to do good to those who despitefully use us and prosecute us. We thank thee for that church founded upon a word that challenges us to do more than sing and pray but to go out and work as though the very answer to our prayers depended upon us and not upon thee.

Then finally help us to realize that man and woman was created to shine like stars and live through all eternity. Keep us we pray in perfect peace. Help us to walk together, to pray together, to sing together, and to live together until that day when all of God's children black, white, red, and yellow will rejoice in one common band of humanity. In the kingdom of our Lord and of our Savior God, we pray. Amen.

CORINA Thank you, Dr. Brown-Collins. Before we partake in our breakfast this morning, the MIT gospel choir will sing a
SETINA: selection. Aaron Winthers, will you please assemble your choir?

AARON Good morning, we are the MIT Gospel Choir or a subset thereof and praise the Lord. This morning we're going to
WINTHERS: sing to you a song called The Lord is Great. We hope it is a blessing to you, and thank you for your attention.

(SINGING) The Lord is great and greatly to be praised. We saw you this morning. Our hands we gladly raise to the rock of our salvation, the Lord of all creation. Your name is greatly to be praised. Your name is greatly to be praised.

The Lord is great and greatly to be praised. We saw you this morning. Our hands we gladly raise to the rock of our salvation, Lord of all creation.

Your name is greatly to be praised. Your name is greatly to be praised. We praise you. We bless. We glorify you. For Lord, you are great.

We praise you. We bless you. We glorify you. For, Lord, you are great.

Your name is greatly to be praised. Your name is greatly to be praised. Your name is greatly to be praised. Your name is greatly to be praised.

The Lord is great and greatly to be praised. We saw you this morning. Our hands we gladly raise to the rock of our salvation, Lord of all creation.

Your name is greatly to be praised. Your name is greatly to be praised. Your name is greatly to be praised. Your name is greatly to be praised.

We praise you. We bless you. We glorify you. For, Lord, you are great.

We praise you. We bless you. We glorify you. For Lord, you are great.

Your name is greatly to be praised. Your name is greatly to be praised. Your name is greatly to be praised. Your name is greatly to be praised.

Thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]

CORINA Excuse me. We're going to continue our program. I hope you've all enjoyed your breakfast and are ready to
SETINA: proceed. We will continue with a reflection on the life and legacy of Dr. King presented by Mishawn Donaldson, class of 2001, and Cassandra Strudwick, a graduate student in the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering. Mishawn?

MISHAWN Good morning. My name is Mishawn Donaldson, and I'm a freshman in chemical engineering. Where do we go
DONALDSON: from here? This is a question that I would like to address this morning. Many times in our society, people often discuss issues about affirmative action. We tend to offer ways to mend or ways to end it or we even present imaginative ideas.

Today, we still offer possible solutions to guarantee equal rights and equality. So that leads me to the question that Dr. King asked in 1967. Where do we go from here, chaos or community, which was the title of his last book. As we examine this year's theme, the same old bone, the campaign against affirmative action, let us examine where this idea of the same old bone originated.

Back in 1863 with the abolition of slavery, the negro man did not have the opportunities for economic advancement in society. It was hard for them to get jobs, because they were looked down upon because of the deep, rich melanin they possessed and their former plight as slaves. Similar negative perceptions lived on through Dr. King's day and well into our era. Dr. King was one of the most powerful leaders in American history.

He was the type of man who meditated on the teachings and the life of Jesus Christ, remembered always that the nonviolent movement saw justice and reconciliation, walked and talked in a manner of love, for God is love, pray to be used by God in order that all men and women might live free, sacrificed personal wishes in order that all people might be free, and sought to perform regular service for others and for the world. Dr. King faithfully led the civil rights movement for several years, and he strongly believed in the equality of all people. He always had a dream that one day people will be judged by the content of their character and not by the color of their skin.

Back during the Civil Rights era, African-Americans were appointed to significant jobs. The Negro felt as if they were always being tossed the same old bone, but now it was only being done with courtesy. In other words, black people were being treated the same way but only in a dignified fashion. It seems as if over the years nothing has really changed.

Dr. King felt that a society that has done something against the Negro for hundreds of years must do something special for him. He felt as if all people should be allowed equal opportunities, and affirmative action sought to achieve his dreams. Affirmative action is not preference for race over race. It is preferential treatment for full inclusion and equal opportunities for full democracy. Dr. King had all of this as part of his dream, and his assassination should not be the end of his dream or the fight for equality.

Now let us come back to the present. Today anti-affirmative action policies are continuously being passed. This process only destroys the method by which equality is achieved. Martin Luther King Jr. once said that integration is the mutual sharing of power. White America must realize that justice for black people cannot be achieved without radical changes in the structure of our society.

This is a multiracial nation where all groups of people are dependent on each other. That power that I mentioned and the power that Dr. King referred to is educational power. It is financial power, and it is social empowerment.

Will we ever be allowed to enter the temple of power, to drink from the well of opportunity, or are we to continue banging on the glass ceiling while the majority continues to maintain the power? If Dr. King was still alive, I think that he would say the only true way to achieve equality is for our nation to share that power and unite as one.

So my final question for you today is, where do we go from here, or are we going to continue to be tossed the same old bone? In one of Dr. King's last speeches he said, we are all caught in an inescapable network of mutuality tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one, affects all indirectly. No man is an island private in himself.

Every man is a piece of a continent, a part of the main structure. One man's death diminishes us, because we are all involved in mankind. And therefore, we are to never let Dr. King's dream die and continue to strive for the ultimate goal of freedom and equality. How long will it take for us African-Americans, Native Americans, Hispanics, Asian-Americans, Caucasians, and all nationalities of people to fulfill his dream and become the most powerful force in the world. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

CORINA Thank you, Mishawn, for those thought provoking remarks. We will now proceed with Cassandra Strudwick.
SETINA: Cassandra?

CASSANDRA STRUDWICK: Good morning. My name is Cassandra Strudwick, and I'm a graduate student in the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering. If the postmaster could reach the heavens, this is what I would send. Dear Dr. King, I have read your biography and heard stories of your trials and tribulations from my parents and grandparents who bore witness to the injustices and fought the same battles with you.

As a member of a generation that only reads of your work and your dream, I often wondered what this nation would be like if your dream had been fulfilled. For it surely has not been at this time, Dr. King. Since the time you were taken from us, we have become a nation of confused people as we continue the plight to become-- to be treated equal as a race in business and education.

We have gone from negro to black to African-American, from black business to minority business to historically under-utilized to disadvantaged. All these labels and designations, yet we have never been labeled equal. While the injustices still prevail, many people believe that affirmative action is detrimentally contagious, because they're ignorant to what affirmative action really means.

Affirmative action, as I understand it, means that a company or university would take positive steps to ensure it does not discriminate. All guidelines and mandates regarding affirmative action clearly state the candidates must be qualified. Affirmative action simply encourages the development of ways to seek out and promote well-qualified candidates. It would, therefore, seem to me that affirmative action should not be viewed as a crutch but as a way of alleviating discrimination.

If an entire race were to enter a marathon 300 years after another, they first had to perform some impossible feat in order to catch up with their fellow runners. Affirmative action simply provides a level track and good running shoes. It does not guarantee first place.

Furthermore, affirmative action does not lift responsibility from black people as a race. As we climb the ladder of success, we must pull others up with us. We must make opportunities available for our brothers and sisters to be those same ivory towers we strive to reach. We must not be afraid to love each other, to help each other, to be proud to be black, to be proud to be descendants of a strength even in the midst of an unrelenting struggle.

Dr. King, what would you have us do today to get back to achieving your dream? What would you direct us to do, reassemble the masses and march again? Would you ask no demand that our black leaders redirect their causes from those of monetary achievements to social and economic advancement for all citizens? Should we look for dynamic, influential, and global or an individuals to provide leadership and project-oriented goals for affirmative action programs? Or should we each pursue our own dreams on an individual basis becoming a citizen who makes a difference?

How can we achieve a dream that's only remembered in the shortest and coldest month of the year, a dream that would require an entire nation to dance together to a musical tune that insinuates life of faith, hope, and love so that next year we may rejoice and not in a dream deferred but in measurable advances at MIT that are more important than what's in the breakfast menu and throughout this entire nation. What would you have us do? Don't despair, Dr. King, as history unfolds one page at a time. One day you will find our race in the first chapter and not in the appendix as solemn onlookers.

With a spirit of love, strength, and commitment, your legacy continues to breathe life into black men and women. We are left here after you as saints and sinners with all of our good deeds and bads, all of our struggles and successes, and yes all of our dreams. And through faith and perseverance, we will continue the onward march to a unified nation of people, and your dream will be achieved.

And then Dr. King, thank God almighty, we will live free at last. As I reflected on these issues, I wanted somebody to address them. Then I realized that I am somebody and that you have passed the torch on to those of us who are coming on the scene. We should be thrilled to have this opportunity to give life to your dream. I know that I am. Very truly yours, Cassandra Strudwick. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

**CORINA
SETINA:**

Thank you, Mishawn and Cassandra, for those inspiring words. I now have the honor of introducing the 15th President of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Dr. Charles M. Vest. Dr. Vest 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 Dr. Vest has played on a national level to achieve full inclusion for minorities in higher education. President Vest will present the recipients of the 1997, 98 Martin Luther King Jr. Leadership Awards for alumni, faculty, and student or student groups. President Vest?

Thank you, Corina. For the last seven years or so, I've always looked forward to these breakfasts or before that we held them in other formats. It's a great opportunity to reflect on something incredibly important, but I have to tell you I'm starting not to look forward to them anymore because the wisdom and eloquence of these young people make me feel very small when I come up here. I'm just terrifically proud of these folks. Thank them again please.

[APPLAUSE]

**PRESIDENT
CHARLES M.
VEST:**

I do want very much to thank all of you for joining us this morning to participate in this annual and very important celebration. I'm especially pleased that we are joined this morning by many members of the Cambridge community beyond the boundaries of our campus, including city counselor Henrietta Davis. Are you here, Ms Davis? Welcome. Thank you for being with us.

It is seriously a great privilege for me to share the podium on this important occasion, and it is an even greater privilege to have this annual opportunity to present the Martin Luther King Leadership Awards. In the same spirit that Cambridge's Tip O'Neil used to observe that all politics is local, I would like to suggest to you this morning that all great social change is personal. Collective action and general social progress is at its root the result of individual leadership, individual example, individual courage and conviction.

The winners of the Martin Luther King Junior Leadership Award are selected not simply for their personal achievements, although those certainly are considerable, but for the effect that they have had on others around them. They are selected not only because they exemplify the ideals of Dr. King but because they have succeeded in transmitting those ideals to others. We are indeed fortunate to have each of these people in our midst. The first of this year's award goes to Dr. Linda Jordan, who is currently also a Martin Luther King Junior visiting associate professor in MIT's department of chemistry. Would you like to come up, Linda?

[APPLAUSE]

As many of you know very well, Dr. Jordan has a passion for biochemistry. She has an equal passion for inspiring excellence and perseverance in her students. And she has made it a special mission to foster the growth of minorities and women in science in America. Dr. Jordan has been recognized and celebrated at the national level for her work in science and for her leadership in encouraging the younger generations to pursue their dreams, and we are delighted to add our own accolades to her honors.

[APPLAUSE]

**DR. LINDA
JORDAN:**

First and foremost, given honor to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. For he has it if it was not for him, I would not be standing here today. I would like to thank [INAUDIBLE] for taking the risk and the time for nominating me for this award. And I would like to introduce two very important people in my life, my mother, Mrs. Charlene Smith, who-- who exhibits dignity and showed me at a young age how to be strong in adverse situations and not to be afraid to speak up for what is right.

I would like to also acknowledge my father, Mr. Charles Jordan-- please stand-- who is a prayer warrior, because prayer is what's going to make a change. I would like to thank my other relatives who have come here in the back, my cousins and nieces and nephews for all the support that they've given me and the people who are sitting at these two tables. Mary Roberts, who's helped me in a lot of ways just continuously be a scientist, Tina Sanders, Carmen Turner, Joanne Stubby, who's let me in her lab, Rick Dan Heiser, who continues to have conversations to try to change some things around here, Tricia O'Connor on the way out in the more who kinds of talks to me and keeps me going, and my pastor, Reverend Regions, who we have to get on the phone a whole lot and pray.

You asked me to talk President Vest for a minute and a half on the significance of what Martin Luther King has done in my life. Office of Minority Education, I haven't forgotten you, [INAUDIBLE] Osgood and your staff, JJ Jackson-- of course, she's going to kill me-- Margo Tyler, who is not here, Blanche Staten, the chemistry undergraduate office, and if I've missed you is not because that I've forgotten you. It's just because I'm a little nervous.

I want to talk to you about three specific things, and excuse me if I go over a little bit. But it's just very important that you understand that. I do not take this lightly. I'm not sitting here on my own recognisances and think that I have arrived based on something that I have done alone. This struggle that we are going through consistently is one in which I live daily.

Three basic things that encompass my life as with every morning when I get up is racism, sexism, and transgressing through socioeconomic background. The most debilitating aspect of racism is the low expectation, which is associated with your existence only because the hue of your skin is different.

Low expectation permeates ignorance. It permeates that your talents are ignored. It ignores the talents that you have. It ignores the talents that your ancestors have. And the bottom line is that you are viewed as being inferior, that the society expects very little from you. And, therefore, when you are born, when you come out of the birth channel, you are already at a disadvantage because you are not expected.

And the thing about it is that you have to come out fighting. You have to come out fighting. And you do not have time to investigate the origin of the fight. The only thing that you have to do is fight.

How do you expect a child to do good on a test? How do you expect a child to have self-esteem? How do you expect your child to feel equal when we already are doomed unequal only because, again, I say the color of your skin. We had nothing to do with that.

God is the one who decided where each and every one of our souls would be encompassed. What would you do if you were in the body of an African-American female, a Hispanic male? How would you feel if you were treated as less than?

I too share in Martin Luther King's dream, and I know that that fight also included equality for women. For I know how it feels to be overlooked only because you are a woman and to band with other women and for them to not understand that when they show discrimination against your skin color that they are fighting against the same fight that you and I are fighting together. That when you of my skin and my gender, either one feels just as painful as the other.

It is also painful when men of my same hue skin color forget that I come from where they come. And they do not understand. How soon do you forget-- how soon did you forget that it was a woman, an African-American woman who went back and forth underground-- underground to free us as slaves? How soon you forget.

And if you forget that, don't you know that your mother and your sisters and your grandparents are too women that brought you here to the loins of their wombs. I say. I'm tired of being looked at as a quota. I am tired of people thinking that I have only got where I am, because I am black and female.

They negate the effort, the hard nights, the long hours, the books, the tall, the snare. They don't think of that. They do not think of that.

Finally, when you transverse the low socioeconomical background and you do the right things and you pay the price and you take the qualifiers and you pass them, but you're consistently over and over and over and over again being re-evaluated and re-qualified. And the bottom line is that what it does for you is take you away from what God has created you to do, to utilize your brain and your talents to make a significant contribution to society.

I have sacrificed a family, [INAUDIBLE]. I have sacrificed children. So these children, these young people in which I meet are my children. When I share with them, I share with them inspiration so that they will be able to make it on a day to day level so that maybe they will not give up.

So when they finally get the degrees that they are obtaining and go to their first job and still not have access, not have opportunity to be able to not utilize the resources that they would know that they have to go deep within themselves and pull from somewhere where sometimes is not the strength to continue to fight. So I would like-- I have a dream. I have a dream that one day that one time in this country that someone will know that a brain knows no color, that our brain knows no gender, that our brain does not have money attached to it. That's my dream.

[APPLAUSE]

I accept this award. I accept this award not because I am satisfied with my accomplishments. I accept this award not because there's not more work to do. I accept this award as encouragement for the future and the impetus to continue to nurture more people and the kind of individuals that you may not ever know they have sacrificed their lives for me to be standing here today.

Martin Luther King was a Christian man. He said love your enemies. I am learning how to love. I am learning how to love. He was a Christian man, and he said that science and religion-- he states in his book *A Strength to Love*-- that science and religion are complementary and that together they bring together wisdoms, facts, power, and value.

So for the young people in the room, I'm going to leave you with this. This comes from Isaiah, the 48th chapter and 31st verse, and it comes of the NIV version. So it's plain English. And it says "For those who hope in the Lord-- for those who hope in the Lord will renew their strengths, will soar as the wings of eagles, they will run and yet not get weary, and they will walk and yet not faint." Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

**PRESIDENT
CHARLES M.
VEST:**

Our second award this morning goes to miss Toby Winer, administrative assistant in the Department of Political Science. Not only does she serve as a mentor and a friend to faculty and students alike, she has worked creatively and tirelessly to organize and teach subjects on such issues as social justice, the history of the civil rights movement, and community service. In all of this, she has worked enthusiastically and skillfully to create an inclusive, compassionate, and civic-minded community here at MIT. We are fortunate to have her here, and we're pleased to be able to recognize her many contributions to life and to learning at MIT. Would you please come up?

[APPLAUSE]

TONY WINER: First, I want to say how honored I am to receive this award. This is truly one of the most important events of my life. I want to thank the MLK committee and all of the people at MIT who have supported me through all my years here. And there's a lot of people, and I won't mention them. But there are a lot of them out there in the room tonight-- today. So thank you very much.

And finally, I want to thank the political science department. I couldn't have done any of the seminars classes and activities that you're honoring me here today for without the support, pretty much unconditional support of my department. And I'd really like to thank Dan Crider for nominating me and just everyone here. Thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]

Our final 1998 Martin Luther King Leadership Award goes to an exceptional student, an exceptional student who has used his artistic talent as a springboard for community building and inclusiveness. Although still only in his junior year, he has already won several notable awards for his painting and his printmaking, including the 1997 List Foundation Fellowship in the arts.

His high visibility and charisma have enabled him to produce a number of provocative and successful performing arts events that have made significant contributions to our cultural life. Many of these activities have celebrated black artists and have engaged them directly in our community. [INAUDIBLE] class of '99 is an exceptional student leader, and we are delighted to recognize him with this award. [INAUDIBLE]?

[APPLAUSE]

PRESENTER: I'd first like to say that you all inspire me. Professor Jordan, I feel you. Everyone inspires me. Someone asked me what did you do to get that when I told one of my friends? I told him I survived, because I'm always restless here. Because I don't necessarily belong. I'm not necessarily comfortable here.

So to survive I have to make MIT my own MIT. And to do that I've done a lot of different things. I wanted to explore arts. So I met the office of the arts, and I got the List Foundation Fellowship. And when I need support, I have a special person, [INAUDIBLE]. When I need encouragement, I have my comrades, 27 brothers of mine [INAUDIBLE].

I have my mentor, Edwin McClooney, the Office of Minority Education, Dean Osgood, and David Shaw, [INAUDIBLE], Professor Harris.

[APPLAUSE]

I'm going to thank everybody in person on some other time, because this is very special to me. And I just want to leave this moment like this. So thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]

**CORINA
SETINA:** Thank you, President Vest, and congratulations to all the recipients. I now have the pleasure of introducing Dr. Joel Moses, provost of MIT. Provost Moses will recognize the Dr. Martin Luther King Junior visiting professors for the 1997, 98 academic year. Provost Moses?

PROVOST JOEL The Martin Luther King visiting professor program was begun in 1994. In the past three years, the number of visiting-- MLK visiting professors has been as follows. In 95, 96, we had three, in academic year, 96, 97, we had five, and the current academic year we have seven.

I, therefore, predict next year we'll have nine. Just kidding. Just kidding. I don't know how many. But we have an excellent group, and five of the current seven are here and I'd like to speak about each and every one of them. And after I talk about them, I hope they'll stand up and get an applause.

You've already met Linda Jordan. She's in the Department of Chemistry. She's an associate professor in chemistry and North Carolina Agriculture and Technical State University. And she received a PhD in biological chemistry here at MIT in 1985. She is conducting research on human placental [INAUDIBLE]-- I hope I pronounced that correctly. And this spring she is teaching 5071 in the biochemistry laboratory, so please give another hand.

[APPLAUSE]

Steven Lee has been visiting the Department of Mathematics. He's a research staff member at the Mathematical Sciences section of Oak Ridge National Laboratory and an adjunct assistant professor in the Department of Computer Science-- here, here-- at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville. His PhD is from University of Illinois and his research has been a numerical analysis and applications. And last year, we renovated the number of 10 classrooms in the math building, building two, and it was my hope that the faculty in mathematics would use computing especially in a linear algebra course. And Steven Lee was the leader of that effort, and I hope it'll continue with his help even now. Thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]

Pamela McCauley Bell is with the Department of Aeronautics and Astronautics. She's also an assistant professor of industrial engineering and management systems department at the University of Central Florida, and her PhD is an industrial engineer for the University of Oklahoma. At MIT, she's investigating the feasibility of fuzzy set modeling as a technique to improve the warning and alert systems in New York aircraft environment.

[APPLAUSE]

Winston [INAUDIBLE] is jointly in the mechanical engineering and materials science engineering departments. He's an associate professor of Department Material Science and Engineering at the Ohio State University and a PhD from Churchill College in Cambridge University, England. And his research focuses fatigue and factual materials and the development of advanced materials and their composites. Professor [INAUDIBLE].

[APPLAUSE]

And having arrived in the last five minutes, Lewis Thomas is with the Sloan School of Management. He's an assistant professor of Management at the Wharton School and the University of Pennsylvania and his PhD in business economics. And his research focus is in applied economics, brand management, management of technology, and technological innovation. Professor Thomas.

[APPLAUSE]

Let me also mention the ones that are not here. Professor Ernesto Cortez Jr. is with the Department of Urban Studies and Planning. He is a Southwest Director of the Industrial Areas Foundations in Austin, Texas, which is an institution founded by Saul Alinsky in Chicago in the 1940s, provides leadership, training for poor, and moderate income families. Ernesto Cortez that you may have read is one of the five winners of the \$250,000 Heinz Family Foundation awards for civic and academic achievements, and he has been teaching courses on community organizing each semester as well as doing IEP this year. So would you give a hand to Professor Cortez.

And finally, Kevin [INAUDIBLE] has been with the electrical engineering, computer science department. He came in as an assistant professor from the School of Electrical and Computer Engineering at Purdue University, having received his PhD from University of California Berkeley, and some of his research is the high temperature circuit design using silicon carbide. He has since-- he was here in the, fall and he has since become a faculty member at Cornell University. So would you give him a hand too? And thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]

CORINA SETINA: Thank you, Dr. Moses. President Vest will now give some remarks followed by an introduction of this morning's keynote speaker, Attorney Lezli Baskerville. President Vest?

PRESIDENT CHARLES M. VEST: Last year I spoke on this occasion about the looming attacks on affirmative action. Like any good scientist or engineer, I cited data from MIT and elsewhere to support the assertion that affirmative action as a policy is just beginning to bear fruit in the world of advanced education and research and that both here at MIT and in society as a whole we had far more work to do. Since that time, however, I have come to believe that the focus on the goals of affirmative action is increasingly being lost to an escalating and not very productive debate about the methods.

That saddens me because I think that a genuine understanding of these issues must begin with a recognition that by any measure of opportunity, advancement, education, or income, women and minorities have not yet been fully integrated into the highest levels of America's economy and civil society. Does that mean that we should defend blindly each and every action, policy, and process that has ever been undertaken in the name of affirmative action? Certainly not.

But does it mean that we must continue to use effective, appropriate, and vigorous means to the end of this unjust state of affairs? Unquestionably, it does. That calls for continuing discussion and debate. How do we get from here to there?

But before we as a society and as a local community discuss the means of affirmative action, can't we accept together the ends it is intended to achieve? Can't we agree that there is an important problem here even if we cannot agree on exactly the best means to its solution? If the opponents of affirmative action are not willing to acknowledge this, then in my view the debate is not about affirmative action but about much more fundamental issues of social justice and societal goals.

The concerns of justice are in this case squarely aligned with pragmatic attention to the economic and social well-being. Our nation grows more diverse with each passing year. Members of minority groups make up one-quarter of our population today. They will make up well over a third of our population within 20 years. In the post-industrial world, knowledge is the basis of economic achievement for nations just as it is for individuals.

The well-being of all America depends on the educational achievements of all of our citizens. If we recognize and agree on that principle, then somehow I think the debate can rightfully focus on the best means to achieve a society marked by economic and social justice. Unfortunately, I think that much of the discussion of the last few years has been clouded by rhetoric that obscures rather than illuminates these issues. If we want to free ourselves from the fierce polarization that has characterized the national debate about so many social issues, we must all abandon the use of such terms of concealment and speak plainly. I will go first.

Like many of my colleagues, I helped shape and I strongly support the Association of American University statement on the importance of diversity in university admissions. That statement talks about the immense value of diversity in enriching and enhancing the educational experience of all students. In attempting to describe the advantage of diversity for the entire community, however, we may have employed however unconsciously our own terms of concealment.

By this I mean that we may not have made a strong enough link between the promotion of diversity and the deliberate goal of expanding opportunity to students from groups which remain statistically underrepresented at the highest levels of American life. The extension of these opportunities is a good thing and an important thing, in fact, a critical thing in and of itself. We should be more forthright in asserting this.

And just as we should be clear about all of our reasons for supporting diversity, so we should examine some of the murkier language that has been used to attack movements toward affirmative action and diversity and other policies designed to promote and ultimately ensure diversity of our institutions. Let us begin with that wonderful word, quotas, a term that is used to suggest that a certain number of people from targeted groups will be admitted or promoted regardless of their qualifications. This notion somehow seems still to persist despite the general acknowledgment that quotas are in the case of university admissions unverified and unverifiable.

Programs with specific numerical goals are explicitly rejected by the AAU and its member institutions. Can we just stop talking about a problem that doesn't exist. Let's turn to another loaded word, preference. If admissions, committees, and officers were showing absolute preference for women and minorities, then women and minorities would be admitted out of all proportion to their representation in society as a whole.

If on the other hand, preference means giving positive consideration to any factor other than grades and test scores, then surely an attack on preferences for race or gender should apply to other preferences for athletic achievement, community service, artistic or musical ability, or in the case of many schools but not here at MIT having alumni parents. These forms of preference are rarely attacked, because they are seen as part of a larger set of criteria.

Preference is thus another misleading term which effectively conceals one factor among many, one factor among many approach to admissions allowed by the Bakke decision while subtly suggesting that minorities are somehow overrepresented in our populations. Finally, let me turn to that most troubling of all of these terms of concealment. Ultimately opponents of affirmative action and admissions complain that it results in the acceptance of candidates who are unqualified or just as ominous, underqualified.

What can we say to this? We could point out that this allegedly underqualified-- that the allegedly underqualified minority students admitted to the University of Texas Law School did just as well at passing the Multistate Bar Exam as did their white male counterparts, or we could point out that the allegedly underqualified women admitted to MIT somehow miraculously seemed to earn slightly better grades than their white male classmates. We could point out that test scores and grades provide a very important threshold or benchmark measure of potential. But beyond a certain level such measures cannot offer hard and fast predictions of achievement for any of us.

We could point out that every student who is accepted to this institution is well past that threshold of competence and capability and is thus well qualified to do the work. I believe that we should be making these points and one more. The ultimate test of any admission policy or any other policy designed to promote diversity should be its ability to maintain standards of performance while broadening access and opportunity. MIT's graduates, whatever their gender, race, ethnicity, or test scores continue to do extraordinarily well in their fields. They consistently reinforce MIT's reputation as one of the greatest universities in the world.

By the pragmatic test of how our graduates perform, I think our admissions policies, including those policies regarding diversity have, in fact, been very successful. MIT and our society as a whole should be willing to look at any alternative policy which produces the same or better results, but no amount of misleading rhetoric should confuse us into accepting anything less. By all means, we should perfect our tools and refine our methods, but we should never turn away from the pressing task before us. We have achieved too much not to stand our ground. Thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]

And now it is my great pleasure to introduce this morning's keynote speaker. Lezli Baskerville currently serves as general counsel to the National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education. This Washington-based organization serves a vital public advocacy and coordinating function for 117 predominantly black colleges and universities, both private and land grant institutions. Her work for the NAOFEO is only the latest chapter in a distinguished career of public service and political activism.

A graduate of Rutgers University and Howard University Law School, she has service in her senior congressional staff-- she has served in congressional staff positions and worked in several national political campaigns, including Reverend Jesse Jackson's presidential runs in 1984 and 1988 and more recently in the 1996 Clinton-Gore campaign. She was the founding director of the National Black Leadership Roundtable, a founding member of the National Political Congress of Black Women, and is a founding board member of the National Rainbow Coalition. We are very honored to have her with us to share her reflections this morning. Please welcome Ms. Lezli Baskerville.

LEZLI BASKERVILLE: Thank you, President Vest and Mrs. Vest. It's been a powerful morning, and I'm privileged to be here, just a powerful morning. And I want to thank Dean Osgood and Professor Feld, the entire Martin Luther King Junior committee for having me here to partake in this powerful, powerful morning. I thank you all. And the students, especially the gospel , choir the awardees all of you have contributed to making this an outstanding and memorable morning for me.

I am privileged to be here this morning at this important center of instruction, academic research, and social service. I'm gratified to join the good people of MIT who have assembled to honor a noble fallen leader in the universal movement for justice, human dignity, freedom, and equality. I am privileged to have been asked to join with you in celebrating the meaning and the message of an educator who taught about the shield of justice and the sword of truth, an agent of change who helped to transform the manner in which an entire generation perceived of itself and of its relationship to its fellow man. We meet to breathe new life in contemporary meaning into the legacy of an excavator who helped the nation to dig from what King called the quicksand of racial, ethnic, gender, and economic injustice to the solid rock of human dignity. I most warmly embraced this opportunity to help keep alive the evolutionary movement of nonviolent militancy to prod the nation to realize its egalitarian ideals.

Dr. King was a revolutionary whose appeal to the decency of Americans and their basic values fueled arguably the most successful revolution in our history, the civil rights revolution. The revolution helped the nation to loosen the shackles of race, prejudice, and to topple a pernicious system of legal segregation that defied decency and fundamental democratic values. In the 30 years since the death of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr, the unstinting efforts of people of many races and ethnicities, both genders varying abilities and fortunes have yielded incremental strides to redeem the country's promise of equality, of opportunity, and justice for all.

Today, despite the fact that African-Americans, Hispanics, American Indians, and other disfranchised groups are not even within hailing distance of equality, there are visible signs that the United States has become a more perfect union, a more pluralistic nation. Witness the tremendous rise in the number of African-American elected officials from less than 1,500 in 1970 to more than 8,000 today, including mayors, members of Congress and a United States senator from Illinois. There exists today 2,300 African-American women in elective office, one former African-American governor, and an African-American who waged a serious race for the United States presidency, and another African-American whom polls suggested that at least in their hearts a greater number of Americans wanted to be the President of the United States than any other candidate or would be candidate for the office.

Thanks to federal anti-discrimination mandates and affirmative action despite their continued underrepresentation in all aspects of American life, minorities that were routinely excluded from schools, from professions, corporate jobs, uniform public jobs, and skilled trades now have limited access in these avenues of economic opportunity. Many minorities have moved into the mainstream, as it is called. There is a fledgling African-American middle class that has grown from one in 17 families a generation ago to one in seven today. And blacks hold corporate and professional jobs unheard of in the days when Dr. King was boycotting the buses in Montgomery, Alabama.

Companies that hired minorities only for janitorial work and women only for clerical jobs, now have minority and female managers. And universities that would not admit African-American and Hispanic students now have black and Hispanic administrators, Dean Osgood and professors. As a result of affirmative action, the number of African-American students in predominantly white colleges and universities has grown from 134,000 in 1961 to 1.2 million today.

Equal opportunity and affirmative action laws spawned a condray of professional working women that have increased the overall incomes of two parent white non-Hispanic households. But like their racial and ethnic minority counterparts white women face ceilings on their aspirations. In 1995, their wages were just 73% of white men's slowly eking up from 61% in 1967. In the fall of 1995, a bipartisan National Commission concluded that the glass ceiling is firmly in place. It found that 97% of senior managers of Ford Fortune 500 companies are white and almost all are male.

It found that African-American men with professional degrees earned 21% less than whites holding the same degree in the same job category and that African-Americans and women with college degrees earn little more than white males with a high school diploma. The Commission found that less than half of 1% of managers are Hispanic, and that Asian-Americans earn less than whites in comparable positions and get fewer promotions despite the fact that they have more formal education than other groups. No one can seriously believe that the limited progress that has been made toward opening previously closed areas of our society and the debt that has been made in the monopolies in high and not so high places in America would have been made were it not for affirmative action, not even Clarence Thomas, who in 1983 during a soul searching reflection is reported to have said but for affirmative action laws god only knows where I would be today.

Of course, today, Justice Thomas repudiates affirmative action despite the data which suggest a continued need for affirmative action. Why the flip-flop on affirmative action on the part of Justice Thomas and on the part of others, such as Senator Bob Dole, who authored the Americans with Disabilities Act and supported other federal affirmative action legislation until he sought to jump start his last presidential campaign? Why the change of position on affirmative action when all indications are that it is proving effective and that there is a continued need for affirmative action? And why now is affirmative action under siege?

After a good start, did America simply grow weary with the struggle for equal opportunity and put it on the back burner, or is there something more pernicious afoot? More importantly, will affirmative action survive? I believe that affirmative action will survive, and I believe as I will illustrate it will survive because it works. It is still needed, and it benefits all Americans.

The opponents of affirmative action. Of course, do not agree. They opined that earmarking a small fraction of positions in work settings in educational institutions in places of influence, affluence, and prestige to end segregation therein runs counter to fundamental principles of equal opportunity and individual merit.

Opponents argue that taking special efforts to assure that our students are trained in leadership roles in public life and in the professions in a culturally rich, diverse setting is un-American to the extent that achieving such diversity requires the examination of factors in addition to test scores. Opponents postulate that affirmative action is an illegal policy that accords the beneficiaries special rights. These arguments are not new. They are simply the same old bone.

And make no bones about it, the arguments of the opponents are cyclical. And all those shrouded in emotionally appealing verbiage are now being advanced by a more diverse cast of characters. The arguments fall short, especially in a university setting where many considerations other than test scores have affected and continue to affect admissions.

At each juncture in our history when the nation has found itself in tenuous economic circumstances, it has opted not to reorder its national priorities to invest in human needs and human capital but rather to adopt and implement policies that profoundly and negatively affect not only millions of Americans of color but also the poor women, the vulnerable young workers, the elderly and the unemployed. Today is no exception.

Although the unemployment rates are low and the gross domestic product is up, incomes are rising and Americans have-- America has secured itself as the world's premier economic power. The nation is reeling from the restructuring downsizing merging and layoffs of the 70s and 80s. Moreover, changes in technology are making workers at all levels more vulnerable to job loss.

New markets abroad too are making US workers vulnerable. The vulnerability has created insecurity and with good reason. It is reported that between 1979 and 95, the United States lost more than 43 million jobs. One of the results of the job loss is that in this time of prosperity we are seeing a widening gap between those whom we call the haves and the have nots.

William Julius Wilson profoundly makes this point in his book, *The Declining Significance of Race*. But it is against this backdrop that we once again find ourselves facing the same old bone, yet another challenge to affirmative action. It is amid this uncertainty and insecurity that people of color and women are again being scapegoated for the failings of the American market economy. The policies that were instituted to solve problems have now become the problem.

You may recall that it was shortly after the collapse in California of the defense industry and the loss of numerous jobs associated with that industry that Proposition 209 surfaced. Its architects and the architects of similar initiatives and legislation across the country would have the public believe that were it not for people of color and women coming into closed arenas in the labor force, the plant workers who were laid off during the 80s and 90s would have job security. They would have the American public believe that the mid-level managers who fell to the ax of efficiency experts would all have job security and certain futures were it not for affirmative action.

Opponents of affirmative action would have us believe that unqualified black and brown students are being accepted into leading universities at the expense of more qualified white students. Well, despite all the hoopla about minority preferences at the University of California Berkeley, you should note that prior to Proposition 209 taking effect, the student population was only 6% African-American and 14% Hispanic. What that meant in real terms was that roughly 80% of the seats were set aside for white students, all of whom did not score well on standardized tests. Some of the white students were the beneficiaries of the 80% non-minority admissions set aside at the University of California at Berkeley where the sons and daughters of alumni, board members, philanthropists, elected officials, and other persons of power received affirmative action.

Some of the 80% were from a geographic region of the country or a foreign country, which the university sought to seek representation. Lacrosse players, swimmers, tennis players, runners, and baseball players were the big beneficiaries of the non-minority earmark. In many instances, these athletes were admitted with low or no academic promised if the standardized test be the only gage.

There were musicians and students who speak multiple languages and others that had special factors that the university sought to include to achieve a more diverse student populace. They were all given preference under the remaining 80% set aside. UC Berkeley also considered what disciplines the students promised to pursue. It did not want all theater arts majors, special consideration for admissions through one of the 80% non-minority set aside seats went to veterans, went to older Americans, went to persons with different physical abilities who were seeking to overcome societal limitations, and students who were able to pay full tuition and were not in need of scholarships or grants.

All of these factors are valid admissions criteria, and each is important to maintaining a diverse student population. Interestingly, each one of these considerations with the exception of race, ethnicity, and gender continues to be a factor in admissions considerations at the University of Berkeley and elsewhere. In *Hopwood vs. Texas*, which was referenced by President Vest, it was revealed that 100 white students with test scores lower than the four plaintiffs were admitted to the University of Texas Law School. This clearly suggests that there was affirmative action in place for non-minorities.

Consideration was given to other than the test score for at least the 100 white students who did not fare as well as the plaintiffs but were none the less admitted to the university. But no one challenged those policies. No one challenges the policies that accord affirmative action to persons on the basis of other than race, ethnicity, and gender. Why do Proposition 209 and pending and proposed legislation is to race, ethnicity, and gender as one of many criteria in admissions to universities but did not question age, military status, relationship to alumni, athletic ability, influence and wealth, regional origins, and academic preference as admissions criteria?

Are the reasons for affirmative action for alumni athletes, the rich and powerful students from select undergraduate-- from underrepresented regions and foreign countries not as compelling as the reasons for affirmative action that take into account race, ethnicity, and/or gender? Of course not. The reasons for affirmative action for racial and ethnic minorities and women in this country far outweigh considerations in other areas, especially in a nation such as ours that is grounded on an egalitarian ideal.

In *Bakke*, the Supreme Court found that race, ethnicity, and gender are indeed valid admissions considerations in the context of higher education, and despite judicial retreat from *Bakke* by the Fifth Circuit in *Hopwood*, the *Bakke* decision fortunately remains the law of the land today. In other than an emotionally charged setting where blacks and Hispanics are pit against whites or conservative blacks are pit against more centrist or liberal blacks, the American population understands and supports affirmative action.

Recall if you will the 1992 Bill Clinton Presidential campaign. During his campaign for the Democratic presidential nomination, Bill Clinton promised that if he got the nod he would appoint a cabinet that looked like America. No one questioned that. In fact, he was applauded for wanting to achieve a diverse cabinet. As President Clinton's search for qualified persons to fill the cabinet position neared an end and there were two positions that had gone to women, the transition team encouraged President Clinton to take a look at women for additional positions. The transition team earmarked one of the remaining slots for a woman, a non-traditional slot, that of the United States Attorney General.

Clinton's predecessor definitely chose a younger running mate in an effort to woo younger voters, and before President Bush, President Reagan sought to appoint a female to head the United States Department of Labor. With the exception of President Clinton, most all recent presidential candidates have sought running mates that were from or would appeal to different geographic region than they.

Each one of these decisions was an affirmative action decision. Each was accepted and supported by the American public. Each required searching beyond the traditional selection pool for qualified candidates that brought something complimentary into the pool, and in no case would the person selected for the position have been selected if a goal had not been established to look beyond the old boys' network to a targeted utilized underutilized group.

The goal was established for the purpose of fending off an otherwise nearly certain all white male appointment, and special efforts were made to go out and find a qualified person from among the targeted groups. This is affirmative action in action. And in this context, the public understands that diversity is a worthy goal. More importantly, there was no charge of reverse discrimination, and where goals have been established for geographic diversity no assumption has ever been made that the candidates from one region are necessarily inferior to the candidates from another region. Where diversity goals have been established for older Americans, for veterans, for persons who sign, persons who use a wheelchair and other persons who have been left out of the main access to our society, no assumption is made that the person from the targeted group is necessarily inferior to others.

This brings me to the problem of my position. I submit and the data support that American public does not really oppose affirmative action. When cast in a proper light and couched in appropriate terms, the public supports affirmative action. But the opponents of affirmative action are not attempting to project affirmative action as it really is, and the proponents of affirmative action missed an early opportunity to do something during this latest round of assaults on affirmative action. When former Senator Bob Dole called for a review of every federal statute, regulation program, and executive order that grants a preference to individuals on the basis of race, sex, national origin, or ethnic background as the beginning point for the unraveling of federal affirmative action laws and regulations, the supporters of affirmative action should have denounced the idea of tampering with equal opportunity laws altogether but simultaneously said Senator Dole if you insist on reviewing affirmative action laws and if you insist on unraveling affirmative action laws review all of the affirmative action laws and unravel all of the affirmative action laws, such as those laws that require affirmative action for religious minorities, for Americans with disabilities, older Americans, Vietnam era veterans, and other groups for whom the nation's laws require affirmative action.

As portrayed by detractors, affirmative action is a bonanza for racial and ethnic minorities and women. In reality, affirmative action is not simply action to include racial and ethnic minorities and women into areas from which they have been and continue to be excluded. It is much, much broader. And in order to stabilize affirmative action programs and repel opponents, affirmative action allies must set the record straight in this regard.

While setting the record straight that affirmative action is broad and all inclusive in society as it has evolved, we should not lose sight of the fact that affirmative action is a remedy and is a remedy for years of invidious discrimination against racial minorities in America. The discrimination has continued in large measure and vast disparities exist in economic and educational attainment as the result of the discrimination. Affirmative action became the pronounced policy in this society of attempting to erase the effects of past discrimination and continuing discrimination in the 1960s when there was overwhelming evidence as it is today that African-Americans and other minorities throughout the country are the victims of systemic invidious discrimination in education, in employment, in housing, and virtually every area of American life.

Faced with studies that revealed that discrimination based on race remained manifest in all walks of public life despite previous efforts that had been made to eliminate the discrimination, Congress called for make whole efforts for victims of discrimination just as Blackman and Bakke summarized what was required most succinctly and clearly.

And he stated, "thus, in order to get beyond racism, we must first take account of race. There is no other way. And in order to treat some persons equally, we must treat them differently. We can not and we dare not let the equal protection clause perpetuate racial supremacy."

These words are as true today as they were when written. Too many African-Americans, Hispanics, and Native Americans are growing up in poverty, in crime and drug-infested neighborhoods, attending underfunded inferior schools, and we can not believe that the students from these environments can adequately compete for a job score or a score on a-- for a job or a score on a standardized test.

Years ago, President Lyndon Johnson said you do not take a person who for years has been hobbled by chains and liberate him, bring him to the starting line of a race and then say you are free to compete with all the others, and justly believe that you have been fair. You could not then and you cannot today. Anyone who believes that we are today a colorblind society in which everyone enjoys equal opportunity is sadly mistaken and cannot see.

We are far from a colorblind society and to the extent that color remains a criterion for consideration in awarding the spoils of the nation, it too must be a consideration in a remedial. The invidious treatment of African-Americans and Hispanics is not, however, a winning argument in the debate on affirmative action. It's not the strongest argument.

The strongest argument for affirmative action in America is that as it has evolved affirmative action covers the vast majority of Americans. As it has evolved, affirmative action is no longer a remedy for the atrocities visited upon the ancestors of African-American slaves. Hispanic Americans, Indians, and women are covered by affirmative action laws, but affirmative action is much broader than this.

Person's are protected based on religion, veteran status, disabling condition, or the status as an older American, which is defined as anyone over 40. The Vietnam errors Veterans Readjustment Act, for example, requires affirmative action. The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 requires affirmative action. The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 requires affirmative action. The Age Discrimination in Employment Act and its enabling regulations require affirmative action.

In short, the majority of Americans are now covered by affirmative action laws, and supporters of affirmative action that want to win this debate must begin to articulate this position. If, for example, California ended affirmative action as relates to racial and ethnic minorities and women, equity dictates that the state eliminate affirmative action for veterans, older Americans, and persons with disabilities all of whom continue to have affirmative action preferences in the state of California.

Let me be clear. I support and I encourage all affirmative action. I encourage every effort to include persons in the main line of our society. We need and we want affirmative action for all groups that have been denied access to the nation's institutions, programs, and activity. But as a strategy if we link affirmative action programs as colloquially used with the affirmative action programs for other groups, it becomes more difficult to maintain opposition to affirmative action.

For example, I presume that the Americans with Disabilities Act is not the only affirmative action legislation that Bob Dole still supports. My guess is that septuagenarian Dole also supports affirmative action for older Americans. My guess is that veteran Dole does not oppose affirmative action requirements for disabled veterans and veterans of the Vietnam era, nor probably does he oppose veterans preference legislation and regulations. It is imperative for the proponents of affirmative action for racial, ethnic, and religious minorities and women to provide for the legislators, administrators, judges, justices, and others who will make final decisions on the issue of affirmative action a stake in the debate.

These persons are mostly older white men, many of whom served some time in the military and may be disabled. Once the decision-makers in the affirmative action debate are made to understand that they too are more than simply tangential stakeholders in the debate and once we halt the decoupling of race, ethnicity, and gender from age, disability, and veteran status, I believe that we can begin to ward off the latest rounds of affirmative action. We must repel assailants of affirmative action.

As we engage in the affirmative action dialogue, as we discuss what affirmative action is, and as we begin to re-couple race, ethnicity, and gender with veteran status, age, and physical disabilities we have to be clear what affirmative action is not. Affirmative action is not a quota. As commonly used, affirmative actions are remedial measures for years of invidious discrimination that continues today, and I've discussed that earlier. They include efforts to seek out and include, to train to promote those who have been excluded because of their race, ethnicity, and gender for sure but also because of their religion, their disabling condition, their age or military status.

Affirmative action is not admitting or hiring unqualified persons. Affirmative action may mean redefining qualified so that non-relevant criteria, criteria having little or no bearing on the likelihood of success of a meritorious candidate must be eliminated, such as certain height and weight requirements, parents of alumni status, friendship to employees. Affirmative action should mean that diversity in a workforce and in an educational institution is considered as a valuable asset.

In the field of higher education, race, ethnicity and gender affirmative action has never meant allowing students to get by because of the color of their skin or their sex. Once admitted to colleges and universities, the students who are admitted under an affirmative action program for underrepresented minorities or for women do not receive affirmative action greens. In many instances, a hostile environment awaits them and they must work twice as hard to receive an A. They must work twice as hard to receive access to the resources, the professors, the TAs, and those things which other students find in a warm and welcoming environment on a predominantly white campus.

Those who got in because of affirmative action do not get by on affirmative action, and we must articulate this clearly and unequivocally. Despite some progress toward fair access that has been made since the 1960s, we're not anywhere near close to achieving a society in which a person's race, gender, or ethnicity does not matter. The Higher Education Statistic belie the notion that there is no longer a need for affirmative action.

According to Census Bureau of Statistics in 1996 council on Education Report and 1995 Economic Policy Institute Survey, African-American enrollments in colleges and universities has increased by 16% since 1990. As of 1995, 13% of African-Americans 25 and older had a bachelor's degree, which was up from 11.3% in 1990. Hispanic enrollment in colleges and universities increased by 35% between 1990 and 1995, but despite this progress African-Americans, American Indians, and Hispanics remain underrepresented particularly in math, science, and engineering despite their capacity and their desire to master these subjects.

For example, while these groups collectively comprise 22% of the American population, they earned only 12% or 44,000 or more than 366,000 math, science, and engineering baccalaureate degrees awarded to United States citizens and permanent residence in 1993. Parity for these groups would have required them to earn 80,000 plus degrees, almost twice as many math, science, and engineering degrees as were actually awarded. The statistics abound and I'll not bore you with them, but particularly in math, science, and engineering, under-representation remains manifest with African-Americans receiving less than 1% of higher education-- of doctorate degrees in math, science, and engineering. And we've got to do something to reverse this tide.

These data suggest that in higher education as in other arenas, affirmative action is working, but there's still a lot left to be done. To close the gap, it is essential that goals and timetables be established maintained and enforced for including African-Americans and Hispanics and growth-oriented degree granting programs. It is essential too that financial assistance may be made available, including minority targeted scholarships, which despite some district court decisions remain the law of the land. And it is imperative that other forms of support systems be put in place to retain and assist students who are admitted under affirmative action programs.

Despite these statistics incomparable data on other areas in which affirmative action is being taken, we're hearing the same old bone that affirmative action is hurting society and its intended beneficiaries. Justice Thomas and Shelby Steele, other opponents of affirmative action, opined that affirmative action stamps minorities and women with badges of inferiority and creates a hostility and resentment that leads to further racial separation. Relative to the badges of inferiority argument as noted earlier, effective affirmative action programs do not allow for the selection of unqualified candidates. The programs allow for a reassessment of merit, so that white male status is not giving overwhelming favorable weight and diversity given no consideration.

It also requires employers and admissions directors to consider a wider range of measurements for likelihood of success than, for example, the test score. Thus anyone who is admitted or hired under an affirmative action program should be presumed to be qualified for the position and not inferior to any other meritorious candidate. And if such assumption is not made, the easiest way to dispel the notion of the lack of qualification is for the beneficiaries to Excel once accorded access.

The changing economy and the changing racial and ethnic makeup of the labor force dictate that in order for the United States to maintain a competitive advantage in the next century, governments, educational institutions and corporations must do all that they can to assure that underrepresented minorities get the skills and the know how to exceed. As President Clinton said from the lawn of the old statehouse in Little Rock, Arkansas on November 5, 1997, whether you belong to the party of Lincoln, the party of Jefferson, whether you're independent or unaffiliated, remember that most of all you belong to the community of America.

We're all in this together. We will rise or we will fall together. Living out these words is our greatest challenge and our greatest opportunity. This is our task, our charge to keep our calling to fulfill our rendezvous with destiny, to weave into a marvelous tapestry the many peoples, colors, and traditions called America. To do this, we must celebrate diversity while bringing people together.

As we all know, the task is not easy. But we should be better equipped for the current challenges to an open and pluralistic society. We should be better armed in the present war against affirmative action. For it is simply the same old bone.

As we rise up to leave this celebration of the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr, recall with me his stirring baritone voice on the eve before his death calling upon us to rise up. Rise up with a greater readiness. Stand with a greater determination. Move on in these powerful days, these days of challenge to make America a better nation. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

**CORINA
SETINA:**

Thank you, Attorney Baskerville. I will now continue with some announcements regarding several events which will be occurring this weekend. The Martin Luther King Jr. celebration committee will be sponsoring a youth conference on Saturday, February 14 with registration beginning at 9:30 AM at the MIT Little Kresge Auditorium. The committee will also be sponsoring a musical tribute to Dr. King on Saturday the 14th at 8 PM OM MIT Kresge Auditorium. Both are free and open to the public.

If you will now please turn to the back of your programs, you will find the words to *Lift Every Voice and Sing* by James Weldon Johnson. Please rise and join the MIT gospel choir in singing one verse of the song.

(SINGING) Sing every voice and sing till earth and heaven ring. Ring with the harmonies of liberty. Let our rejoicing rise high as the listening skies. Let it resound loud as a rolling sea.

Sing a song full of the faith that the darkness has taught us. Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us. Facing the rising sun of our new day begun, let us march on till victory is won.

[APPLAUSE]

Thank you, Aaron Winthers, and the MIT gospel choir for your beautiful music this morning. I would like to ask Reverend Jane Gould to offer the benediction as we close this morning's celebration. Reverend Gould?

**REVEREND
GOULD:**

Carrying within us the words and witness of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr, of Leslie Baskerville, Mishawn Donaldson, Cassandra Strudwick, Linda Jordan, Toby Winer, [INAUDIBLE], may we go forth from this place holding in our hearts and minds the call of the prophet Micah to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with our God. Amen.

[APPLAUSE]

**CORINA
SETINA:**

Thank you, Reverend Gould. I hope you've enjoyed this morning's celebration of the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. It has been a wonderful and inspiring event, and we look forward to seeing you all next year as we celebrate the 25th anniversary of this great event. Thank you and have a great day.