**BANQUET SPEECH**

**FOR**

**COREY DAVIS**

Hello everyone and welcome to this year’s Black and Gold Ball. This gala, and all we do here at the Xi Alpha Lambda Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha, is dedicated to our mission... to inspire, motivate, acknowledge, and remember... and to strengthen ourselves, our community, and those that look up to us. Individually, we are works in progress.... together, we can move mountains.... who here can refute the words of Coretta Scott King, who so wisely said, “The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members?” As far as I’m concerned, that statement has our mission written all over it!!! (**Wait for the laugh**).

For most of the year, we, as individuals, professionals, friends, and colleagues, work. We work to communicate. We work to live and thrive. We work to support others while discovering and acknowledging our purpose in life and the impact our actions yield on the world around us. We work to improve our own lots in life.... to find resolve and determination that drive us to our own self-reflection. We do all of it to give back to others so that they may discover their own inner strength and light. When we get down to it, isn’t that the purpose of community? To gather, share strength, and unite to build a stronger, better, more inclusive world for each one of us???? And while we’re at it... every once in a while, like tonight, we pause.... we reflect... we dress up... and we celebrate!!! (**Can you say, “We tear the house down? ... didn’t know how outrageous you might want to go... it’s your choice**).

Here we are at the Black and Gold Ball.... what does that mean to us??? Not wanting to guess, I checked... Gold is the color of winners... it invokes “higher ideals, wisdom, and enlightenment. It inspires knowledge, spirituality, and a deep understanding of one’s self and one’s soul. While superficially, the color black might get a tougher “rap,” psychology and tradition remind us it is associated with “elegance, strength, power, and authority.” What more can we ask for to guide us?

Tonight, as we acknowledge our brotherhood and as we recognize the indomitable, inherent strength that exists in others, and as we gather to dine, dance, and bathe in the elegance of our accomplishments, let’s remember that people are watching.... young people that look to us for guidance. We may not be aware of their gaze at all times, but they are there.... they are watching and they are emulating our actions, and as such, it is our duty to be the example to follow in this world. It is our mandate to look within before we can guide those around us. It is our mission to be open to learn before we can teach. The work we do to raise funds for our scholarship program is exceptional. We as leaders, must also be exceptional. Marianne Williamson said, “In every community, there is work to be done. In every nation, there are wounds to heal. In every heart, there is the power to do it.”

We have the power...Let’s continue to use it to build better lives for those we mentor and for ourselves. There’s an African proverb that states, “If you want to go quickly, go alone. If you want to go far, **go together.**” ... and to paraphrase George Bernard Shaw, “... I want to be thoroughly used up when I die, for the harder I work, the more I live.” I am proud to work hard and to go far with all of you.... Thank you and enjoy!!