



(left to right) Former MSU President Dr. Earl S. Richardson; Tabb Bishop, Vice President of Government Affairs, Verizon Maryland and Verizon Washington, D.C.; Alan Rice, President of CITE-Maryland; CITE National President Leona Punzi; Sandra Arnette, Manager of Media Relations, Verizon Maryland and Verizon Washington, D.C.; and Rory Fisher, Past President of CITE-Maryland

Answering the Call

The Consortium of Information and Telecommunications Executives (CITE)

The court-ordered breakup of the Bell System in 1984 brought about many changes in the U.S. Among those changes was the establishment of CITE - the Consortium of Information and Telecommunications Executives. CITE is a national nonprofit organization that represents more than 35,000 African-American employees and retirees of Verizon. The consortium, which has local chapters across the nation, "is committed to industry excellence, community service, and personal and professional development," according to its website.

In April, CITE brought its community service mission to Morgan State University, by donating \$22,000 to a new endowed scholarship fund for students of the University.

"The organization has an annual gala where the leadership rallies its members to financially support historically black institutions," says Erica Cryor, MSU's director of development. "Morgan is grateful for CITE's donation and for the opportunity

to work together to make a difference in the lives of Morgan students."

"We're trying to support HBCUs," explains CITE National President Leona Punzi. "One of our missions is to support our youth, and where better than with historically black colleges or universities?"

In deciding which black college will receive its annual gift, CITE has no strict criteria, Punzi says. Rather, "we look at the academics of your school to make sure that you have an engineering department and a computer science department.... We're hoping some of your students will come to Verizon one day and work in our organization. Some of us are not fortunate enough to have money and means. Everyone needs some help, and our goal is to help. That's why we're here."

Punzi reports that Morgan is well represented in CITE's membership.

"Many of our Verizon executives attended Morgan, and one or two are on CITE's board," she says. "The region president of Verizon for Maryland and the District of Columbia is an MSU grad. That's Bill Roberts. He's a good friend of CITE and a big supporter. We also have many members who have children who are attending Morgan, and many of those members attended Morgan themselves."

CITE plans for its donation to MSU to be part of an ongoing relationship between Morgan and Verizon, Punzi reports. "We're hoping that our Verizon local president for Maryland, Alan Rice, will work with Morgan on initiatives that we can help support, whether that is sending Verizon employees to the school to speak, Verizon participation in Morgan's Career Fair, providing internships for Morgan students at Verizon, or other programs," she says. William M. Carson, MSU director of Career Development, will be Morgan's main liaison with Verizon beginning in Fall 2010.