

Dr. Valerie Montgomery Rice Investiture Address:

I am humbled
by the trust and confidence
of the Morehouse School of Medicine Board of Trustees
for this honor.

Thank you.

I appreciate the opportunity today
to stand under the shade of a tree
that I did not plant.
This honored and sacred ground
was nurtured and cultivated by many who came before me.
Those like former Morehouse School of Medicine presidents
Louis W. Sullivan,
James A. Goodman,
James Gavin III,
David Satcher
and John Maupin
who nourished this medical meadowland.

I am grateful for their contributions
to the School of Medicine
and their legacy of fervent leadership.

To my teachers,
Ms. Neubold,
Faircloth,

Ella Mae Cater

and Mr. Charles Cook,

just to name a few

who brought science alive in the classroom and taught me to love the role it could play in my life.

Jayne and Melvin III;
and yes happy birthday, Melvin III,
thank you for sharing your birthday today with me.

I would like to take a moment and ask them all to please stand.

To my sorors of
Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Incorporated,
my Link Sisters,
and my dear friends
who have supported me through tears,
love
and laughter,
I say thank you
for adding to the richness of my life.

Thank you to the platform guests
who have impacted my life
in so many ways,
shepherding me toward this day.

I want to extend a special thank you
to Dr. Robert Franklin for presiding
over this investiture ceremony.
Robert and Cheryl Franklin
have been friends of Melvin and me
since our early days at Harvard Medical School.
We have shared so many memories together:
the births of our children;
the christening of Jayne at Danforth Chapel; and many vacations
that we now get to take with each other,

Today we are gathered in the Chapel
that bears the name of a man

on which Morehouse School of Medicine was built.

Today

our charge is to become a leader

in closing the health

this country will face a serious shortage
of both primary care
and other medical specialists
to care for an aging and growing population.

This year

we enrolled our largest class of 78 students, and we will focus on expanding to 100 medical
students
with a 20% increase in our biomedical and public health students by 2017.

Continuing to increase

the number of mission-conscious health care professionals
will require enhanced recruiting efforts
and innovative medical education programs. It will include training
compassionate professionals
who are committed
to the holistic treatment of patients
and not just their medical condition.

Our recruiting efforts

must include cognitive diversity
in the selection of those

in underserved communities,

enforcement
and evaluation.

s has a profound effect on every aspect of her or his

life,

yet nearly 1 in 4 Americans
do not have a primary care provider
and people without medical insurance
are more likely to skip routine medical care that increases their risk
for more serious health conditions.

We can thank the Obama Administration
for the Affordable Care Act
that has improved access to quality care and makes health care coverage possible for many
Americans
in order to reduce disparities in health care.

The president has proposed
\$14.6 billion for health care training
in his 2015 budget plan.
It includes more than \$5 billion
over 10 years
to train 13,000 doctors to serve in underserved areas.

His budget also proposed
nearly \$4 billion
over six years
for medical students to receive scholarships and loan repayment assistance
in return for serving in communities
with high medical needs.

In addition,

President Obama is expected to seek more than \$5 billion in increased payments to providers who serve Medicaid patients.

Increasing access to routine health services and health insurance are vital steps in improving the health of all Americans and specifically minority communities.

We understand that health status and health behaviors are determined by personal, institutional, environmental, and policy influences.

Educational and community-based programs over the next decade will continue to contribute to improving health outcomes in the United States.

We at Morehouse School of Medicine recognized years ago that education and community-based programs must reach out to people outside of traditional health care facilities.

That is why we have trained over 75 community-based physicians to participate in clinical research, and why we have one of the first mobile research vans that actually goes *into* the community.

Our community engagement must be broad, comprehensive and substantive like the Community Voices under our Satcher Health Leadership Institute that addresses Prison Health and Reentry Support Programs, Obesity and Diabetes Prevention Programs,

with humility.

The character of a person
is tested when they find themselves vulnerable to a system
or a person
who can determine a particular outcome
in their life.

The humility in which a physician engages with patients
can either rob them of their dignity
or elevate their spirit of hope.

We also value our relationships
with federal agencies
like our friends and colleagues
at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention,
the National Institutes of Health,

working in a paper factory;
and siblings all less than three years apart. But the Georgia public school system was my
lifeline.

I believe it can be that same lifeline
for many other Georgia children
who have a curiosity for knowledge.

Georgia public school systems
to assist in advancing STEAM:
science, technology, engineering,
arts, and math.

We want to partner with companies
like Georgia Power
and its workforce development programs. Creating the next generation of health care
professionals
begins with stimulating a passion
for learning
and a hunger for discovery
in young children.

Some of these kids will become technicians; some will become nurses;
some will become MSM students
and some will work at places

and invested together
in a shared vision.

For those students
who come to MSM for medical school
or residency training,
we will continue to show the return
on our state operating grant investment

by the 60 percent of our graduates
who practice in Georgia
and the more than 65 percent
who choose primary care
or core need specialties.

Thank you to the Governor
and the Georgia legislature
for supporting our mission
through a state operation grant
that allows us to educate and train professionals
who are standing and leading
in the elimination of health care disparities.

And last,

research

Great research

makes for a great medical institution. Research programs can provide the basis for innovative
models for teaching

and for community partnerships

that are essential to meeting

the health challenges of the 21st Century.

We all understand that

resources are limited

and medical schools have to focus their research

to closely align with their mission.

Well that is good news for us
because Morehouse School of Medicine has already seen success
in our nationally recognized
neuroscience and cardiovascular research programs.

In the last five years,
we have concentrated our research
in four key areas:

cancer,
cardiovascular disease,
neurological disease
and infectious diseases.

Why?

Because we know these diseases
have the highest rates of disparity
and by making an impact in those areas,
we can begin leveling health equity
across the board.

We have to continue
to produce groundbreaking research combined with innovative improvements
if we are to make that research translational.

from their peak

from 1950-2000.

7 of the 9 conditions required all three elements of the triangulation model research innovation,

public health / health promotion,

and medical care

to achieve that success.

The success stories

typically consisted of a research innovation

for example

the invention of the pap smear--diffused through the dual channels of public health

for example, promoting screenings for cervical cancer and then medical care

for example primary care delivering most Pap smears and specialty care doing the colpo/biopsy and Rx.

We noted that most often

the dual channels of public health and medical care worked in parallel,

but not in partnership,

A cautionary note unequal diffusion of new lifesaving treatments

often worsens the disparities between more advantaged and less advantaged segments of the population,

as in antiretroviral treatment of HIV, unless we pay attention to equity.

And this is why the world needs
Morehouse School of Medicine.

Benjamin Franklin said,

**until those who are unaffected
are as outraged as those who are**

It is not unconscionable to question costs and quality of care
in this new health care environment.

Cost is a reasonable qualifier.

But our moral challenge

is to be impassioned enough

to be outraged by the enormous equity gap between the haves
and the have-nots.

At Morehouse School of Medicine,
we have always known and believed
that addressing health needs

is a moral obligation

because health is essential

to our existence and to our quality of life. There is no moral ambiguity

in our responsibility to humanity.

My hope for health care equity in this country

will not be accomplished by my vision

and my will alone.

But this great and historic institution

can be the catalyst that activates

that vision and will.

Our greatest asset lies in the professionals we train

whose care and commitment

illuminate our highest calling.

Knowledge,

Wisdom,

Excellence

and Service

are the tenets that will propel us

from good to great.

However,

such as consistently sharing the stories of our success
and of challenges,
and inviting partners to join us.

We have to inform them
honestly and transparently
about our circumstances
and let them know when giving
can make the difference
between failure and success.

As you know,
I have been extremely vocal
about this inauguration focusing
on raising money for scholarships
to support our students
thereby decreasing the debt they incur
to attend Morehouse School of Medicine. On average,
our students come from families
with household incomes of \$45,000
when the average medical student
in this country comes from a family

whose household income is \$175,000.

So we asked hundreds of alumni and friends to join us

in raising \$1.5 million dollars

for the Presidential Scholarship Initiative. Today,

I am proud to announce

that you answered the call.

You stepped up

and we have raised a total of \$2.7 million

in gifts and pledges

to the Presidential Scholarship Initiative.

You made the difference!

You have my abiding
and enduring allegiance
that I am prepared for this
and will steer this ship
under my watch with grace.

We are partners in this exciting new venture,
and I am honored to be at the helm
as we journey together
in pursuit of excellence.

THANK YOU