Andrew Young headlines Meharry's 138th Convocation

by Cassie Ivagne

Civil rights pioneer Andrew J. Young delivered the keynote address at the 138th Convocation of Meharry Medical College on October 14. As part of the ceremony, held in the Compton-Nelson auditorium of the Stanley S. Kresge Learning Resource Center, Young was awarded an honorary degree by the college.

"Andrew Young is one of the finest public servants this country has ever known," said A. Cherrie Epps, president of Meharry Medical College. "We are honored to have him join us to formally launch our new school year and welcome students to this new academic year. His work, fighting for equality in the United States and across the world, has spanned decades and we know that his remarks will inspire our students to reach for the same monumental goals, particularly in alleviating health care disparities."

Young was the 14th and first African American U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations under President Jimmy Carter. He also served two terms as a U.S. Congressman from Georgia and eight years as mayor of Atlanta.

To close Convocation, Meharry leaders unveiled a portrait celebrating the presidency of Henry Wendell Foster, Jr. M.D., who has dedicated his career fighting for health care equality for disadvantaged populations and improving the quality of life for women and children.

Dr. Foster is Professor Emeritus of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology and former dean of the School of Medicine. He served as president of Meharry Medical College for the 1993-1994 academic year.

Following Convocation, Meharry marked the dedication and reopening of Hadca Lyttle Hall which once served as home to Meharry's School of Nursing. One of the oldest buildings on Meharry's campus, Lyttle Hall was built in 1933. The National Park Service of the United States Department of the Interior listed it on the National Register of Historic Places in 1998. The building, which now houses office space, has been renovated with funds from the National Park Service of the U.S. Department of the Interior and President Barack H. Obama's American Recovery and Reinvestment Act stimulus grant for Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

A ribbon cutting ceremony and open house will begin approximately at 1:30 p.m.

"Meharry is an institution growing to better serve the city of Nashville and communities across our nation," said Dr. Epps. "Our students, faculty and alumni share a dedication to serving and treating those whom no one else will. Convocation is a time for us to recognize their dedication and accomplishments and demonstrate our appreciation for their service to their communities."

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