

## Charles “Roc” Dutton inspires NYC students of the Fidelity Futurestage



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Charles “Roc” Dutton, stage & screen legend spoke on Friday, February 11, 2008, to underprivileged New York City Students participating in the Landmark Theatre Program. This multiple Tony Award nominated actor (*Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom*, *The Piano Lesson*) and Emmy Award winner (“*The Practice*”, “*Without a Trace*”) engaged with the Martin Luther King Jr. students of Fidelity Futurestage® about how he turned his post-prison life around through his love of the arts. His powerful delivery of how he went from “Jail to Yale” left many of the students in attendance spellbound.

After “Roc” told his life story of how the mean streets of Baltimore, MD almost engulfed him into a life of doom. Solitary confinement actually saved his life. A former girlfriend just by chance happened to send him a book on plays and he ate up every word, studied every structure of how the play lines were written, eventually, Dutton’s love for the theater, film and TV grew from him reading the playwright book from cover to cover this is what they call it in showbiz a star is born. On the streets it is called exploring your positive options and making better life choices.

The students were allowed to have a Q & A period with the actor. In closing, Dutton said, to the students, “if there is one thing that I want you to take away from my talk today is this, learn your craft well and be the best that you can be at it”. He later added, I am

hopeful of the day that one of you will come up to me and say you spoke at my school and it changed my life. As the lunch bell rang the students and actor parted ways and this writer could tell that more than food would nurture the students in the lunchroom.

**FIDELITY FUTURESTAGE** is a comprehensive arts education initiative designed to bring professional theater into the classrooms of participating New York City schools created by **FIDELITY INVESTMENTS**. Now in its second year, the program provides a unique playwriting and production curriculum for more than 800 area students, representing 10 underserved inner-city schools. Fidelity FutureStage affords students the extraordinary opportunity to learn from some of the Broadway community's leading playwrights, directors, designers and actors – both in their classrooms and at Broadway theatres – and ultimately experience the thrill of bringing their own creativity to life on a professional stage. In May, one play from each participating school will be selected for the Fidelity FutureStage landmark finale event, marking an unprecedented New York theatrical debut for every student involved.