

or whatever to get the ball to him immediately. You want to reward the bigs for running hard." With four or five defensive players back, the choice will be a secondary break—an offensive structure that enables an attack. Harvard, which likes up-

tempo play, always strives to move the ball quickly up the court: "less dribbling, more passes" is the mantra.

Although the Crimson has in reserve a dozen set offensive plays it can run, about three-quarters of the time the point guard

improvises an attack in response to what the defense is doing. "We have some very talented players on our team," says Curry. "So our coach gives us a lot of freedom. He trusts us to make great plays."

~CRAIG LAMBERT

ALUMNI

Morehouse Man, Redux

John S. Wilson Jr. takes a chance to realize his calling.

TO START the new academic year off right, Morehouse College psychology professor Bryant Marks offered students "some clarity" during Crown Forum, a weekly, all-campus assembly. "Hard work is sitting in an air-conditioned room pressing buttons on a computer. 'Oh, it's so hard. My eyes hurt. I'm tired,'" said Marks, in a friendly mimicking tone. "Hardship?" He paused, then flashed up on the auditorium's screen a black and white photo of civil-rights protesters. "Can you imagine water being sprayed on your arm so hard it tears the flesh off, just 'cause you want the right to vote—the right to be fully human, not three-fifths of a man?....Your education is beginning. Dig deeper. Do your work. Find out who you are."

In the audience of nearly 2,000 young black men was their new president, John Silvanus Wilson Jr., M.T.S. '81, Ed.M. '82, Ed.D. '85. He had heard this same message—cultivate intellect, character, and identity—as a Morehouse undergraduate in the late 1970s, and embraces it now in returning to revitalize the ailing Atlanta institution. "We need people who aspire to become not just a smart man, but a 'Morehouse man.' And that's something of a higher order," says Wilson in a conversation in his office, shortly after the forum. "Morehouse fosters an important obligation in life to do well *and* do good," he adds. "It's about finding a calling."

Morehouse was founded in a church basement in 1867 to prepare black men for ministry and teaching when white institutions would not. It has evolved into a four-year liberal-arts college with notable busi-

ness and political science programs, but its curricular blend still carries an overt Judeo-Christian ethos, and a rigorous exploration of race relations. Martin Luther King Jr., Maynard Jackson, Donn Clendenon, Spike Lee, and political analyst Jamal Simmons, M.P.P. '98, are alumni, along with generations of other influential black leaders, such as Wilson, who recently spent nearly four years as executive director of the White House Initiative on Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs).

At Morehouse—then and now a flagship among HBCUs—he majored in business, minored in religion and philosophy, and enjoyed the political culture. Wilson recalls working on the push to name a national holiday for King and winning honorable mention for his submission to a campus essay contest on the best way for black Americans to contribute to the revival of Africa. "We were still wearing dashikis my freshman year," he says. "There was cause for protest, a counterculture. But," he adds, "things were already shifting. We thought that if we got enough knowledge and credentials we could make progress by working in the system and, at the same time, being a counterpoint to it."

Today, he acknowledges, "the justice infrastructure for righting wrongs, to the extent that it is still there" through organizations like the NAACP and the National Urban League, "has lost its magnetism" for many college students. "But to suggest we are in a postracial culture, to me, would have to mean that most of that inequality and inequity are no longer significantly color-coded," he says. "That's not the case. Period."

The Morehouse motto, *Et facta est lux* ("And then there was light"), promotes the power of enlightenment—an internal process of growth that "merges learning with the heart and the head"—he says, in fighting the primordial battle "of dark versus light, good versus evil" set up in Genesis and portrayed in most world religions. "And then," he adds, "the question always is: Who is going to win?"

EDUCATION and religion are bound to Wilson's identity. Growing up in Philadelphia, where his father and grandfather were ministers, and his mother taught third grade, he reports, "The signal I got was: you must be a force for good." Morehouse catalyzed his move away from Jesus as the passive standard-bearer of personal conduct, toward "a more empowering, active, and demanding Jesus," he explains. And with that came the wider social obligations of Christianity.

At Harvard Divinity School, he studied the mysticism of theologian and educator Howard Thurman, a pioneering proponent of nonviolent resistance. (His ashes are buried on campus beneath a commemorative obelisk near a looming statue of his spiritual protégé, Martin Luther King Jr.) Weighing a future in "the black church or the black college," says Wilson, "I got my calling to be in education." He completed his last graduate degrees in four years, under the guidance of then-professor of education and urban studies Charles V. Willie, also a Morehouse alumnus. The men are still in touch. "He cares about the people around him," says Willie, "and is a gentleman who's not always looking for his own next victory." The next 16 years

Wilson spent in fundraising at MIT, where he helped manage two capital campaigns, ultimately serving as director of foundation relations.

In 2001, he moved to strategic planning at George Washington University, and became executive dean of its Virginia campus. While there, he also researched the future of development at black and non-black colleges, subjects he taught as an associate professor of higher education. That led to the 2009 White House appointment, where he met with leaders of the nation's 104 HBCUs—and delved into the problems they face in finding and enrolling qualified students, competing with now-integrated public universities, and losing students to private institutions with tempting offers of financial aid. Saint Paul's College in Virginia, founded by a former slave in 1888, closed this summer. Others, such as Howard, Hampton, and Clark Atlanta University have reported financial shortfalls. Underlying all of this, Wilson adds, "is the need to build endowments; less than \$200 million makes you, by definition, unhealthy."

Part of the problem is also self-selection. "The vast majority of African-American students in higher education are choosing nonblack colleges," Wilson says. Today, HBCUs educate only about 10 percent of that population; and of those who do enroll, he adds, 75 percent are women, "so we are in a particular crisis in educating African-American males." In his White House role, Wilson also worked closely with federal agencies and philanthropic groups trying to bolster HBCUs and raise college-graduation rates nationwide. "He knows fundraising and in Washington he learned all about the political aspects of his work," says Willie. "I can't think of anyone more ready" to meet the challenges at Morehouse.

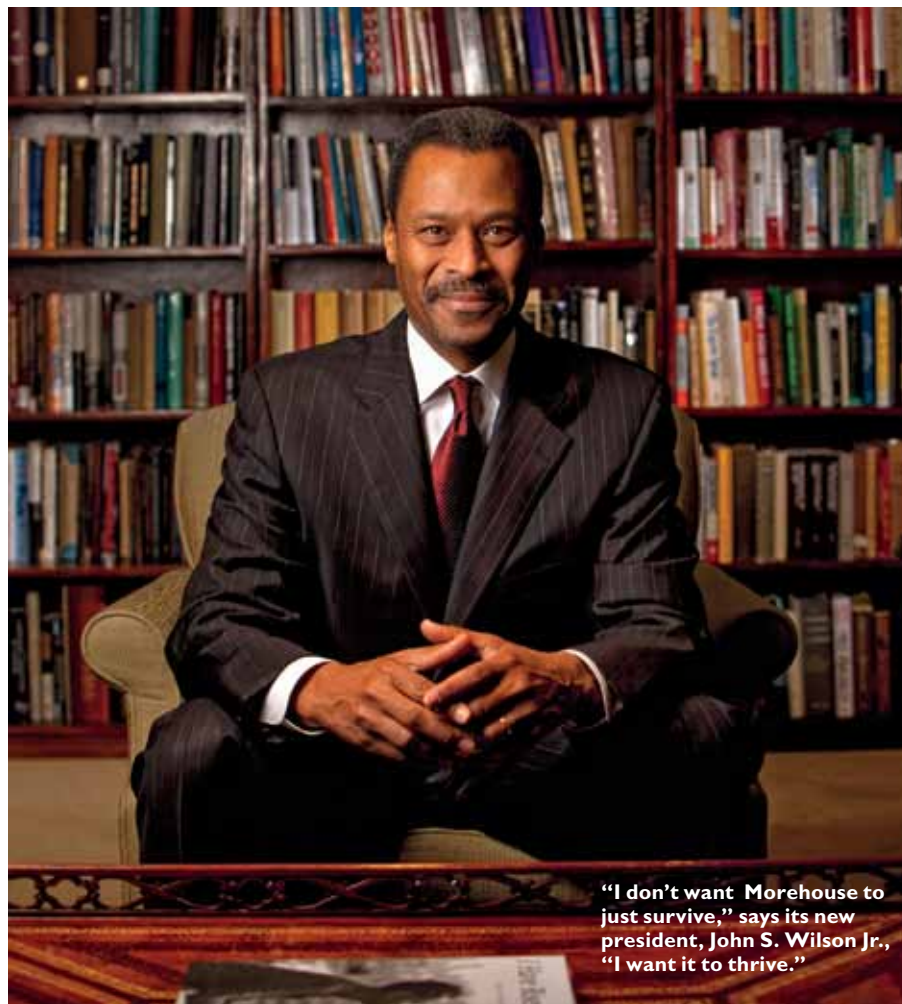
Since taking office in January, Wilson has shown himself to be a straight-talking leader with a grand plan: to rebuild and promote the school's "capital and character preeminence," pioneer the "rebranding of the African-American male," and produce a new generation of leaders who are "competitive in the existing world, who can imagine a new one, and are driven to do both."

BUT CAN HE—or anyone—effect it? Morehouse has seen significant money troubles, along with slippage in academic standards

and enrollment (a loss of 500 students between 2009 and 2013). Several violent incidents have also jarred the campus community. The day he arrived, there had been an armed robbery in a dorm overnight, and that Friday a student was shot (after a pickup basketball game in the gym) by a peer at neighboring Clark Atlanta. At a town meeting with students, Wilson stood on stage flanked by local officials and Atlanta and campus police officers and declared "zero

officers, provost—were vacant. Many faculty members had never seen a budget for the school until he presented one in April, announcing: "This is a period of repair."

For this year, he cut \$5 million in mostly administrative costs, including 75 jobs, and consolidated two dorms. Future fiscal health, however, depends on restructuring the school's financial model by reversing three main threats: over-dependence on tuition revenue (about 50 percent of More-



tolerance for violence. Not on my campus. Not on my watch." The same day, students held a peace vigil with Clark Atlanta and the all-female, predominantly black Spelman College next door. (Morehouse shares cross-registration, a library, and social activities with both under the Atlanta University Center Consortium.)

Then he dug into the Morehouse financial records, at least those he could locate, quickly realizing that "nobody even knew the depth of the hole we were in." Key posts—chief financial and information of-

house's budget, with 94 percent of students on aid; the annual term bill ranges from \$25,879 to \$41,443); an inadequate endowment (\$139.8 million); and a relatively weak ability to compete for "the best and the brightest" against wealthier private institutions. "The \$6.5 billion that Harvard is now setting out to raise is nearly five times the total endowments of all 104 HBCUs combined," he notes. Other pressing priorities are raising academic standards and improving the campus infrastructure which, he says, "is basically the same

buildings and landscape that I left in 1979.”

Wilson’s new provost and senior vice president for academic affairs, Garikai Campbell—formerly a math professor and academic strategist at Swarthmore—arrived in August with mandates to implement pedagogical innovations, upgrade teaching technology, explore a probable foray into online courses, and replenish the faculty—a third of whom are about to retire. “For many professors here, Morehouse is a labor of love,” Wilson explains. “And it is a very personal place. So they have been working with total compensation packages that are smaller than would be required to hire top young faculty today.”

IF THIS SOUNDS like a total makeover, it is. With his background in higher-education fundraising and at the White House (President Barack Obama was Morehouse’s commencement speaker in May), Wilson is prepared to pursue the philanthropic support the school urgently requires. A \$3-million gift from the Ray Charles Foundation received in February endows the school’s music-education building. Coca-Cola, based in Atlanta, committed \$1.25 million for scholarships and “institutional advancement infrastructure” in August. The philanthropist and farmer Howard Buffet (Warren Buffet’s son), gave another \$1 million in September for the Andrew Young Center for Global Leadership, which Wilson intends to develop as “a portal for advancing international exchanges, curriculum, and internships with an emphasis on Africa.” The school’s 16,000 alumni should also expect to do more, according to Wilson, who is identifying “specific investment targets.”

Among them could be the school’s rising debate team. At a weekend competition with rival Howard University in September, Morehouse lost in football but won in debate. Wilson was thrilled. “We need to put that brain power on display on the national and world stage,” he says during a meeting afterward with debate coach Kenneth A. Newby, an attorney, assistant professor, and alumnus who has made the award-winning speech and debate program a personal project. He drives debaters to many tournaments, often pays their costs, and was looking to fund a student trip to train and compete in India—all in an effort to make Morehouse a center for collegiate debate culture. After

Newby leaves, Wilson asserts, “There’s no reason a professor should be driving kids by himself in a van for 12 hours to get to a tournament. That’s why I asked him for a blue-sky proposal: ‘What would it take to get this team prepared and competing on the world stage?’ I learned that at MIT and Harvard: when you want to do something, you do it right, and you do it all the way.”

There, he also saw how the top, richer private colleges can siphon off minority students. The affluent minorities, he says, do not necessarily get that “free ride.” Instead, “It’s the African-American males who are from poorer families with attrac-

“...this sea of college students, all men, all young, all black—and all defying the stereotypes....”

tive academic profiles that get bought by the Ivys and MIT and Stanford because we cannot compete well for those kids.” The students, he reports, are often drawn more by the brand names than the tuition discounts, “but I don’t blame them.” He and his wife, Carol Espy-Wilson—an electrical-engineering professor at the University of Maryland, College Park, and founder and CEO of a start-up company, OmniSpeech—have three children. Twin daughters Ashia and Ayana graduated from Harvard and Stanford, respectively, in 2011. Son Jay, who was admitted to Morehouse and also plans to spend a semester or a year there, just began freshman year at Princeton. All represent, perhaps, close-to-home examples of HBCUs’ admissions dilemma.

Of his own Harvard experience, Wilson says the resources “do matter. They make your life easier; I could study and think freer from monetary distractions.” That said, what he got was more of “an institutional education than a personal one,” he adds. “I felt addressed, but not really engaged. I concluded that Harvard needed more of what Morehouse has—character preeminence—and that Morehouse needed more of what Harvard had—capital preeminence. I want to use my presidency to combine the two.”

MOREHOUSE sophomore James Parker, from Virginia, is the campus-news editor for the student newspaper, *The Maroon Tiger*. He says the lack of capital does affect morale. Friends, teammates, and roommates who cannot keep up with school payments have to leave campus. The campus amenities are not as nice as those at fancier schools he has visited. Despite occasional “dorm envy,” however, Parker says, “Morehouse is working well for me. The only way I can explain why I am here is fate.”

He studies philosophy, religion, and political science, and enjoys discussions with friends, among whom race and identity—and the writings of black leaders such as Marcus Garvey, W.E.B. Du Bois, A.B. 1890, Ph.D. ’95, and Malcolm X—prompt ever-evolving debates. “We’re open about all of these things,” he says. “The people here, and even...alumni at homecoming, I really feel are all my brothers.” He responds to Morehouse’s historic legacy and finds it exciting to have seen the actual copy of *Invisible Man*, by Ralph Ellison, once owned by Martin Luther King Jr. (among more than 10,000 of King’s notes, papers, unpublished sermons, and books held by Morehouse). Outside of academics, Parker appreciates the emphasis on dignity and self-respect. The “no-sag” rule, for example, requires “never letting your own or a brother’s pants fall too low.” And he now drinks water instead of juice or soda, he reports, “because I learned in Crown Forum about the health problems that particularly affect me as a black man.”

Identity questions led senior Anthony Simonton, president of the student government and an aspiring lawyer, to choose Morehouse, “specifically what W.E.B. Du Bois called a feeling of ‘twoness,’ reconciling what it means to be black in America,” he adds. He grew up in a middle-class family with college-educated parents, and was a top student at his Jesuit high school outside Indianapolis. A campus visit clinched it. “When classes let out, I just saw this sea of college students, all men, all young, all black—and all defying the stereotypes... that black men are ignorant, maybe don’t even graduate from high school, and all act and dress a certain way,” he recalls. “I wanted to be with people who looked like me, who were serious about their studies, and looking to make a difference in the world.”

Wilson depends on these “baby and

wannabe eagles”—Parker, Simonton, and professors with vision, like Newby—to build the new culture. Critical, too, is this admissions season. He and his new associate vice president for enrollment management, Terrance Dixon (an alumnus who was at the College Board), are taking a data-driven approach to targeting and fighting for students on new frontiers. That means strengthening elementary- and middle-school pipelines, Dixon says, drawing even more from the South and Southwest (where the overall birthrate is higher), and increasing international outreach, particularly in southern Africa and Brazil. Morehouse has hired its first Spanish-speaking recruiter, and is contacting American Latinos, who comprise less than 10 percent of the student body but have shown increasing interest in the school.

Morehouse “has never been segregated,” Wilson notes. Typically, there have always been a few white students (and more white faculty members) in the mix. Joshua Packwood, class of 2008, even became the school’s first white valedictorian. “And he is a Morehouse man,” Wilson adds. “That’s a powerful statement that the concepts we teach here are universal.”

SUCH AS INTEGRITY. In a rousing speech at the same “hard work versus hardship” Crown Forum run by professor Bryant Marks, senior Winford Kenny Rice Jr., a religion major headed for a career in the pulpit, welcomed his brothers to shut down their electronics and engage with “the cinema of the cerebral cortex.” “Integrity” derives from the Latin *integer*, meaning whole or complete, he preached: There’s nothing worse than “a public success and a private mess.... Integrity is when the life you are living on the outside matches who you are on the inside: when there’s no one there to blame you or praise you—and you still do the right thing.” His schoolmates gave him a standing ovation.

The “crown” refers to a quote from Howard Thurman: “Over the heads of her students, Morehouse holds a crown that she challenges them to grow tall enough to wear.” The theologian and Morehouse classmate and friend of Martin Luther King Jr.’s father had for years watched, nurtured, and agitated for Morehouse to become better. As has Wilson. His pending February 14 inauguration was purposely coupled with a White House-organized summit on the future of black

males. “We need to re-brand African-American men in this country,” Wilson asserts. “Too many are dropping out of high school, are involved with the criminal-justice system, or are otherwise mar-

ginal. Someone needs to stand up and say, ‘Enough!’ There are exceptions to these numbers and the biggest one,” he adds, “is something called the Morehouse man.”

~NELL PORTER BROWN

HAA Award Recipients

THE HARVARD Alumni Association (HAA) Awards, which recognize outstanding service to the University through alumni activities, were to be conferred on six winners during the HAA board of directors’ meeting in October.

Stephen W. Baird ’74, of Chicago, is director and vice president of the Harvard Club of Chicago, and last year received the College admissions office’s Hiram S. Hunn Memorial Award for schools and scholarships work. He has also been an HAA elected director and regional director for the Western Great Lakes.



Stephen Baird

Mary McGrath Carty ’74, of Belmont, Massachusetts, is president of the Alumnae and Friends of Radcliffe College Shared Interest Group (SIG), and was executive director of the Radcliffe College Alumnae Association (RCAA) from 1993 to 2000. During her tenure, the RCAA and the HAA strengthened their partnership, and in 2006 she became an HAA elected director. Since 1979, she has served on her class-reunion planning committee.



Mary McGrath Carty

Sylvia Chase Gerson, Ph.D. ’75, of Fort Meyers, Florida, has interviewed College applicants since 1978 and chaired the local schools and scholarships committee for three decades; she received the Hunn Memorial Award in 2006. She has also been active in Florida clubs, as president of the Harvard Club of Lee County and a board member of the Harvard Club of Naples. A former HAA elected director and a regional director for Western Florida, she now sits on the HAA’s clubs and SIGs committee.



Sylvia Chase Gerson

Carl J. Martignetti ’81, M.B.A. ’85, of

Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts, has played many roles at Harvard, and was most recently named co-chair of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences’s capital campaign. Also a member of the University Campaign Executive Committee, he is a former co-chair of the Harvard College Fund (he still sits on its executive committee), and has served on the Committee on University Resources since the mid 1990s. He has also helped lead and organize both his College and Business School class-reunion gifts for many years.



Carl Martignetti

Peter D. Weldon ’59, of Bangkok, joined the Harvard Club of the Philippines in 1961 and has since been a member of the clubs in Singapore, Indonesia, Hong Kong, and Thailand. His work led to innovations in communication and outreach, especially in Hong Kong. As HAA director of clubs and SIGs of Asia, he has visited each club and mentored their leaders. He is also a 2007 recipient of the HAA Clubs and SIGs Committee Award.



Peter Weldon

George H. Yeadon III ’75, of Pittsford, New York, has been an alumni interviewer and active in Harvard clubs since graduation. He is a former vice president and president of the Harvard-Radcliffe Club of Rochester, and is the current secretary. He has also been HAA director of clubs and SIGs since 2011, and has been closely involved with the Association of African American Harvard Alumni (AAAHA) since its formation and merger with the Harvard Black Alumni Society (HBAS). An organizer and participant in the 2003, 2006, and 2009 Black Alumni Weekend events, Yeadon also rallied minority members of his class to return for their twenty-fifth reunion.



George Yeadon