



# COMMENCEMENT 2009

## GRADS URGED TO LIVE THEIR IDEALS

**N**ewark Mayor Cory Booker captivated more than 5,000 students, parents, faculty and others at NJIT's 2009 commencement ceremony in May. Speaking after receiving an honorary doctor of humane letters degree, the mayor began by highlighting the bond between Newark and NJIT since its founding as a technical school in 1881. "A great global university and a great city that are linked," Booker said.

During the ceremony at the Prudential Center, the university awarded 2,148 degrees, which included honorary doctoral degrees and earned doctoral, master's and bachelor's degrees.

"Graduations have a very special place in my heart," Booker went on to say. "The most important advice I can offer is to always live your ideals, to know who you are and to make your words match

**"YOU WILL TRANSFORM  
THIS WORLD IN WAYS  
GREATER THAN YOUR  
OCCUPATION DICTATES."**

*Mayor Cory Booker*

your actions. Every moment of your life you can choose positive energy where others choose negativity.

"You will transform this world in ways greater than your occupation dictates and you must choose action over apathy because democracy is not a spectator sport. You must get in the game."

The mayor also told humorous graduation anecdotes about his family. "They hold the record for starting the most scandals for counterfeit tickets," he joked. "They'd also show up and take so many pictures, they'd blind incoming flights at Liberty Airport."

To illustrate that nothing comes easy, he recounted his political path to City Hall. He talked of his early strained relations with the previous mayor. He talked, too, of his despair as a young councilman, because he couldn't improve living standards for Newark's poor. Older residents exhorted him to "do something," but he was



PHOTO: CHAPPELLE PHOTOGRAPHY

Newark Mayor Cory Booker

BISHOF TOLD STUDENTS THEY HAVE THE KNOWLEDGE AND POWER TO CHANGE THE WORLD. "TAKE A RISK. MAKE A CHANGE."



by carrying a gonfalon – a tall banner that demarcates NJIT’s different schools. The gonfalon carriers were Alexander Sheppard, Hackensack; Carlos Figueroa, South Orange; Stephen Korol, Middlesex; Ken Mosca, Nutley; Tom Zarebczan, Clifton; and Joseph Di-Napoli, Colonia.

Vincent Naimoli, founder and chairman emeritus of the Tampa Bay Rays baseball team, and an NJIT alumnus, received an honorary doctor of humane letters. Naimoli, who grew up in Paterson, is chairman and CEO of Anchor Industries International, Tampa, and chairman, president and CEO of Naimoli Baseball Enterprises. He entered the national spotlight last fall when the Rays, a team he had nurtured for almost a decade, played in the World Series. Among baseball owners, Naimoli is known for his focus on the game, especially its welfare. He has served on Major League Baseball’s committees for international relations, legislative affairs and equal opportunity. Among his degrees, Naimoli received a master of science in mechanical engineering from NJIT in 1962.

Philanthropist, astronaut and entrepreneur Bernard A. Harris, MD, received an honorary doctor of science. Harris is the veteran of two space shuttle missions and was the first African-American to walk in space. In education circles, he’s known for the Bernard Harris Summer Science Camp, a two-week opportunity for middle school students that encourages them to pursue a career in science or related fields. NJIT has been a New Jersey venue for this program, fully supported by both Harris’ own foundation and ExxonMobil. Harris is also CEO of Vesalius Ventures, a venture capital firm in Houston focused on medical informatics and technology. ■

*Author: Sheryl Weinstein is NJIT director of public relations.*



paralyzed until one day he erected a tent on a field and started a hunger strike. Hundreds joined him and their outcries eventually brought about change.

“Be courageous,” Booker said. “Stand up for who you are. . . Love yourself enough to be true to what you are so you can love your fellow man and be true to a cause that is true.”

NJIT President Robert A. Altenkirch urged graduates to accept all challenges with utmost optimism. “Sail away from the safe harbor, explore and discover,” he said.

Class Crier Edward Bishof Jr., of Freehold, who coincidentally is the great-grandson of the late Mayor of Newark Leo Carlin (1958-1962), opened the ceremony. Bishof, who was senior class president, told students they have the knowledge and power to change the world. “Take a risk. Make a change,” he said.

During the ceremony, the university recognized eight alumni present who graduated prior to 1959. The oldest of the group was Harvey Segal, who received a BS in chemical engineering in 1944.

Six seniors of high academic standing led their respective colleges into the ceremony

PHOTOS: BABAJIDE AKEREDOLU

Edward Bishof Jr., senior class president and class crier