President Urges “Renewed Commitment to University”

The following are excerpts from the speech made by University President Ivory V. Nelson at the Founder’s Day and Alumni Awards Banquet on May 4, 2002 at the Marshall Center.

Today is a dual event for the University — it is a celebration of our founding and it’s a recognition of our alumni. We are now observing 148 years since John Miller Dickey obtained the Charter for Lincoln and 143 years of honoring the graduates of Lincoln.

Today, I tell you with all certainty that Lincoln’s days of greatest and glory lie not in the past, but in the future. Today we drink from a cup of gladness as we celebrate the achievements of alumni and supporters. However, accomplishment is a journey not a destination. This is true for us as individuals and it is true for Lincoln University as a whole.

Our agenda for the coming decade is simple — we must be committed to providing our students with excellent professors and the most stimulating of (See COMMITMENT, Page 2)

Adrienne G. Rhone ’76, chairwoman of Lincoln’s Board of Trustees, and Warren R. Colbert, Sr. ’68, who chairs the Board’s Planning and Development Committee, urge alumni and others to make their contributions to the University before the close of the fiscal year, June 30, 2002. See Page 2 for details.

Year-End Appeal

Producing Leaders to Shape a New Millennium...

Lincoln Presents 143rd Commencement; Awards Honorary Degrees to Four Distinguished Leaders

On a bright and sunny May 5th afternoon, 275 cheering graduating seniors and another 163 master’s degree recipients joined the ranks of Lincoln University’s 6,000 alumni.

Assembling for Commencement, President Nelson (center) greets the honorary degree recipients. They are (L-R): Roderick L. Ireland ’66, Associate Justice of the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court (Doctor of Laws); Dr. Na’im Akbar, a noted educator and psychologist (Doctor of Humane Letters); President Nelson; Herb J. Wesson Jr. ’99, Speaker of the California State Assembly, who delivered the Commencement address (Doctor of Laws); and Marita Rivero, who accepted the Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree for her deceased father, Manuel Rivero, a Lincoln Professor Emeritus.

Hail! Hail! Lincoln. In a stirring salute to the University, the Class of 2002 proudly sings their alma mater at commencement. Two hundred and seventy-five seniors received baccalaureate degrees and another 163 students were awarded master’s degrees at the May 5th ceremony.

(See DEGREES, Page 3)
President Urges “Renewed Commitment to University”

Continued from Page 1

intellectual opportunities in the best of facilities. Excellence flows from a commitment to doing things better. This is the heritage of Lincoln University.

Let every friend of Lincoln University whether alumnus, alumna, neighbor or government leader, mark this as a day of renewed commitment to this university.

Let every member of the administrative staff mark this as a day of renewed commitment to better serve our students.

Let every member of the faculty mark this day as a renewed commitment to creating intellectual excitement in the classroom.

Let every student mark this as a day of renewed commitment to the quest for excellence.

Let every trustee mark this as a day of renewed commitment to our most noble mission.

Let us all mark this as a day of renewed commitment to the tradition we have inherited. And let us begin today to create tomorrow.

Happy Birthday Lincoln University. Congratulations honorees. The future looks bright as we begin this new millennium. And just as our founders looked to the 20th century with anticipation, we too can look to the 21st century with optimism and pride as we raise the benchmark of Lincoln University.


Dear Fellow Lincoln Alumnus/Alumna:

Congratulations! You are a well versed, successful, Lincoln University Alumnus/Alumna. The University points, with great pride, to your victories. Similarly, we hope that you view the University as a point of inspiration when life’s challenges are before you. For 148 years, the Lincoln University has stood for perseverance and academic excellence in good and challenging times. As a result Lincoln Men and Women have, at our core, the knowledge of what it takes to excel. Your personal and professional successes are a heartwarming testimony to that fact.

Did you ever stop to think about how you got where you are today? The answer is multi-faceted. You worked very hard. Perhaps, you even had a few lucky breaks. Family, friends, people in your home town, and mentors supported you. You made it and thanked your supporters, a thousand times over.

Wait a minute. Lincoln University deserves some credit, as well. That’s the reason for this open letter to Lincoln Alumni. It’s time that we have an honest discussion about our responsibility to Alma Mater.

Now, everyone has a “Lincoln story.” Each of us can tell many stories about the faculty that motivated us or the event at Lincoln that proved to be pivotal in our lives. Similarly, each of us has a story about the challenges we had to overcome while at Lincoln. For the challenges or the personal disappointments inadvertently caused by the University, please accept our apology. When you stop to think about it, each “Lincoln story” was an important life lesson. Combined -- the good and the challenging -- it makes us who we are today.

Should we express our gratitude to Lincoln University in some tangible way? Why? Here are the answers.

First, yes, you should express your gratitude to Lincoln through a generous financial contribution. If you don’t, who will?

Second, Lincoln is in the midst of a resurgence. President, Dr. Ivory V. Nelson and the entire University faculty and staff are working together to put the University back on the map. The University is nationally ranked academically. Systems of fiscal and management accountability are in place. The physical plant infrastructure is being updated. A new, state of the art, residence facility is being planned. More than 50 Alumni have made multi-year “stretch” pledges of $10,000 - $120,000 to the school. Fundraising momentum is rising. The list of exciting things at Lincoln is exhaustive. Besides, your personal academic prestige is on the line.

Lincoln’s future will be even brighter than its glorious past, with your support. So, yes, it’s time to say “thanks!” to Lincoln for all that the University has meant in your life.

You have been bombarded with both broad and targeted fundraising appeals from Lincoln. The choices for earmarking gifts are endless. Choose one. Give to the Mary Dod Brown Chapel, give to student scholarships, or even to the general fund. But, just give.

Every one of our successful 6,000 Lincoln Alumni is needed -- and not just in your reunion year.

For new donors that respond to this appeal, the University is making a $1.00 down payment on your gift. To take advantage of this incentive gift, please complete the enclosed envelope and return it along with your own financial contribution. Whatever form of payment you have, Lincoln takes it!

Lincoln is a global treasure. Your success was enhanced by your having attended Lincoln University. For the two of us, Alma Mater has truly made the difference in our lives. Your passion for and financial support of Lincoln are needed now more than ever before. We look forward to hearing from you before June 30, 2002, which is the end of the University’s fiscal year.

Please help make the University as successful as you are.

“To whom much is given, much is expected.”

With Sincere Thanks,

Adrienne G. Rhone ’76, Chair, Lincoln University Board of Trustees
Warren R. Colbert, Sr. ’68, Chair, Planning & Development Committee, Lincoln University Board of Trustees
Lincoln’s 2002 Founder’s Day honorees proudly display their plaques received at the May 4th banquet. They are (L-R): Tehma H. Smith ’00, a systems engineer at Lockheed Martin, who has created a scholarship fund at Lincoln; Phyllis G. Woolley ’85, director of African-American marketing, Colgate-Palmolive, who has established an endowed fund at Lincoln; Dr. Alvin E. Amos, a Lincoln professor of music, and his wife, Carol, who established a scholarship award in music at the University. A fourth recipient, William B. Ingram ’61, vice president of public school relations for Sylvan Education Solution, was unable to attend the banquet.

The Alumni Association Distinguished Award was presented to Dr. Fred Johnson ’27, formerly executive secretary of the North Philadelphia Branch of the YMCA, posthumously. Dr. Johnson died March 30, 2002; he was 102 years old; Carla J. Maxwell Ray ’82, associate vice president, Office of Institutional Advancement, Morehouse School of Medicine; and Rev. Dr. James A. Scott ’52, minister emeritus, Bethany Baptist Church, Newark, N.J. A fourth recipient, Lewis T. Berry Jr. ’57, president of Cleres Shoes, Inc., was unable to attend the banquet.

Lincoln Awards Degrees  Continued from Page 1

Honorary degrees were awarded to four leaders who have distinguished themselves in their chosen professions.

Herb J. Wesson Jr., Speaker of the California State Assembly, who has achieved remarkable success with his unprecedented and meteoric rise in the political arena, received an honorary doctor of laws degree and delivered the Graduation Address. He earned his bachelor’s degree from Lincoln in 1999, nearly 30 years after family illness prevented him from finishing his senior year.

The other three recipients were: Dr. Na’im Akbar (honorary doctor of humane letters), a renowned educator, psychologist, and author; Roderick L. Ireland (honorary doctor of laws), a 1966 Lincoln graduate, and Associate Justice of the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court; and Manuel Rivero (honorary doctor of humane letters, posthumously), Lincoln University Professor Emeritus, and founder of Lincoln’s Department of Health, Recreation and Physical Education. His daughter, Marita Rivero, accepted his degree.
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