

Black Men's Union Induction Ceremony 2013

To Azmar, the current members of the BMU, past BMU presidents in attendance, Dean Cohen, and future members of the BMU, I am happy to be here tonight.

I'd like to thank brother Azmar for inviting me to this induction ceremony. Whenever I'm able, I enjoy making myself available to the BMU.

Over the years, the BMU has maintained a positive track record of service, of brotherhood, and of unity. In a world full of choices, becoming a part of an organization isn't always the easiest thing to do. How does one know which group to choose? You may ask will I fit in? Does this group's values align with mine? These and many other questions that you might ask often aren't easily answered.

One thing that I have learned is that you must ask questions. An organization that's about anything will be able to share their successes and goals. Also, a group's track record is important to incoming members, because it provides a blueprint of what was and what is to come.

For you who are becoming new members of the BMU, let me just say, that this group has shown leadership by example, has given back by serving, and has nurtured by mentoring. I know Dean Cohen joins me in congratulating you on your induction into the BMU.

I'd like to spend a few moments on what I consider to be, perhaps, the most important word in the title BMU— and that is the term, Union.

Etymologically, the word **union** originated from the ancient Latin term **Unum** or **unio** which is translated to mean a single pearl. The term **unitas** or **unitatem** meant oneness, or sameness, or agreement. It also is defined as the action of joining one thing to another.

Likewise, the term *common* comes from the Latin word **communis** (comu neese), from Old French **comun**, meaning belonging to all, in common, shared by all or many.

And if we wanted to take this a bit further, there is the term, **community**, the joining of the terms **common** (belonging to) and **union** (one) or belonging to one. The term **community** comes from the Latin term, **communitatem** and the Old French term, **comunité**. A community is built from a union. The concept of a community is that it's broader, deeper, wider, and is designed to stand the test of time. A community in its finest moments embraces fellowship, friendship, partnership, camaraderie, and dare I say, communion among a group of people.

In a human and social community like the BMU, the talents, resources, needs, and goals of the group are pooled together to form an identity, and when it is firmly rooted on the cornerstone of empowering supporting, and uplifting others, then it is itself a powerful, relevant, and transcending force on campus and in the wider community.

Members of the BMU come together to share many common interests, yet by virtue of your diverse backgrounds, academic interests, and talents, you all are individual unios, pearls. It's a delicate balance to one's ego to strive as an individual, a unios, a pearl, while working together for the common good of the union, or the communion—or the community. The union that you create must support and propel each other individually. Reciprocally, each of you as individual members of the BMU should aim high and contribute your talents to the maintenance and sustainability of this wonderful union. The whole of you as an organization is greater than any one of you.

So, as I close, I'd like to share a message by way of a poem I stumbled upon about how the bonds of friendship and of brotherly respect, brotherly trust, and brotherly love can strengthen and remain unbroken in spite of the many shortcomings we have.

It's called You're My Dear Friend, and it's written by Perry Campanella, an Urban poet from New York City.

**We have been together
treasured joy now for many years
we trust each other with our
emotions, with affection, tears,**

Any day when you are sick or hurting

**I feel your pain - significant other,
when either-one needs attention
we help one another...**

**These mutual friendly feelings
for assistance, approval, support
form our tight bonds,
usually never broken**

**Sharing visions, time together
we respect each other;
regardless of shortcomings,
I know you, and
"I love you anyway"**