

son for being is now somehow obsolete. But it was because of these schools that a young prankster discovered the sense of purpose that led him ultimately to sit on the Supreme Court. It was because of these schools that a young broadcaster with a funny name—Oprah—[*laughter*—]could make that name into an empire. It was because of HBCUs that a young preacher grew into a king that shared his dream with all of America.

It was because of these schools that America's middle class was filled with Black doctors and educators and judges and lawyers and engineers and entrepreneurs. And today, it's because of these schools that one out of every two wide-eyed freshmen who arrives on their campuses with big backpacks and bigger dreams is the first in his or her family to go to college.

And that's why we're here today to ensure that these schools remain the beacons that they've been for more than a century and a half: crucibles of learning where students discover their full potential and forge the character required to realize it; catalysts of change where

young people put their hands on the arc of history and move this Nation closer to the ideals of its founding; and the cradles of opportunity where each generation inherits the American Dream and keeps it alive for the next.

That's what HBCUs are about, and that's why I'm proud to now sign this Executive order.

[*At this point, the President signed the Executive order.*]

There we go.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:54 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Bryan Smart, president, Howard University Student Association; John S. Wilson, Executive Director, White House Initiative on Historically Black Colleges and Universities; William R. Harvey, Chair, President's Board of Advisers on Historically Black Colleges and Universities; and talk show host Oprah Winfrey. The Executive order is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

## Statement on the Resignation of Desiree Rogers as White House Social Secretary

*February 26, 2010*

We are enormously grateful to Desiree Rogers for the terrific job she's done as the White House Social Secretary. When she took this position, we asked Desiree to help make sure that the White House truly is the people's house, and she did that by welcoming scores of everyday Americans through its doors, from wounded warriors to local schoolchildren to NASCAR drivers. She organized hundreds of fun and cre-

ative events during her time here, and we will miss her. We thank her again for her service and wish her all the best in her future endeavors.

NOTE: This statement was released by the Office of the Press Secretary as a statement by the President and the First Lady.

## Statement on Dominican Republic National Day

*February 26, 2010*

On behalf of the American people, I send my warmest wishes to those, both in the Dominican Republic and here in America, that are celebrating Dominican Republic National Day. The United States values the cooperation and posi-

tive relations it enjoys with the Dominican Republic. Here at home, we honor the contributions that Dominican Americans across the country make in all facets of our national life and join them in celebrating their heritage.