



White Coat Welcomes New Medical Students

Dr. Shabazz notes that a good physician needs more than a white coat and stethoscope

Constance Shabazz, M.D., '86, used the doctor's bag as an analogy to show first year medical students that they need a lot more than stethoscopes and reflex hammers to become good physicians.

"Some additional tools you may need go well beyond what you'll be exposed to during the four-plus years of your medical training," she said. "They may include tools of advocacy, business skills and policy-making, to name a few."

Dr. Shabazz was the keynote speaker at the fifth annual White Coat Ceremony, the symbolic rite at which first-year medical students stretch their eager arms into their fresh white coats, symbolizing their commitment to the four years of learning that lie before them.

Using her personal history to illustrate her theme, Dr. Shabazz noted that the ever-changing world of medicine (such as HIV) and the world in general (noting the September 11 tragedy) can "suddenly change your outlook on life in general and medicine in particular."

To confront these changes, Dr. Shabazz is continually



Clockwise from top left: Shryock Auditorium before, during and after the White Coat Ceremony.

"adding tools" to her doctor's bag, developing new skills, confronting professional and personal challenges, and broadening her scope of interests. She has learned, she says, "to not get hung up on the tools (the degrees) but get hung on what we produce with them." Since graduating from the medical school, Dr. Shabazz has worked with underserved populations, including people with HIV and AIDS, smoking addicts and substance abusers.

School of Medicine alumni assisted with the ceremony. Dean and Provost J. Kevin Dorsey, M.D., Ph.D., '78, welcomed the students. Kathryn Bohn, M.D., '83, President of the Alumni Society Board of Governors, and Sharon Hull, M.D., '87, Assistant Dean of Students, presented the white coats.

Most U.S. medical schools host a White Coat Ceremony, designed to emphasize the importance of professionalism and empathy in medicine. ■