

My Fellow Spartans,

First of all congratulations to all members of our Spartan family on this occasion of the celebration of our 23rd Anniversary. A big, big thank you to all alumni, honorary members, family and friends who have supported the Association, and our alma mater over the 4 years – from those far thinking members who first conceived the Association, to those who have supported our Association through the years, and to all of you who are here today in attendance – thank you from the very bottom of our hearts.

Let us give a big hand of applause to President Mona Diggs, the officers, and members of the DC Metro Chapter for hosting a very successful and memorable 23rd Anniversary Convention. Thank you Mona for your leadership and foresight.

Four years ago you selected us to lead the Association and for that we say - Thank You. Today, our Association is stronger financially; chapters are renewing their commitments; membership has increased; registration has doubled; and the Capital Campaign has reached its highest level ever in the Association. We are leaving with our scholarship, operations and endowment accounts financially secured. For me personally – it is Mission Accomplished, which I could not have achieved without the strong, solid and consistent support I have received. B. W. Harris School still stands stronger in Liberia because of what we do here in the United States.

Our Scholarship program is one that catches the attention of our donors. We are grateful that we are able to pay 30 plus students scholarships worth over \$14,000 dollars. To our scholarship donors, we say thank you for making the difference in the lives of our students. A special thanks to Charles Hoffman who is one of the highest scholarship donor members.

We committed to reach \$50,000 in our Endowment funds by 2016; we take pride today to say we are only \$2,000 shy from the \$50,000 in 2015 – this means we will exceed \$50,000 by 2016. I want to say special thank You to our Lifetime donors. I look forward to more members becoming Lifetime to sustain the legacy of the Harris Administration. And I note that Lifetime means “for your lifetime” – so we look to continued support from the Lifetime members. I say special thank you to all those who became members of the Gold Club and Hall of Fame, donated to the Wall of Recognition and Spartan Pride, memorialized loved ones on the Wall of Memory and contributed to the Building Infrastructural Development Fund.

Darren Wilkins, Joanna Freeman-Richards, Meyartha Perry, Albertha Gillespie, Lafayette Willis, and Nee Allison, it was a 4 year journey, but not only a journey, but a very successful journey, the most successful ever in our Association. Staying focus on the objectives brought us this far. Georgina RoyAkins-Scott we appreciate the 2 years you gave this administration, your commitment to your Association is highly appreciated, which is manifested by becoming Lifetime this year. Comfort Brown – we appreciate you service to the National Association even as you serve as an active officer of your chapter – this is what we are talking about.

By multiple measures – raising funds, investments in the school, attendance at convention, all of which are objective measures by the numbers, our administration has been deemed to be the most successful administration in the history of the Association and for that I say thank you all for your service.

Henry Byrd-Phillips, Yuku Stewart, Mona Diggs, Richard Wright, Nadine Wilson, Louisa Merchant, M. Daniel Nelson and Ora Scott please come up. We want to say to you your officers and members of the various chapters, our Association is in your hands. There will be NO BW Harris alumni association without the chapters – without you the leaders and members of chapters. You are the strength, the rock and the future of our Association. Tonight, we say thank you, thank you and thank you for the 4 successful years, and ask you to lend the same high level support to the next administration.

Special thanks and appreciation to our outside donors, My dear friend Hon. Al Curtis and his foundation who have supported me over the years with contributions of over \$7,000.00 making him our highest donor over the last 4 years and for believing in the cause. Thanks to Dr. Qualls Stevens, who has made a long term commitment to this Association and has become the highest donor to the Association.

To the class leaders and members, thank you for continuing the closeness you brought with you from the doors of BW Harris School, thank you for continuing to support your Alma Mater

Tonight is also a special night for me and my classmates, the class of 1980 “Malamu” – we celebrated our 35<sup>th</sup> reunion on Thursday. We are proud to say that we did it not for ourselves but for an unfortunate child Liberia. Thursday night was an astounding one. We want to thank you all for the support. Congratulations again Malamu- I love you all!

Before I end, Madam incoming National Chair, Joanna Freeman Richards, you have my unwavering support. The challenge is ahead of you – take every challenge as a good challenge. Stay above the pettiness that leaders face – I brushed the small minds off my shoulder and that made the journey even smoother for me. The ones that for their own reasons decide they don't like you will turn their heads on your success – but keep on keeping on - do not focus on those that leave the Association – focus on those who stay - the same way they found an excuse to leave, they will find an excuse to come back. As I always say, real Spartans do not turn their back on the Association - never. Be prepared – for some if they disagree, then the decision is wrong. Stay focus and strong to be able to build on and surpass my successes as I built on and surpassed the successes of the Diggs' administration. Thank you for allowing me to chair the Scholarship and Academic Committee. Wait and you will see!

In closing let us remember that forward, forward march we go, to victory B. W. Harris School, thy praise we sing forever more.

Thank you, and may God bless B. W. Harris Episcopal School and the B. W. Harris Episcopal School Alumni Association-USA, Inc. (PAUSE)