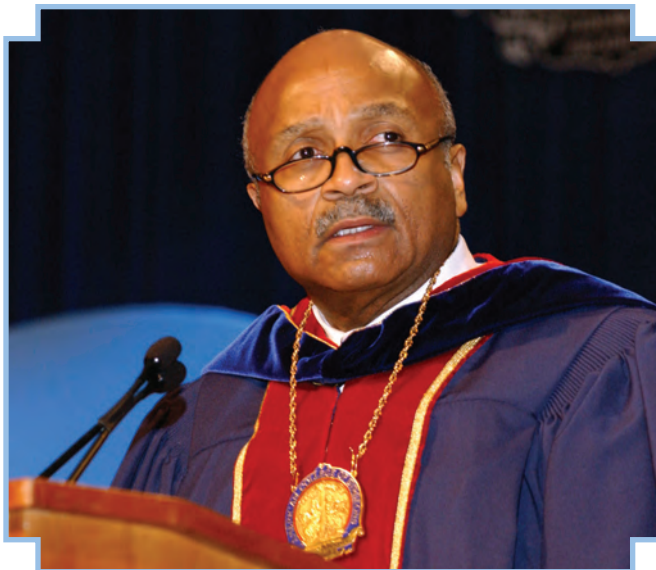


Presidential Address



ACS: A legacy of leadership

Editor's note: *The following is a summary of the Presidential Address delivered by L.D. Britt, MD, MPH, FACS, during Convocation at the 96th annual Clinical Congress in Washington, DC. The full text of the address will be published in the February 2011 issue of the Journal of the American College of Surgeons.*

“**I** enthusiastically dedicate this Presidential Address to the patient,” said L. D. Britt, MD, MPH, FACS, newly installed ACS President, to the College’s 1,467 Initiates on October 3, during the Convocation ceremony in Washington, DC. Framing his address with a historical perspective of both the Clinical Congress and the American Col-

lege of Surgeons, Dr. Britt noted the historical benchmarks of the College, while acknowledging the importance of strong leadership in the past and the present day. “The American College of Surgeons has a legacy of leaders who put the interest of patients first,” Dr. Britt said, “even when such an emphasis conflicted with the economic best interests of the surgeon. It is a legacy that no amount of advertisement can create. Today, the American College of Surgeons has leaders who transcend gender, ethnicity, race, and professional/specialty orientation.”

Although Dr. Britt emphasized the importance of the College’s “legacy of leadership,” he urged the Initiates not to “bask in nostalgic euphoria” and he stressed the importance of adapting to change “without compromising [the College’s] core values.”

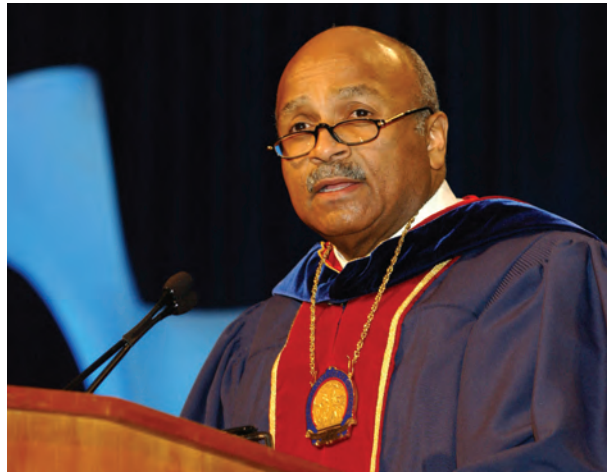
In speaking about the challenges surgeons will face over the next several months, Dr. Britt underscored the importance of access to quality health care, and the College’s role as a “beacon for quality care and patient safety” with “unwavering emphasis on professionalism and ethics.” He specifically noted the Advanced Trauma Life Support® course—which is celebrating its 30th anniversary this year—as a prototype for best practices in the management of the surgical patient.

“There has been no better steward of quality care and safety than the American College of Surgeons,” said Dr. Britt. “The American College of Surgeons has never needed any other authority to define its mission.”

Dr. Britt noted three ways the College—as well as the individual surgeon—“must fulfill their professional responsibilities to society.” These duties include ensuring excellent patient outcomes, wise resource allocation, and effective self-regulation.

“Whether we consider ourselves members of the ‘House of Surgery’ or citizens of the ‘Village of Surgery’ (where there are housing neighborhoods), we have an unbreakable contract with society to provide optimal care for the surgical patient,” said Dr. Britt.

In closing, Dr. Britt noted that “the gathering today marks the 100th year since the inception of the Clinical Congress, [and combined with] the fact that we are just three years shy of the



Dr. Britt delivering his Presidential Address.

centennial anniversary of the American College of Surgeons, it seems only fitting that we all renew our commitment to the original tenets of this great organization.” He called for everyone to demonstrate “the leadership that will be required” to meet the challenges of one of the “most turbulent and labile periods that this nation has faced.” ^Ω