

2012 H.O.P.E. Diversity Scholarship Dinner Remarks
February 16, 2012
Tuscarora Room, Reisner Hall

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. Please join me again in thanking our scholarship recipients for their remarks.

I believe it is important that we take every opportunity we can to celebrate, and tonight is one of those occasions to highlight our outstanding students and their optimism in their future.

As each student took us through their journey, we could feel their optimism. As they spoke, I couldn't help but notice the smiles on everyone's face...that said it all... optimism is indeed infectious! Listening to the students I was reminded of Helen Keller's famous quote, "Optimism," she said, "is the faith that leads to achievement. Nothing can be done without hope and confidence."

Just moments ago you saw a wonderful group of young women who are confident, who are optimistic and who are filled with hope. What they have already achieved — what they will achieve throughout their lives — should fill each of us with hope and optimism because their future successes will make this world a better place for all.

More than 7,200 undergraduate students and approximately 1,000 graduate students bring Shippensburg University to life each day, and the faculty, staff and administrators are privileged to have the opportunity to work with these future leaders. We have seen them progress, we have seen them excel and we have seen them become men and women we are proud to call Shippensburg alumni.

That's why tonight it's so important that we celebrate the Helping Our People Excel, or HOPE, scholarship. The name reflects a philosophy in which we all can believe — that people can excel with help, and we are here to help!

Our help always starts somewhere. At SHIP it starts with the HOPE Diversity Scholarship Committee, so ably led by its chair, Dr. Ronnie Tucker. This committee spends countless hours reviewing applications and then selecting talented students like those here tonight. Will Dr. Tucker and the members of the committee please stand and be recognized?

During our pre-dinner conversation many of you said that you: "just wanted to give back what others gave you." Not only have you exceeded your goal, you've done it without fanfare and without words alone. What you've done, and continue to do, is quietly, continually, and unselfishly share your resources to help others. Simply put: you "walk the talk." You're amazing!

You, and others like you, have shown us how to help others excel. Your generous contributions to the HOPE, and many other scholarships, allow Shippensburg to give well-deserving students the much needed financial resources to turn their academic dreams into a reality. On behalf of those scholarship recipients, and — this university — please stand so we can recognize you and express our heartfelt thanks.

On behalf of Shippensburg University there's another special group I want to thank for its support. That group is WITF — the presenting media sponsor for this evening's event. We want to Andy Scheid, general sales manager; Miranda Metz, account executive; and Richard Price, multi-media account executive, who are in the audience tonight. Thanks for joining us.

In a few minutes, we'll have the pleasure of hearing from our guest speaker, Spike Lee. His presentation is sure to inform and inspire you beyond what you might have imagined. I know that, like me, you look forward to his presentation.

Again, thank your support in fulfilling many hopes and dreams, for joining us, for your unending help — and for giving meaning to the phrase “together we can make a difference!

Spike Lee Introduction

Good evening ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to the highlight of our celebration of Shippensburg University's annual HOPE Diversity Scholarship Program.

First, let me say that Shippensburg University is pleased to have WITF as the presenting media sponsor for this evening's event. We want to recognize Andy Scheid, general sales manager, Miranda Metz, account executive, and Richard Price, multimedia account executive, who are in the audience tonight. Thanks for joining us.

In the more than two-decade history of this program, we have been honored to have as our guests at these programs individuals of international renown and tonight we are fortunate to yet another truly remarkable and inspirational individual.

We all know that we live in a world of instant communications, but despite all the new social media and other communication methods, one still remains among the most powerful — video, or more precisely film. Tonight's guest knows the power of that medium and has used it as a voice from which has come social change.

Spike Lee truly revolutionized the role of African-American talent in cinema and is regarded as one of — if not the — premiere African-American filmmaker. His “do-it-yourself” style is the forerunner of independent film and his debut film in 1986, “She's Gotta Have It,” set him at the forefront of the Black New Wave in American cinema. He quickly followed that film with several critically acclaimed films, including “Do the Right Thing,” that earned him an Academy Award nomination for Best Original Screenplay, and the drama “Malcolm X” that received two Academy Award nominations.

When asked what he hoped youth could take from his film Malcolm X, Spike Lee said: “... [its] about how you can persevere, and it's a lesson that lives today, especially today.”¹

There's no doubt that our student speakers embody that perseverance. It's one of the many reasons we're so honored and grateful to have with us someone whose professional and personal works continually challenge and inspire us! Ladies and gentlemen, it's my absolute pleasure to introduce Spike Lee.

¹ DVD Talk. Spike Lee on Malcolm X. Retrieved on Feb. 14, 2012 from http://www.dvdtalk.com/interviews/spike_lee_on_ma.html