

**Maia Carter Hallward**  
**Remarks upon receiving the Jepson 10<sup>th</sup> Reunion Award**  
**April 12, 2008**

Thank you Dean Peart for this honor and your generous introduction. Thank you, President Ayers, and congratulations on your installation yesterday. I would also like to thank my family and friends, those here and also those unable to be with us today, for your support.

On this occasion, however, I would most like to thank the faculty and students of the Jepson School of Leadership Studies. In particular, I would like to express my appreciation for three “gifts” I have found invaluable in my personal and professional life since graduation.

The first two gifts, the gift of cooperation and the gift of conflict, come from the extensive group work that is a hallmark of the Jepson experience. In our groups, we learned how to deal with different communication styles and cultural approaches and how to engage with conflict constructively, creatively and with humor. We learned how to persevere in solving problems, since we *had* to work together and collectively turn in a final product for our grade. In groups, we learned that sometimes the best way to lead is to step back and let someone else take charge, that good followers are just as necessary as good leaders and that there is fine line separating the two roles. Part of our group learning involved negotiating that line and knowing how we could best serve the group at any particular time.

The third gift, the gift of border-crossing, comes from another hallmark of the Jepson curriculum, the intersection of theory and practice through practical application of course concepts in the real world. In most classes we worked in a community organization or business, taking theories from class and applying them in the real world setting to see how they worked, and then taking the practical experience from that setting and bringing it back to class to add to our knowledge and adjust our theories accordingly. In the process both theory and practice were improved. Through constructively engaging and through dialogue, both the classroom and the real world pushed each other to higher levels.

Another aspect of border crossing is the importance of crossing disciplinary borders. Because our faculty was trained in different academic disciplines, and because each student had an additional minor, major or concentration other than Leadership Studies, each of us looked at every topic through a variety of conceptual and problem-solving lenses. Not only did this help us think more critically and creatively about the issues before us, but it taught us that there is no *one* right way to go about addressing any leadership challenge. Furthermore, it taught us that everyone has something to bring to the table, and that border-crossing is a *positive* endeavor.