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Nova Southeastern University's Sixth President

Remarks from the African Presence Art Exhibition

Friday, January 31, 2014

On behalf of Nova Southeastern University's Board of Trustees, students, faculty, staff, and alumni, it gives me great pleasure to welcome you tonight as we celebrate the opening of our 11th Annual African Presence Art Exhibition.

This is an exciting year for NSU. We are celebrating 50 years of academic excellence, research and community service. A lot has happened since NSU was founded in 1964. We have grown from our initial class of 17 PhD students to being the 9th largest private not for profit university in the nation. We have been consistently recognized for our diversity, including master's and doctorate degrees awarded to African Americans and Hispanics. But at NSU, diversity is about so much more than a person's ethnic background or the color of our skin. Inclusiveness is a cornerstone that makes our campus and our lives so much richer. This foundation has been with us for our first 50 years, and will continue to guide us into the future.

This year marks the culmination of more than a decade since all of NSU's colleges, centers, and schools collaborated together to produce one united, university-wide recognition of Black History Month.

And for these past 11 years, the same tradition has kicked off our festivities and been a cornerstone of our month-long celebration: the unveiling of NSU's annual African Presence Art Exhibition.

This year's exhibit – "Witness to History: The Photography of Ernest Withers" – brings more than 75 pieces of photographs from the Withers Collection Museum and Gallery in Memphis, Tennessee.

As many of you know, Diversity is one of NSU's Core Values, which permeates all that we do, and also reflects our student body.

In fact, approximately 27% of our students are Black, 22% are Hispanic, 38% are White, and 10% are Asian, Pacific Islander, Native American, or another minority.

NSU also awards more doctoral degrees in fields like education and psychology to African-Americans than any other university in the nation – a distinction that we have held for years. We also rank in the top five in the number of master's degrees awarded to African-Americans throughout the United States.

These achievements are a reflection of NSU's commitment to mirror the community we serve and our mission to make education accessible to all deserving students.

NSU also has a responsibility to prepare all our graduates to thrive professionally and personally in a global economy.

And one way we create a global mindset, is by exposing our students to the greater world culture, as we do tonight and throughout February.

So don't forget, NSU's 2014 Black History Month celebration is just getting started – there are many more compelling discussions, engaging performances, educational workshops and dynamic speakers to come!

All of our Black History Month events are open to the public, and you can find a listing on our website, www.nova.edu/blackhistory.

I would also encourage you to visit our Museum of Art Fort Lauderdale to see a complimentary exhibit, "The Movement: Bob Adelman and Civil Rights Era

Photography,” which illustrates Adelman’s view of this important era in American History.

Thank you. I hope you all enjoy the evening, and the exhibit.