

Howard raises money for media school

By La Risa Lynch
Special to Sentinel-Voice
CHICAGO (NNPA) — Howard University has embarked upon an aggressive fund-raising campaign to raise \$75 million to build a new home for the John H. Johnson School of Communications.

The storied journalism school is currently housed in a converted hospital built after the Civil War. University officials want a modern facility that will give students a competitive edge in today's changing media market. They say the current facility is not flexible enough to keep up with the department's changing technology needs.

The historically Black university recently launched the John H. Johnson Legacy campaign to secure funding for the new facility. University officials announced its efforts at the late *Ebony*/*Jet* publisher's Chicago headquarters during the largest gathering of minority journalists at the quadrennial Unity: Journalists of Color convention.

Linda Johnson Rice, Johnson Publication's president and CEO, was pleased that the university initiated the campaign in her father's name. Johnson, who founded *Ebony* magazine in 1945, died in 2005. The new facility, Rice noted, is an extension of her father's mission to foster Black entrepreneurship.

"The whole premise of our building is entrepreneurship combined with journalism..." said Rice, who hosted a media reception for the school's alumni during the convention that attracted 7,000 journalists nationwide.

"Those are the types of degrees they are going to have when they graduate from the John H. Johnson School," she added. "We need to get the building built so there is a great facility for these students to learn."

Although the building "is not as stellar as we would like it to be," the department has produced top journalism students, said Jannette L. Dates, Ph.D., the school's communication dean. But the Internet, Dates noted, has changed the industry.

Print and broadcast journalism were separate entities, but now there is a convergence among them. Today's journalist, she added, must have skills in each industry. And a building that centralizes all those genres gives



Photo special to the Sentinel-Voice by Ana Miyares
(L-R) Deirdre Connelly, president, Lilly USA; Jannette L. Dates, Ph.D., dean, the John H. Johnson School of Communications at Howard University; and Linda Johnson Rice, president and CEO, Johnson Publishing Company, enjoy kick-off reception at Johnson headquarters during Unity Convention in Chicago last week.

Howard's students a level playing field, Dates added.

"The building that we have right now is designed for a hospital (and) it has six separate wings," Dates explained. "All the departments are separated from each other. In an area where there is convergence of technology, for us to be separated as if radio/TV/film is different from journalism is not helpful."

The D.C.-based university wants to construct a \$50 million state-of-the-art five-story building. An additional \$25 million will be used to outfit the school with smart classrooms, digital labs, and production facilities.

Howard University kicks off \$75 million fund raiser for new School of Communications; Black Press to occupy wing in the building

Technology is key in equipping young journalists for tomorrow's job, said Barbara Bealor Hines, Ph.D., professor and director of the department's Graduate Studies.

"You can have all the talent in the world, but if you don't have the technology to make sure that students are competitive, you are not doing them a service with their education," she said.

The National Newspaper Publishers Association Foundation's Chair, Dorothy R. Leavell, was represented at the reception and is an integral part of the fundraising efforts. The NNPA Founda-

tion has agreed to raise funds to support an NNPA Wing in the new John H. Johnson School of Communications. This wing will represent the "Black Press of America" by providing an enlarged and expanded Converged Lab, now presently operating at the Communications School. The new wing, costing approximately \$3 million, will include NNPA executive offices, a reception area, and other multiple use rooms.

The department will reach out to university board members, corporate sponsors and alumni to raise funds. The school wants to raise \$10 million in initial monies by 2010. They have raised nearly \$4 million in pledges and actual money so far.

But Attorney Cornell L. Moore, who sits on the Board of Visitors of the Johnson School of Communications, admits the depressed economy may hinder fundraising efforts.

"The times we live in right now, [it] is extremely hard to raise money because everybody is short; everybody is looking for something and nobody has any money," Moore said.

But the school is banking on Johnson's legacy to draw big funders.

"I'm not a journalist," Moore said. "I'm just a poor country lawyer. But I recognize the need for good journalism to tell both sides of the story."

The School of Communications already has support from Johnson Publications, former basketball star Magic Johnson, Time Warner and the McCormick Tribune Foundation.

Eli Lilly and Co., which co-sponsored the reception, supports the endeavor. The pharmaceutical company also recognized the school's success.

Deirdre Connelly, President of Lilly USA, noted that *PR Week* ranked Howard among the top schools to recruit job candidates for the public relation industry. Also, the National Association of Black Journalists recognized the university as the number one journalism school.

"I have no doubts that the talent, hard work and perseverance will thrive at the John H. Johnson School of Communications, where teachers and mentors encourage success at the highest level," Connelly said.

Aisha Chaney, a 2004 graduate, owes her success to the school. Chaney is an associate producer of ESPN's Sports Center.

She credits one particular class for giving her the writing tools that landed her an internship with ESPN before being hired full-time.

"I would never have gotten to where I am now," she said. "I owe a lot to Howard."

Malveaux to begin as NNPA columnist

Special to Sentinel-Voice
WASHINGTON (NNPA) — Renowned economist, political commentator and Bennett College President Julianne Malveaux this week joins the ranks of noted columnists of the NNPA News Service, the Black Press of America.

"I am delighted to be part of a team that connects the African-American community and to bring my work in education and economics to the tableau," Malveaux said in a statement.

"We all know that education has the power to transform lives. As President of Bennett College for women, I am able to combine my public policy expertise with the hands on work of preparing young women to be twenty-first century global citizens and leaders. Contributing a column to the NNPA papers is an honor, a privilege and an opportunity to teach and to learn."

Malveaux has been described by author and lecturer Dr. Cornel West as "the most iconoclastic public intellectual in the country."

Her writings have also appeared in *USA Today*, *Black Issues in Higher Education*, *Ms. Magazine*, *Essence Magazine*, and the *Progressive*. She also published weekly columns for more than a decade (1990-2003) in the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Charlotte Observer*, the *New Orleans Tribune*, the *Detroit Free Press*, and the *San Francisco Examiner*. She is also well-known for her quick-witted style of social and political commentary on national network programs.

She joins an all-star line up of distinguished NNPA columnists with deep roots of service in the Black community. They include Dr. Ron Walters, University of Maryland political scientist, who is often called the most
(See Malveaux, Page 9)

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