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President Cheek on The Larry King Show
PART I

The Interview
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Larry King: Do you like the term Black institution?
James Cheek: Yes, I do. Because it conveys what I think is important for both Black Americans as well as white Americans. And that is the fact that this is a pluralistic society and one of the unique characteristics of American higher education is its pluralism, not only in terms of public and private, but in terms of the diversity of institutions with special identities.

LK: So it's good that we have Black institutions?
JC: It would be tragic if we did not have them. It would have been catastrophic for Black people had we not had them.

LK: One would say or one might ask, do you think that some day, 30, 40, 50 years from now, we might not need them? Or do you think we always need an identity?
JC: I think the problem of education in our country is so enormous and the underrepresentation of Blacks in American higher education is so severe, that they will be needed for a very long time to come. I think also they serve as important reservoirs of the cultural heritage of Black people and they preserve the Black presence in American higher education.

LK: You have white students?
JC: Yes. In the case of Howard, the overall percentage of non-Black students would be approximately 12%.

LK: Has that been good for the institution?
JC: Indeed it has. Howard is probably the most desegregated university in America. It is also perhaps one of the most cosmopolitan. We have students from practically all 50 states, most of the American territories, and usually in a given year from 90 to 92 foreign countries.

LK: You have schools at the post-graduate level of what?
JC: Those that are strictly post-graduate are medicine, dentistry, law, divinity and the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences.

LK: Among the Black institutions, how would Howard rank? By that, I mean, take the young Black with some educational ability who might live in Biloxi, Mississippi or might live in Chicago and wants to go to a Black institution—Would Howard be one of those high on his list?
JC: Indeed, it would be. We receive approximately 22,000 applications for about 3,200 spaces.

LK: This is based, obviously, on long years of building credentials.

JC: Yes.

LK: Are there any unique problems that the president of a Black institution faces that your fellow presidents of what might be called white institutions or other institutions do not face? I know you have all of their problems anyway. Fund-raising and running a university today must be one of the toughest jobs in America. Do you have other problems that they don't have?

JC: In terms of looking at Howard in relation to comparable white universities, by which I mean large complex institutions, one of the problems we have is a small endowment, whereas comparable other institutions would have much larger endowments. We have an overall operating budget that is lower than most comparable institutions. We also do not have wealthy alumni, and that creates a problem because the alumni giving is not on the level that it might be at comparable institutions. We also have the problem of not having had a tradition of fund-raising in the private sector. We are currently engaged in a hundred-million dollar fund-raising campaign directed at the private sector. We are currently engaged in a hundred-million dollar fund-raising campaign directed at the private sector. So even though we are 114 years old, we are just beginning to establish a constituency among corporations and individuals and even our alumni.

LK: [Are] there vice presidents of American corporations who are Howard alumni and [who] have some clout in their cor-
Corporations and hopefully some of these corporations will endow you?

JC: That is what we are aiming for.

LK: How does the American corporate structure look at the primarily Black institution?

JC: Right now in our case we have raised, either in actual money or pledges, about $47 million. The hardest part of our fundraising program is going to be getting that additional $53 million. The corporations have been very responsive. Corporations generally, however, do not consider themselves as being in the philanthropy business. They are in the investment business and they target their giving to those programs that produce graduates that they can utilize.

LK: And how are you doing in that area?

JC: We’re doing fairly well. We’re not doing as well as we would like. We expect that with economic recovery we will do much better.

LK: The competition for professors and associate professors must be incredible in the marketplace.

JC: It has become a nightmare, frankly, because we compete against other institutions of higher learning; we compete with the federal government and we compete with private industry. Then we have an additional handicap of being located in Washington, D.C., which is a high-cost area, and to persuade someone to uproot and move to Washington over the last several years has been a tremendously hard task.

LK: How do you compete salary-wise?

JC: We do very well. I don’t think there is anybody that we want that we could not get in terms of salary. However, one of the new things that has come into the picture in the last few years is that not only faculty but other staff have become very sophisticated. They will look at the Consumer Price Index for the area where they are and for Washington—if they cannot do it themselves they will get somebody to do it for them—to translate that into what it really means for them to move. Even if we offer $10,000 more in many instances they don’t consider that as being an attractive offer.

LK: Do you receive funds from the United Negro College Fund?

JC: No we do not.

LK: How does that [UNCF] work?

JC: Well, we were a founding member of the United Negro College Fund and sometime during the 1950s, I think, the organization put Howard out.

LK: Why?

JC: Because of the contribution it [Howard] received from the federal government. When I was president of Shaw, I was a part of the United Negro College Fund. The UNCF is made up of 41 private colleges, predominantly Black, most located in the South. On behalf of those institutions, the fund conducts an annual campaign similar to what we would call the United Way. And then it divides the funds according to a rather intricate formula based on endowment and number of students.

LK: Do you think that the decision was correct, based on the fact that you do receive federal funding, that the other schools need it more than you do?

JC: I think it was correct for the most part, except in the case of the School of Divinity which is the only school within the university that does not receive federal funds because it is a professional theological school.

LK: Are you losing a lot of young men who previously would have gone to Howard who now say, ‘Dr. Cheek, I’m going to [a white school]’?

JC: Not now. We did go through a period when that was the case. We are now experiencing a phenomenon of a rather sizable number of students transferring from such institutions to Howard.

LK: Why this phenomenon of the kids who went to Ohio State and Duke and North Carolina and Georgetown, switching back?

JC: Many of them have expressed the view that they found themselves in a hostile environment, or in an environment that was unresponsive to their needs.

LK: Despite all the gains we’ve heard about?

JC: Yes. My son, for example, who is now a junior at Morehouse, informed us when he was a [high school] senior that there were three things that he wanted us to know about his plans for college. The first was that he was not going to Howard. Because of obvious reasons he wanted to go away from home. Secondly, he was not going to go to any predominantly white institution. Thirdly, he was going to apply to only one institution, a predominantly Black institution which was Morehouse College in Atlanta.

LK: And the reason?

JC: His reason was he felt that he needed a dimension to his education that could not be gotten at a predominantly white institution. He had attended integrated or desegregated institutions from the time he was in kindergarten and it was his feeling that he would have a more enriching educational experience if he went to an institution that had Black professors and where he could interact with a larger number of Black students of his own peer group.

LK: That is the reverse of what much of white America would think. They would think that the Black student in high school would want to go to the predominantly white institution for two reasons. Hopefully he would think that the professors there [are] better, second, the job opportunities would be better if he holds a graduate degree from the University of Miami rather than from Morehouse.

JC: Many of them still do think that. But it is not as great now as it perhaps was in the latter part of the 60s and the early part of the 70s. Now, for professional education, in terms of going to medical school or law school or graduate school, that still remains the case because there are only two predominantly Black medical schools. . . A third, at Morehouse, has not yet become a four-year medical school.
There are only about a half dozen predominantly Black law schools.

**LK:** Has the major hurt been felt in athletics, where the Black schools lost that kid, in the South especially, to the University of Mississippi and Alabama and Mississippi State and the University of Florida?

**JC:** There is no question about that. In that arena, it is extremely difficult for predominantly Black institutions to compete because the athlete who is really good wants to go where he can get attention, where his chances of perhaps having a career in athletics are much better than at an institution that did not have a big-time athletic program.

**LK:** Are most of the Black institutions in or near the South?

**JC:** Most of them are in the South.

**LK:** Are any in Oregon or Arizona or Nevada or Washington or Oregon?

**JC:** Not in terms of what we call the traditionally or historically Black institutions. You may find, not in Oregon or places like that, but outside the South some institutions that are referred to as predominantly Black institutions, rather than traditionally Black. And these are largely two-year community colleges that are located in areas that have a high concentration of Blacks.

**LK:** The university president cannot live in a shelter of the university; he’s part of the community, and in your case, part of the nation. The Urban League [on Jan. 18] —and I know you are on the Board of Directors of the Washington Urban League —issued a stinging indictment of the Reagan administration, indicating it for lack of feeling, for programs that are hurting America’s Blacks, for lack of caring.... What’s your reaction?

**JC:** Well, I was there. The Urban League was presenting its annual State of Black America Report [at Howard University] and it portrayed its perception of the Reagan administration as well as the condition and status of Black people. The report did not pull any punches at all. I do not agree with the view that the Reagan administration is responsible for all of the problems that were mentioned. Many of those were trends that had begun to set in before this administration took office. It [the Urban League] did what it is supposed to do—that is, to bring into sharp focus its findings on what is happening.

**LK:** Have you thought this administration is without feeling or caring?

**JC:** Absolutely not. One of the problems, I think, is a perception on the part of many segments of the Black community that it [the Reagan administration] is indifferent, but it is not all that way. President Reagan, during the campaign, was the only [candidate] who issued a very strong statement supporting predominantly Black institutions and clarifying what he felt was very important to the nation. He [later] issued a very strong Executive Order to require all federal agencies to [increase], to the extent that their programs would permit, the amount of funds given to the Black colleges. He staunchly defended the preservation of the Title III Program which was developed by President Johnson as a part of the Higher Education Act of 1965, and as a matter of fact, actually increased it. And at the time he issued that Executive Order, he made one of the strongest statements that anyone had made in that position in history.

**LK:** How about the economic program, which obviously the Urban League took out after?

**JC:** My view is that this country could not continue in the direction that it was going. It was predictable that Black people and poor people would, in the process of trying to rectify the problem, be hurt. However, they were already being hurt by virtue of the direction in which the economy was going. I think that it’s too soon to arrive at conclusions about this administration’s programs vis-a-vis Black Americans. The President has been in office for only a year.

**LK:** But, most of your fellow Black Americans are jumping on him.

**JC:** Yes, they are.

**LK:** You don’t agree with that?

**JC:** Well, they have to act on the basis of their perception, and their conscience and the constituency that they represent. I think it’s important that Blacks who are in positions of leadership try to develop relationships with administrations in order to have access and also some influence. And it is my hope that that is what will occur.

**LK:** The Internal Revenue [Service] a week ago granted tax exemptions to segregated schools. There was much complaint from Blacks inside the administration as well [as] many white Americans. The Reagan administration rescinded that to announce that it will send a bill to Congress. ... First, did it shock you when the initial announcement was made, and have you been happy with the Reagan administration’s response?

**JC:** It did indeed shock me. As a matter of fact, I wasn’t certain that I was hearing what I was hearing. I did have a conversation with the President in which he indicated what they were attempting to do, and what he planned to do to rectify what clearly was a mistake.

**LK:** They certainly rectified it.

**JC:** Yes.

**LK:** Howard University will be producing many of the Black leaders in this country of tomorrow. I want to ask [you] Dr. Cheek about Black leaders.... The other day, [Jan. 15] in a parade in this city for Martin Luther King, Jr. on occasion of his birthday, the principal person in that parade was Stevie Wonder, an entertainer.... There was a time during the 60s when one would think of Black leaders in America and any one of us could reel off five, six, seven names. Now, we have a parade for Martin Luther King and the principal attention of that parade is gained by a brilliant Black entertainer, Stevie Wonder.
Where are the Black leaders?

**JC:** Well, the Black leaders are here. They do not have the visibility that they had in the 60s. The Civil Rights Movement was a very dramatic movement that attracted a lot of media attention. And now the issues are somewhat different. It requires a different style of leadership, more in terms of the formulation of new strategies, the negotiations of the participation in activities to try to influence public opinion as well as public policy through writing, through appearing on media programs, rather than through demonstrations or marching. As to why Stevie Wonder is the star for what I guess now is going to be an annual activity until the goal is accomplished, [it is] because of his personality. He's a very popular person and is a magnet that draws a lot of people. There were [other] participants in that parade from the Congressional Black [Caucus] and from other areas. And, you know, Jesse Jackson did play a role in that. But the whole issue of Black leadership is [a] very, very mixed picture at the present time because of the nature of the problems with which we have to wrestle.

**LK:** On the other side you have the mayor of the third largest city in this country, Tom Bradley in Los Angeles; you have the mayor of Atlanta, Andrew Young. . . . On those levels, the improvements have been dramatic from say 10 to 15 years ago when the leaders were in the streets and not in city hall—the mayor of our own city.

**JC:** That is correct.

**LK:** Is that growing? Is Howard University going to produce a lot of tomorrow's elected Black leaders?

**JC:** We certainly expect to. As you know, Andrew Young is a Howard graduate. We have many Howard graduates in prominent positions both here and abroad. And we would expect to continue to produce leadership. As a matter of fact, we emphasize that we are educating leaders for the future.

**LK:** [Are] a lot of Blacks majoring in political science?

**JC:** Yes, that's a very large department.

**LK:** You were one of the forerunners of Blacks in communications, right? I mean you said that Black institutions should start communications departments so that Blacks would forge into the media?

**JC:** That's quite correct. I actually started that venture when I was president of Shaw.

**LK:** What made you think the media would accept what in the past it had not accepted?

**JC:** Well, at the time, it was clear to me that opportunities were opening up all over. I felt, and still do, that mass media is perhaps the most powerful industry in the world, that Blacks could ill-afford to not be prepared to be qualified to take advantage of opportunities. One of the problems that we discovered in the mid 60s when we started that venture was that in both television and radio the response would be "We don't have any Blacks or we don't have many because we can't find any who are qualified." . . . It was my view that our institutions had an obligation to train students in all aspects of mass media communications so that no one could respond by saying there is not a pool of qualified Black and minority people to be, not just broadcasters but also communications engineers. In the case of Howard, our program involves a combination of engineering students as well as communications students, students in business to be trained to go into management aspect of mass media, in fine arts to take advantage of the opportunities in the graphic arts, particularly in television. I also felt it was important that some of our institutions have their own broadcast facilities in order to add another dimension of interpretation on the airways.

**LK:** You've accomplished that?

**JC:** Yes.

**LK:** Are others having it too? Are other Black institutions having their own broadcast [facilities]?

**JC:** There is a radio station at Central State in Ohio and a radio [station] at Clark College in Atlanta.

**LK:** Yours is the only one with a television station?

**JC:** Yes it is.
PART II

Calls From Listeners
COLUMBIA, SC: Dr. Cheek, you mentioned the hostile feelings a Black person might feel at a white university, and that would be a reason for going to a Black university. I get the feeling that the existence of Black universities helps in aiding the segregation of the cultures and would be a detriment to white universities.

JC: The hostile feelings to which I referred was in response to a question as to why Black students would transfer from a predominantly Black institution. The predominantly Black institutions do not contribute at all to the segregation of education. Our institutions have never denied admission to students on the basis of race or color. Our institutions serve not only a purpose of educating the students who come but also serve a purpose of educating the country. On the very practical side, we must understand that inasmuch as Black students are tremendously underrepresented in American higher education, without Black institutions our people would be impoverished. The predominantly Black institutions still produce approximately 40 to 50% of all Black students receiving undergraduate baccalaureate degrees. We do not at all contribute to a separation between the races. Our institutions, as you know, have probably been the most integrated in our society.

ATLANTA, GA: I would like to ask three questions: One, both in terms of preliminary expectations and in the environment they encounter, what awaits African students at Howard University? Two, being in Atlanta, I happened to attend the testimonial dinner for Dr. Benjamin Mays. If you were there, what were your thoughts? If you weren't, then what were your thoughts? Three, slightly off the subject but perhaps relevant, since you have degrees in divinity and in philosophy and are an educator, what are your thoughts on the creationism vs. evolution tiff going on now in the public schools?

JC: We have very large African populations. It is probably around 10%. The overall non-American population at Howard is approximately 16% and the largest group of that percentage would be students from Africa.

I did not attend the dinner. Unfortunately I was not able to be there. Dr. Mays is a long-time friend of mine and as a matter of fact, when I was elected president of Shaw in 1963 he is the first person that I visited to discuss the job. He is one of our heroes.

I frankly feel that in terms of the scientific data that we have, evolution is what should be taught. I think that discussions about creationism vs. evolution should take place because there are a great many people who still have the Biblical concept of creation.

WASHINGTON, DC: I'm a graduate of Howard University and I just felt compelled to call and say thank you to Dr. Cheek for having the courage to devote his life and his health and his being to Howard University. I went to predominantly white schools in Virginia and after having attended Howard I felt a tremendous support. There is some feeling in this country that Black students receiving undergraduate baccalaureate degrees. We do not at all contribute to a separation between the races. Our institutions, as you know, have probably been the most integrated in our society.

WASHINGTON, DC: What steps are being taken to overcome the problems with the District of Columbia Bar?

JC: The Law School faculty has developed a special program to attempt to identify the problems and then formulate remedies while the students are still in law school to overcome these problems. We had two of our students who were Phi Beta Kappa undergraduates who went to Harvard. They graduated in the top of their class from the Harvard Law School and they took the D.C. Bar and failed in the first time. So we think the problem is a little more complex than just the Howard Law School.

Baltimore, MD: You mentioned several things during the evening. My questions are: After a history of a century or more, I'm a little curious as to why Howard finds itself in need to go to primarily corporate America to get the kind of money it needs to continue its growth when Dr. Cheek speaks so proudly—and I think rightly so—of such a large cadre of distinguished and affluent graduates of Howard University? Why not go to those graduates?

JC: We have, as a part of our organized fund raising campaign, the alumni as an integral part of our efforts. I have spent a considerable amount of my time traveling around the country speaking with alumni groups. Now, with respect to going to corporate America, you have to remember that Black people in this country have wealth in excess of $100 billion which is largely consumer wealth. We purchase goods and services from these corporations who invest in other institutions of higher learning. We feel that they have an obligation to invest in us.

BALTIMORE: My second question is: There is some feeling in this country that there are two classes of Black Americans: those who are running ahead of inflation and those who are at the very bottom of the economic ladder. I wonder if you would talk a little about the role, either positive or negative, that Howard University has played over the years in creating or reducing the broadening gulf between these two classes of Black Americans?

JC: As you know, education perhaps...
the tompost priority for the average Black family. Howard University’s student body is made up largely of students from what we would call low-income backgrounds. We have been enrolling such students since the school was founded, and as a matter of fact we have actually changed the economic status just through the education of one student from one of those families.

NEW YORK: I am a parent of two students presently attending Howard. I want to comment about what you said as to why some of the kids are coming back to the Black schools. I know what happened in our family. My husband and I were products of the 60s, the so-called upward mobility. We both attended white universities and when it was time for our children to go to school they wanted to go to a Black school and get the Black experience. We had no objections and they seem to be adjusting quite well. We’re happy with that.

JC: I’m happy that you are.

NEW YORK: It was quite disturbing and shocking to hear you, just because you have access to the President with telephone calls, make excuses for the administration. Would you respond to that?

JC: I’m not making excuses for the administration. I’m simply representing my perception of the administration, and what it is attempting to do for the entire country. There is no question that the problems that are being created for Blacks and poor people are enormous and I think that we’re going to have to find a way to respond to that. But, I don’t think that anyone has to make excuses for this President. We’re going to have him for three years and I think it’s important that we try to find ways to influence the policies and the decisions as they affect our people and our constituents.

HOUSTON, TEX: Dr. Cheek, Malcolm Muggeridge, a famed British philosopher, in discussing the decline of Western civilization was asked if he could say in a few words what he thought contributed most to that decline. And he answered: “over-education.” He felt that there was too much accent on education. In light of the fact that a lot of people say that four-year colleges are stealing people away from what would really be better, to follow a technical training, I wonder if you could make some comments on that?

JC: I thoroughly disagree with the quote. I think that an education in a four-year institution, and even beyond, is going to become increasingly more important in the future than in the past. It’s particularly crucial that the people have a liberal education because the foundation of a true democracy really rests on education. Since you offered a quote I’ll give you one. Disraeli, the Prime Minister of England, in addressing Parliament said: “Gentlemen, it is upon the education of the nation’s people that the fate of the nation depends.”

MINNEAPOLIS, MN: How much of an effort is being made to acquaint Black Americans at Howard to some of the richer aspects of African culture and of Black culture in other countries around the world?

JC: Howard University offers a masters degree and a Ph.D. degree in the field of African Studies. We have a relationship with a number of universities in Africa as well as in the Caribbean. And our students, by virtue of interacting with students from more than 90 foreign countries, get a tremendous amount of exposure to the cultural heritage of those countries.

SHAWANO, WIS: How do you feel about the idea of competency testing for teachers?

JC: I think, inasmuch as we do have competency based testing for many professions, I’m certainly not at all opposed to it. I think a way has to be found, however, to be certain that what one is testing for is relevant to what a teacher is supposed to do.

MINNEAPOLIS, MN: [Please] define the meaning and value of Black schools in a historical context. Black schools have never really been completely segregated. I am a product of a Black school [where] 40% of the faculty was white.

JC: Well, they were created because other educational institutions would not admit Blacks or would not admit Blacks in any significant number. Most of the historically Black institutions emerged shortly after the Civil War. Many of them were created later, particularly those that are land-grant institutions. And they were created to provide educational opportunities that were not otherwise available to Black people. Now, had they not existed, one can imagine what the state and condition of Black Americans would be today. Over a period of 100 years or more, they have been the providers of education and the leavening influence in the communities in which they are located in helping to educate the entire community to what America is as a country and what all of us should be as a people.

MINNEAPOLIS: You put your finger on it. One wonders what would have happened to W.E.B. DuBois, Fletcher Henderson, Martin Luther King, Maynard Jackson, Andy Young, Jesse Jackson, Constance Motley, Charles Drew, and George Washington Carver, who did his work at a Black school. Black schools have been, and are, a positive force.

JC: Thank you very much.

NEW YORK: Did you receive your early childhood education at the Washington Street Elementary School?

JC: Yes, I did.

NEW YORK: [This is] your third grade teacher to whom you’re speaking. [You] were an exceptional student and I have followed your career diligently.

JC: Well, thank you so much.

LAUREL, MD: I’m a product of two Black institutions. I went to Coppin State and I am presently at Howard University’s School of Architecture and Planning. I intend to go on to get my doctorate in International Development at Howard. So I’m all for Black institutions. Now, my
question is, what are we going to do about parking? I come in from Laurel every day and the parking is driving me berserk!

JC: If there is any urban university that does not have a parking problem I don't know where it is. We have several plans underway on Georgia Avenue to develop some additional parking. We also are in the process of building a parking garage opposite the hospital on 4th Street.

PHILADELPHIA, PA: This has been fascinating, very informative and quite enjoyable. I have two questions, doctor. What is your view concerning affirmative action programs? Is it a positive step-up for Black people or has it become a detriment to their advancement?

JC: Well, to be candid, it has been mixed. And the reason for that is, in a number of instances there is an assumption made in predominantly white institutions when they encounter Black students—and this is made sometimes by students as well as faculty—that they are there as a result of affirmative action, using different criteria for admissions. From that standpoint, it's negative. From the standpoint of increasing opportunities for Black students, I think it has definitely been positive.

PHILADELPHIA: Would you consider that view applicable to the private sector also?

JC: I don't think you would have exactly the same kind of thing. Where employment is clearly based upon skills that must be demonstrated everyday and where work performance can be measured much more quickly and rapidly than in college, it's definitely a plus.

PHILADELPHIA: My second question concerns the educational system, and if I might get away from the university situation and refer to grammar and secondary schools, particularly in urban areas. Being from Philadelphia, I'm more familiar with the situation here and it is in a state of disarray. I'm wondering what your views are?

JC: I agree with you that in most urban areas, the system is in disarray. It's clear-ly in trouble. I think that one of the most important things that has to take place is a restoration of the kinds of standards that existed in an earlier period in our life. And I think that promotion should not be social, that students should be held to a higher standard of achievement, and that the teachers should be held to a higher level of accountability.

PHILADELPHIA: Would you lay the majoriy of this problem on the system or perhaps other things, [like] the family structure breaking down.

JC: A variety of social factors have contributed to that, the family certainly, but not totally. In many areas of public education in this country, the professionalism that once characterized public school teaching has disappeared.

NORFOLK, VA: Do you think that busing has helped the quality of education for the Black and white students in elementary, junior and senior high [school]?

JC: I have not been able to determine whether it has or has not. In terms of giving students of different racial backgrounds an opportunity to associate and learn together, I think it has been beneficial to both.

NORFOLK: Another question. If we paid teachers better, do you think that we could demand a better quality of education and dedication from these educators?

JC: Yes, I think that would be the case and I think we would also attract more people into the teaching profession who would be dedicated to teaching.

MAMARONECK, NY: I understood you to say that big corporations are supporting Black education. Well, I'm white, just to clarify the numbers. I worked for IBM from 1966 to 1975 and when I left IBM I knew of two professional Blacks, two out of about 10,000 professional whites. Now, is this [the] proportion of Black college graduates to white college graduates? If not, is there any legal approach that can be taken to correct this situation [other than] donations to schools?

JC: It has only been recently that we have been producing very many Blacks in some of the fields that are needed by corporations such as IBM. I rather suspect that since you left IBM that number has increased and I think that there is a corporate commitment. We have seen it at our institution. Many students who graduate from our School of Business, and our School of Engineering and our School of Communications, have three or four job offers and their problem is trying to decide which one to accept.

LINCOLN, NEB: How does attending a predominantly Black college help the average Black student learn to work and relate to whites in America's white-dominated job market?

JC: First of all, before the student gets into college, he has already had to live in a predominantly white world and he has already become quite familiar with the problems that are necessary to cope in an ethnically plural society that is dominated by Caucasians. You must understand that at a Black institution the student is not isolated from the large society. At the average Black institution, those students are going to encounter white professors and in a number of instances interact with white students. The Black college is not a
prison. It's still a place where people of diverse backgrounds gather. In many instances, the student at a predominantly Black college has a more enriching experience in the pluralistic nature of our culture than would otherwise be the case.

**WILMINGTON, NC:** Dr. Cheek, I'm glad you just said what you just said. My question is about Black athletes at the predominantly white colleges. On national television, you see [teams of] predominantly white universities playing basketball and football. Yet most of the players are Black. How do you feel about Black athletes serving as entertainers for white people first to get an education. What I'd like to say is, to participate in the process of an education and to participate in intercollegiate athletics secondarily. I would hope also that those institutions, because their reputations are at stake as educational institutions, would put forth every effort to see to it that the product that they graduate meets the standards required of all of their graduates.

**RICHMOND, VA:** I have a couple of questions. One, would [you] contrast the views of W.E.B. DuBois and Booker T. Washington as far as educating Blacks? Which one of the two [views] would be more prevalent in educating Blacks today? Two, since Blacks are having a difficult time in passing the C.P.A. exam, the Bar, the Med Board, are Black colleges properly preparing Blacks to compete in a predominantly white environment?

**JC:** With respect to your first question, I think that the educational philosophy of DuBois is clearly more appropriate for Blacks. The educational philosophy of Booker T. Washington, had it been the predominant pattern, in my judgment, would have blacked Black people into a socioeconomic category that would be insurmountable. With respect to your question about our Black colleges adequately preparing students for the professions you mentioned, I indicated earlier on this program that from 40 to 50% of all Blacks graduating with baccalaureate degrees are graduating from predominantly Black institutions. And these students have no difficulties at all in going on to some of the most prestigious universities in the country in medicine, in law, in business, in engineering and in graduate schools for masters and Ph.D. degrees. On the record of the performance of the predominantly Black institutions, there should be no argument or debate at all.

**SILVER SPRING, MD:** Does [Dr. Cheek] have any regrets that he invited Mr. [George] Bush last year for the Commencement?

**JC:** No regrets at all.

**SILVER SPRING:** And was that a political or budget-related decision?

**JC:** It was not. We choose our Commencement speakers on the basis of their position, what they have to say, and the contribution that they can make.

**SILVER SPRING:** Okay, let me just read off my other questions. What's the makeup of the trustees of Howard? Also, when are you going to improve the T.V. station, Channel 32, to start having more original programs [other than what's carried] on public T.V.?

**JC:** The composition of the Board of Trustees is predominantly Black. It is, however, an integrated Board of Trustees. With respect to upgrading the programming, we are in the process now of moving into our new production facilities. And that will be completed in March. And it is expected that by the end of the year, we will be producing substantial number of programs on our campus. We do have an original production that will be aired the latter part of this month that is being presented by our Department of Theatrical Productions, which was created last summer, and it will be "Macbeth," from a Black perspective.

**WASHINGTON, DC:** I'm currently a senior at Howard University. There has been a discrepancy as to which is the oldest Black college. Cheyney State was founded in 1837 but Lincoln University is always cited as the oldest Black college and it was founded in 1854. I'd like to know your feelings.

**JC:** Well, until Cheyney State made the assertion that it was the oldest, we had always thought that Wilberforce University in Ohio was the oldest. I suppose we'll have to get a historian of Black education to answer that question.

**WASHINGTON, DC:** Would Howard be forced to admit a larger percentage of non-Blacks as a result of the efforts of the NAACP and other integrationist organizations?

**JC:** We do not have any quotas with respect to our admissions. Our mission is primarily for the education of Black students and other minorities without any restrictions on access for others. The University has never operated on any kind of quota system and I certainly do not foresee any efforts to impose a requirement on us that we do anything differently in the future from what we've always done in the past and are doing in the present.

**ARLINGTON, TX:** I would like [you] to comment on the practice of forced segre-
gation that's being practiced in Texas and California known as bilingual education. It's my opinion that bilingual education is going to be a force one day that could result in a division in this nation. I drive around cities I live in and I see billboards I cannot read because they're in somebody else's language.

JC: I think it's very important that our country not be a monolingual society. One of the things that has troubled me when I travel abroad to other countries is the ability that I see among kids in France or Germany who are able to handle several languages. I don't think that having bilingual educational programs will lead to the kind of social problems that you have some anxiety about. I think that it is very important for those students who live here to be taught in their native language as well as be taught in English.

WASHINGTON, DC: I have a very difficult question that is: There are a lot of people who graduated from Howard University in the 60s who apparently are very angry with the university itself. And I think that is one of the reasons why there is not as much response from the alumni as may be. Could you respond to that?

JC: Well, I have encountered that. I got there in 69. A variety of experiences of the negative kind can leave those impressions. We have been able, in numerous instances, to indicate to those people that they wouldn't be where they are without Howard and that they have a responsibility to support the institution. When we visit with alumni groups and individual alumni, we have been able to cultivate them and educate them into an awareness that they should take on the responsibility of supporting the institution. And I think the relationship is better now.