Annual Convocation Held at Meharry Medical College

NASHVILLE, TN — Meharry Medical College held its 138th Annual Convocation Monday, October 14, 2013, with civil rights luminary, Ambassador Andrew J. Young as the keynote speaker and recipient of an honorary doctorate degree.

“Andrew Young is one of the finest public servants this country has ever known,” said Dr. A. Cherrie Epps, President and CEO 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.”

Under President Jimmy Carter, Young became the 14th, and the first African-American, U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations. He also served two terms as a U.S. Congressman from Georgia and eight years as mayor of Atlanta. Known for his work with the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and his relationship with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Young was arrested on two different occasions for his involvement in non-violent protests and played a major role in the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and in the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Young reminded Meharry students...
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of their "call" to the medical profession and how they may possibly bring about change. "You're in one of the most exciting professions on the face of the planet," Young said when speaking on the vocation of health care. He told students that "God has blessed you to be born at such a time as this." The son and brother of dentists, Young told Meharry's dental students that Congress should have addressed dental issues in the Affordable Care Act. "But it's far too late," he said. "The fun hasn't started yet. Nobody ever thought that President Obama could get that [Affordable Care Act] passed and then when he got it passed, they never thought that he could get re-elected and he's done that. And, they can't figure what to do next."

The Convocation ceremonies also recognized the lifetime accomplishments of five prominent leaders whose public service and other work have helped promote quality health care especially for the under-served:

Ruufen C. Warren, D.D.S., M.S.P.H., Dean and Professor School of Dentistry
William B. Butler, D.D.S., M.S., T.A.C.C., former Dean of the Meharry School of Dentistry

Fr. Chresty M. Farmer-Olson, D.D.S., M.S.P.H., Dean and Professor School of Dentistry and William B. Butler, D.D.S., M.S., T.A.C.C., former Dean of the Meharry School of Dentistry

Dorothy Burten Berry

Dorothy Burten Berry, the first African-American female to hold the office of Assistant Commissioner of the Department of Personnel, Deputy Commissioner and Commissioner of the Department of Personnel in the state of Tennessee, was awarded the Presidential Distinguished Service Medal.

Arkana Chilombori, M.D., '86 FAAFP, President and CEO of Bell Family Medical Centers and Chair of both the African Union African Diaspora Health Initiative and African Union Diaspora Africa Forum Americas, received the Axel C. Hansen, M.D. '44 Distinguished Physician Award.

William B. Butler, D.D.S., M.S.,

Byron Ford, Ph.D., '95, Professor in the Department of Neurobiology and the Director of the Neuroprotection, Neurorepair and Stroke Program at the Morehouse School of Medicine, received the Harold D. Wan, Ph.D. Distinguished Biomedical Scientist Award.

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"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 who are one of the closest. Convocation is a time for us to recognize their dedication and accomplishments and demonstrate our appreciation for their service to their communities."