Opening Ceremonies Speech for Black History Month
February 2, 1996 Charles Sydnor

Good Afternoon everyone, I do hope you are enjoying our opening ceremonies for what I expect to be a spectacular month here at Hopkins!

I would like to thank everyone who has...
involved themselves in the preparation of this celebration. It took a lot of hardwork and dedication by numerous nameless hands to make this event what it has manifested into today. And I thank you all from the bottom of my heart.

I am a firm believer in not allowing efforts to
be taken for granted. Today I stand here because of the dedication and action of my predecessors against an unequal educational system which largely locked them out. For their actions they received curses, threats, and many other thorns within their hands as they tried to pass the flower of opportunity.
to generations walking after them. And they accomplished that! The stems are not as thorny today. They won! They won... for me, the privilege to attend a local high school which up until 1952 never allowed a black student to attend. For those of you who know Dr. Vernon Savage, his older brother was one of those.
pioneer trailblazers. And today, I am privileged to attend
The Johns Hopkins University. To think, it was
just 1945 that the first black student was given the
opportunity to attend Hopkins as an undergraduate. These
nameless people won opportunities for us all. Please
don't let their efforts be in vain, keep up the fight.
Behind the scenes there has been a lot of work done to put together this year's celebration. If you have seen the pamphlets and the posters, I believe the events speak for themselves. In closing, I make a very simple request. Please come to our future events, learn a little about our country's
history, and by your participation demonstrate to us that our efforts were not in vain. Thank you!