

Loretta Claiborne

2015 Calendar

I am so encouraged by the work that the athletes featured in this year's calendar are doing to bring their communities together through a variety of sports and athletic programs. Sports has always been my saving grace and a way for me to feel like I belonged, even when everyone else was telling me I didn't. Sports can bring people together from different backgrounds and experiences, and make a community a whole.

I believe it's important to inspire the kids in our communities to be better and to do more with their lives. That's what the men and women highlighted throughout the months of this calendar are doing through their initiatives. The lessons kids learn by playing organized sports can prepare them for life. They have to learn respect their coaches and the rules. They have to dress properly and behave. It is a place where they learn what it takes to do well, not just on a track, court or field, but also in school and life.

Sports are also a game changer when it comes to the physical health of our communities. Sports keep people active. The growing obesity epidemic in America makes it more important than ever to get African Americans on track for more healthful living. Being active can help our



weight down. It can also keep us from doing things that may be harmful to ourselves or to one another. I'm sure these calendar honorees would agree that anything we can do to keep our kids active today is going to be the key to a better tomorrow for them and the neighborhoods we live in.

I know sports can change people's lives. I'm living proof of that. And the wonderful people profiled in this year's calendar are changing lives physically, emotionally, and academically, helping to create positive influences within their communities. They are proving hope for the future, and they're accomplishing it through the power of sports.