

Opening remarks for
Woodford Porter Scholars Fall Meeting
October 3, 2012, 6:00 p.m.
Bigelow Hall

- Thank you for inviting me to join you this evening. This is one of my favorite events. It is one of my favorite events because of the wonderful memories that I have of attending this event when Woodford Porter, for whom your scholarship is named, was still alive.
- You see, Woodford loved this event. He loved being with you, the Porter Scholars.
- Woodford would spend time going from table to table, asking each of you how you're doing, how is the semester going. Woodford had a

unique sense— he could tell when you were shooting straight with him and when you might be suggesting that you were better than you were.

- Woodford had a way of being stern yet encouraging. Each scholar would leave this event feeling special because of their conversation with Mr. Porter, but also feeling a sense of responsibility – “I better not let Mr. Woodford Porter down.”
- You see, Woodford and Harriett Porter were special people. They knew the importance of education. In fact, Mr. Porter used to say, “Education is the great equalizer.” Education

gave all people a chance in life and he didn't want anyone to blow their chance.

- We have a banner as you enter the oval on campus with Mr. Porter's statement – "Education is the great equalizer" – a banner for all to see as they come and leave the campus.
- Mr. Porter believed in education. He spent his life trying to be sure that everyone, his children, and as Dr. Martin Luther King said, all God's children, had a chance to get their education.
- Mr. Porter was a friend, mentor of mine. He told me of running for the Louisville Board of

Education at a time when African Americans did not run for public office in our community. Mr. Porter not only ran, but he won and ultimately became the chairman of the Louisville Board of Education. He worked tirelessly on behalf of public schools in this community.

- Later Mr. Porter became a member of the University of Louisville Board of Trustees – the first African American to serve on the Board. He also was the first African American to become the Chairman of the Board of Trustees.
- It wasn't enough for everyone to have the opportunity for a quality high school diploma

- it was important for everyone to also have an opportunity to get their college degree.
- The Porters were a wonderful couple-- trailblazers. Harriett always looked radiant in her red and black, and they were a dynamic team who did so much, not just for the University of Louisville but for our community.
 - This event was special to Mr. Porter and I can see him now, beaming with joy to know what the Porter Scholarship has grown to become— 11,000 Porter alumni. Let me repeat – 11,000 Porter alumni. 523 active scholarships. He

would be proud of you. You should be proud because being a Porter Scholar is special.

- I also understand that you as a group have an average GPA of 3.23 – Wow! That’s special! Give yourself a hand.

(APPLAUSE)

- Also, we want to thank the many people at the University of Louisville who work hard to make sure that Harriett and Woodford Porter’s dream would be realized.
- We would like to thank
 - Mordean Taylor-Archer and her staff.
 - Our outstanding REACH program.

- The Admissions Office and their Office of Diversity Recruitment
- Our Financial Aid Office
- Our Honors Program
- Our CONECT Mentoring Program
- Our International Center
- Ideas to Action Staff
- Our Civic Engagement, Leadership & Service Office

Every one of these individuals is there to help you and give you the opportunity to be successful.

- Our job is to give you the opportunity to be successful. We can't guarantee that you will be successful. Continue to work hard – you

do your part and we'll do our part – and the legacy of Woodford and Harriett Porter will live forever.

- Now it is a great honor for me to introduce the Porter's granddaughter, Dani.