



Imani Brooks '16 Leader on the Rise Recipient Remarks

April 30, 2022

Good morning, Rector Connell, faculty, alumni, and the entire Chatham Hall family. I want to first and foremost thank the Alumni Council for selecting me as the inaugural recipient of the Leader on the Rise Award.

I am truly humbled to be considered let alone selected.

With recognition of this caliber comes responsibility, as Luke 12:48 says "of much is given, much is required." One thing that my time here at Chatham Hall taught me is do not hide your talent. share with others so that they may be encouraged. Chatham Hall has had a special place in my life ever since I transferred to Chatham Hall as a sophomore and even more as my sisters matriculated through. This school has come a long way since I graduated as the only Black student in my year, and I applaud its progress and dedication to its students, the life blood of Chatham Hall. Chatham Hall certainly poured into me as a student to become the alumna who is today a Leader on the Rise.

I learned public speaking skills through my Senior Chapel talk and being a volunteer for MLK Day and Black History Month chapels. Now, Chatham Hall hosts a variety of cultural awareness and cultural affirming chapel talks for its community. My love for writing grew in my AP English class and with mentors such as Dr. E and Ms. Betsy Seymour. A real appreciation for writing has proven to be an essential skill as I prepare for my legal career. And I was inspired to travel the world after a South Africa spring break service trip. I later committed my undergraduate studies to global politics, and I have traveled to the African continent multiple times.

Chatham Hall has a unique opportunity to shape its students into culturally competent, socially conscious, and dedicated leaders through the school's curriculum, campus programming, and off campus excursions. There are only so many places where you can get a glimpse of the whole globe via your peers without even having a passport and even fewer where you are encouraged to do independent research in any area. Female leadership is a norm set by example by Dean Griswold and Rector Connell and a value embraced by staff and faculty who dedicate their time to Chatham Hall students. As alumnae present today, it is evident that you are just as grateful for your Chatham Hall education as I am. I implore you to continue to support Chatham Hall in tangible ways through scholarship donations, internship opportunities for students, and speaker roles. It is important to remember current students and give back in ways that specifically impact their experiences. Staff, faculty, administrators, students, parents, and alumnae all make up the Chatham Hall community. Remember, of much is given, much is required. Thank you.