

"Graduate Spotlight, At the 37th Commencement Ceremony Of Medgar Evers College, CUNY."

Medgar Evers College was founded as a result of collaborative efforts by community leaders, elected officials, the Chancellor, and the Board of Trustees of The City University of New York. The College, named for the late civil rights leader, Medgar Wiley Evers (1925–1963), was established in 1970 with a mandate to meet the educational and social needs of the Central Brooklyn community. Medgar Evers College is committed to the fulfillment of this mandate. Consequently, the College's mission is to develop and maintain high quality, professional, career-oriented undergraduate degree programs in the context of liberal education.

Medgar Evers College has a history of educational partnerships with Caribbean nations; articulation agreements exist with institutions such as the University of the West Indies, the University of Guyana and Dominica State College. These arrangements have fostered student and faculty exchanges as well as curriculum development initiatives. The relationship between the College and the Caribbean was recognized and reaffirmed last week during the visit of the leaders of the CARICOM states with a new agreement to expand and strengthen cooperative relationships with educational institutions in the Caribbean.

The future is bright for Medgar Evers College; graduates received degrees in an exciting array of disciplines and were awarded prestigious scholarships.

It is my sincere hope that other Colleges and Universities around the world will join the Medgar Evers College in establishing successful student and faculty exchange with other countries, while simultaneously allowing minorities and people from lower income families to further their education.

This Commencement ceremony offers us an occasion to thank the students and faculty of Medgar Evers College for their strength, their courage, and their invaluable contributions to U.S. and global communities. So, on this 37th Commencement ceremony, I proudly stand with Medgar Evers College to celebrate and appreciate the growth and change it continues to establish.

[From the CUNY Newswire, June 12, 2008]

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 37TH COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY OF MEDGAR EVERS COLLEGE; GOVERNOR PATERSON DELIVERS KEYNOTE

Medgar Evers College of The City University of New York (CUNY) celebrated its thirty-seventh Commencement ceremony in the College Amphitheater at 1650 Bedford Avenue in Brooklyn on Saturday, June 7 at 10:00 a.m. Themed It's all about M.E.—Aspiration, Devotion, & Culmination, the exercises commemorated the culmination of years of academic dedication by the Class of 2008.

Following the College's Annual Alumni Breakfast and traditional Presidential Reception for special invited guests, the occasion opened with a grand procession comprised of New York State Governor David A. Paterson, City University of New York Chancellor Matthew Goldstein, College President Edison O. Jackson, senior University and College officials, honor guards, flag bearers, faculty, and the 975 students of the graduating body.

Amongst those donning caps and gowns that day were notable graduates like business major Alan Newton, a 46-year-old Bronx native who served 22 years in prison before

DNA evidence secured his release. Newton plans on continuing his education in law school and later to work in a field that allows him to give back. "I want to carry the torch of social justice. A lot of people are voiceless and even if they have the power they don't know how to wield it," he said.

The graduates received words of congratulations and encouragement from dignitaries like Brooklyn Borough President Marty Markowitz and Congresswoman Yvette D. Clarke.

"In life, as you know, you can either wait for things to happen or make things happen. As a Medgar Evers graduate, I know you've got the style, pizzazz, moxy, and chutzpah. I know that you'll make things happen, said Markowitz. "You are the best of Brooklyn and the best of New York."

"You [graduates] are the inspiration and motivation for the work that I do," said Clarke. "You are part of a legacy of excellence. A legacy that reigns supreme and as long as you remember that, as long as you are committed to that, our future is secure."

In his keynote address, New York State's 55th, and its first African American, governor, David A. Paterson said, "To all of you graduates I wish for you all that you desire in your careers; but it is the responsibility of our government to make sure that you have equal opportunities." He went on to discuss his plans to help ensure such opportunities through the issuance of an "executive order about the procurement of minority and women-owned businesses, right here in the State of New York, for contracts, for investment banking, for savings and bonds and insurance" this week.

"As you go forward in your lives, don't forget where you came from," Paterson continued. "Don't forget Medgar Evers. Don't forget the younger people who will be coming to this school. Contribute to the school. Come back."

The future is bright for Medgar Evers College; graduates received associates and baccalaureate degrees in an exciting array of disciplines that day. Additionally, three scholarships, totaling twenty thousand dollars, were awarded through the National Grid Charles Evans Inniss and Dr. Betty Shabazz Awards.

The hopeful nature of the day was best expressed by College President Dr. Jackson, "Yours is an extremely fortunate generation. One that stands in the sunlight of a new tomorrow."

HONORING THE CITY OF LEON VALLEY'S ANNUAL FOURTH OF JULY CELEBRATION

HON. CHARLES A. GONZALEZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 26, 2008

Mr. GONZALEZ. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor and thank the city of Leon Valley as they prepare to host their annual Fourth of July parade and celebration. This marks the 14 consecutive year in which Leon Valley has celebrated our Nation's independence.

This historical significance of our independence is felt beyond our domestic borders as this holiday truly epitomizes the meaning of the word democracy. Centuries ago on this day, our Founding Fathers stood up for their cherished values and used them as a blueprint for the basis of our country's government. They believed in a citizen's right to freedom and equality, and they abandoned tyranny and

oppression along the way to forming a bold new government.

What started as a courageous experiment in democracy developed into a flourishing government that to this day symbolizes liberty and justice. Without their vision, our democracy would not be what it now is over 200 years later. Along the way, our country has continuously represented the principles on which it was founded to the rest of the world. It is a tremendous responsibility that we carry not only as a government but also as citizens, and it is one that we should all be honored to fulfill.

It is with great privilege that I commend the city of Leon Valley for recognizing these important principles of our democracy with their annual Independence Day celebration. The Leon Valley community should be proud of their efforts, both in the past and in the future, to honor our Nation's independence and the values this holiday represents.

INTRODUCTION OF THE SEGAL AMERICORPS EDUCATION AWARD TAX RELIEF ACT OF 2008

HON. JOHN LEWIS

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 26, 2008

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Madam Speaker, today I am introducing legislation that will help people who have looked around their community and seen a great need. They have answered a call to national service. They are AmeriCorps volunteers.

Segal AmeriCorps Education Awards are offered to volunteers after they complete their service so they can pay for an education. The award is \$4,725 for a year of full-time service. It is prorated for part-time. Unfortunately it is taxed as regular income. This legislation makes clear that the Segal AmeriCorps Education Awards are not income and should not be subject to income taxes. The AmeriCorps Education Award should be a source of inspiration to serve not a source of fear on tax day.

People trying to pay for college cannot afford to be hit by extra taxes on this education benefit, not while they are still in school, and not when they are struggling to make ends meet through working their first job. People cannot afford an unjust tax bill at the same time their student loans are coming due. People cannot afford to receive less financial aid because this award is counted as income and makes student loan applicants appear to have more ability to afford college than they actually do.

Now is the time to believe in people again. Now is the time to believe in the power of change. We must find every way to reinforce just how important it is that the American people engage in volunteer service to their country. We must make the future a better future. AmeriCorps volunteers are out there every day, leading the way, getting in the way and making good change. This bill invests in the power of change.