



Johnnetta B. Cole

Lectured at Siena on January 21, 1999

”Holding Up Half the Sky: The Civil Rights Struggle Continues”

The twelfth annual lecture was given by Johnnetta B. Cole on January 21, 1999. “Sister President” Johnnetta B. Cole recently completed a decade of service as the first African American woman to serve as president of Spelman College since its founding in 1881. During her presidency, Spelman made history by becoming the first historically African American college to receive a number one rating in U.S. News & World Report’s annual college issue. She also led the college to completion of a \$113 million capital campaign, which is the largest amount ever raised by a historically black college or university.

Cole earned a Ph.D. from Northwestern University and continued her research and teaching in the areas of cultural anthropology, African American studies, and women’s studies while holding positions at Washington State University, where she was named Outstanding Faculty Member of the Year; the University of Massachusetts at Amherst; Hunter College; and the graduate faculty of the City University of New York. This past fall she assumed a new position as Presidential Distinguished Professor of Anthropology, Women’s Studies, and African American Studies at Emory University.

Textbooks written and edited by Cole are widely used in classrooms throughout America. Her widely read recent book, *Conversations: Straight Talk with America’s Sister President*, was written for African American women, but with an invitation for others to “listen in” on the conversations. She is an active participant in numerous community and civic boards, including the Carter Center of Emory University, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, The Link, Inc., and the National Council of Negro Women. She has received honorary degrees from 41 colleges and universities and numerous awards, including, most recently, the Eleanor Roosevelt Education Achievement Award given by the Women’s National Democratic Club and the TransAfrica Forum Global Public Service Award.