

JULY 2010



LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



Dear Friends of the Maroon and Gold:

This story begins with the classic, “It was a blustery and chilly day, with the skies threatening to open and unleash a torrent.” While that description is true, it was also a wonderful and momentous day in the lives of the 275 women and men, and the many families and friends who joined us, at the 2010 Commencement ceremony for Central State University.

Though early comments were about the weather, that memory, like so many in our everyday lives, will quickly fade. The lasting memories are those we enjoy for a lifetime: the wonderful academic and social experiences that forever changed our lives and which endure through generations.

There are two times I am most moved in my role in the presidency of Central State. One is during Commencement, when I witness the absolute sense of accomplishment on the faces of our graduates. The second is when I see alumni who have graduated during my tenure, back on campus or elsewhere with their spouses and young families. One of the most indelible such experiences occurred several years ago in a dimly lit mall parking lot in Northern Virginia.

As I walked toward my car, I noticed a large SUV drive by me and then circle around a couple of rows of cars and return to my location. It suddenly stopped, the tinted windows went down, and the driver called, “President Garland, we thought that was you.” Then this happy young couple jumped out of the vehicle, embraced me and showed me their two beautiful children sitting in the back seat, one an infant, the other a toddler. The couple told me they were proud CSU alumni who recalled the day I handed them their degrees. Like me, and tens of thousands of other Central State graduates, they attribute much of their success and happiness to the education they received at our great alma mater.

I tell you this story and write you this letter to remind you — alumni, friends, and supporters alike — that this is a university unlike any other. We truly transform the lives of our students and, in turn, they transform the communities they call home. Our students are, in the words of my friend and mentor John T. Casteen, III, endowments for the future. Just as you have endowed your families, your communities and our society with your knowledge, skills, and leadership, so too will our students today enrich the future with the fruits of their Central State University education.

I ask that you continue to support Central State and hold it dear. Our future is bright but will be tempered by the economic and political uncertainties ahead. This much is certain, however: We will continue to educate our students in an environment dedicated to our four core values of honesty, hard work, caring, and excellence. Our students will be well prepared to meet the workforce challenges of a global environment. And, finally, Central State University will continue to develop young people who leave here prepared to lead, serve, and change the world.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John W. Garland".

John W. Garland
President