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DR. MURIEL PETIONI, *"THE MOTHER OF MEDICINE IN HARLEM,"* TELLS STUDENTS AT TOURO COLLEGE OF PHARMACY TO FIND THEIR MISSION IN LIFE
Her Speech Was College's Inaugural Black History Month Lecture

New York, N.Y., February 9, 2011 – Dr. Muriel Petioni, center, known as *"The Mother of Medicine in Harlem,"* recently spoke to more than 200 students at Touro College of Pharmacy on *"Dealing With the 21st Century,"* at the College's Inaugural Black History Month Lecture in Harlem. With her, from left, are Ed Davila, director of development at the College, and Dr. Stuart Feldman, dean of the College. In her speech, Dr. Petioni stressed the importance of finding one's passion in life and mapping out a plan to pursue it. "Each of us has a mission in life," she said. "You've got to know what your mission is." Dr. Petioni also emphasized that everyone is special and unique, with their own strengths and weaknesses, and that one of life's most critical lessons is to learn to recognize others' strengths and accommodate their weaknesses through tolerance and compassion. Respecting one's own history and culture is also crucial: "If you want to know where you're going, you need to know where you've been," she said. Born in Trinidad in 1914 and raised in Harlem, Dr. Petioni followed in the footsteps of her physician father, graduating from Howard University College of

Medicine, the only female in the Class of 1937. After a two-year internship at Harlem Hospital, she worked at several southern Black colleges before establishing her own practice in Harlem in 1950, taking over the 131st Street offices of her late father in 1951. Seeing an urgent need for the sharing of knowledge and opportunities among black women physicians, Dr. Petioni founded the Dr. Susan Smith McKinney Steward Medical Society in 1974, named after the first African-American woman licensed to practice medicine in New York State. In 1976, she organized the Medical Women of the National Medical Association (NMA), and served as its first president. In the mid-1980s, she founded the Friends of Harlem Hospital Center. In May 2006, she helped to establish the Dr. Muriel Petioni Hospital in Sierra Leone, West Africa. Plans are currently underway for the creation of a charter school for health, scholarship and community leadership in New York City for students from first grade through high school that is also to be named in her honor.

Touro College of Pharmacy, which opened its doors in Harlem in September of 2008, is the first school of pharmacy to open in New York in 70 years and is dedicated to increasing educational opportunities in Harlem and serving the Harlem community.

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