

“ALDC Speaks to Future Leaders at Morehouse”
(Version 1)

By Leroy R. Mitchell Jr. Staff Writer, *The Maroon Tiger*

Last Thursday, members of the Atlanta Legal Diversity Consortium (ALDC), a non-for-profit organization, traveled to Kilgore Hall to counsel and offer students from Morehouse and Spelman College expert instruction on how to prepare and succeed in law school. In collaboration with Phi Alpha Delta and the Morehouse/Spelman Pre-Law Society, President of ALDC and Morehouse Alumnus, Sam Matchett, alongside Chairman of the ALDC Future Bright Lawyers Program Ken Neighbors graciously answered questions, shared personal success stories, and recommended tips to the curious undergraduates.

The presenters addressed the importance of a superior LSAT score, fiscal discipline, managing fears, developing alumni relationships, studying, as well as mastering writing and verbal communication skills. Neighbors, a partner at Greenburg Traurig LLP, put a firm emphasis on the importance speaking and writing the English language properly. “There is a right way to write the language and a right to speak the language,” exclaimed Neighbors, adding humorously, “There is no such word as ‘conversate,’ its converse.”

Matchett, who is a partner at King and Spaulding, LLP, one of the nation's top law firms and legal counsel for half of the Fortune 100, placed high value on the ability to impress and persuade employers during a job interview. After reviewing thousands of applications throughout his career and sitting in the judgment seat of countless interviews, Matchett openly admitted to still being mystified on the amount of potential hires that have never attended or practiced the art of interviewing. “Why would you come to a job interview without having done a mock version or practicing it with a friend or family member aloud first?” Matchett used the question to explain the vital ingredient of preparedness when pursuing a result. “Think of how to best sell yourself and distinguish yourself... What is different about you is a question you should be asking yourself everyday for the rest of your life.”

Both mentors as well as leaders of the ALDC Future Star Lawyers, Matchett and Neighbors also discussed the significance of studying and analytical skills. “I had a well-rounded college experience, that started with a set study habits,” Matchett confessed, “Knowledge builds on itself, you cannot start a book in the middle and expect to know what your talking about... No shortcuts, you have to study.”

Neighbors shared his method of analyzing problems in his profession using a simple method he dubbed I.R.A.C. The acronym stands for issue, rule, analysis, and conclusion. The technique aids him in defining a problem, acquiring exceptions to it, applying the facts, and elaborating a solution. “Learn how to think logically now,” Neighbors said, “Gain sharp analytical skills and edit everything you see.”

Renaldo Pearson, President of the Morehouse Pre-Law Chapter of Phi Alpha Delta and student co-chair liaison of the ALDC Morehouse/Spelman Future STAR Lawyer program, deems having the guidance of such accomplished and knowledgeable professionals as a crucial building block to attaining any goal. “Analogously, mentors are like experienced drivers,” Pearson stated, “You seek their advice to avoid the traffic and

potholes in life.” Pearson, a junior political science major and law school prospect, called the forum, “a success, in regards to attendance and message,” and encouraged students who are serious about a future in law to enroll in future events. “Although, I might add, I invite more pre-law students to register for the upcoming October ALDC Law Forums: "Choosing the Right Law School and Financial Aid," Tuesday, October 6th at 11:30am and "Logic & Writing," Thursday, October 15 at 11:30am.”

This was the third appearance for the ALDC on the campus of Morehouse College and the first of many planned for the 2009-10 school year according its Director Joel Peddle. Peddle, who is also a Lecturer of Philosophical Ethics at Morehouse College offered his words of wisdom to the entire student body regardless of the field of interest. “Moral excellence leads to professional excellence.” To learn more about the ALDC and its Future STAR Lawyer Program visit www.aldcinc.org.