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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

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Dear Southernites and Friends,

I am traveling to Canada this weekend for the American Bar Association Mid-Year meeting in Vancouver, British Columbia. As you know, I am a member of the ABA House of Delegates. Over the last few years, we have had serious challenges with certain recommendations to the House to further limit access to law schools which, if approved, would put our law school at risk. We will remain vigilant in our work to protect our HBCU law schools who were founded on the premise of affording access to students who were traditionally precluded from obtaining a legal education at PWIs. HBCUs continue to be major producers of lawyers and legal scholars of color. HBCU law schools have also expanded their scope over the years and have afforded greater access to a legal education to students of all races. The Southern University Law Center is a tremendous example of that. I am often reminded here in Louisiana of the number of judges, legislators and practioners who earned their law degrees from Southern University.

I am slowly recovering from an incredible weekend at the Washington Mardi Gras. It was tuly both an entertaining and productive weekend networking with Louisiana congressmen and other Louisiana political and business leaders. The Houston and Los Angeles Chapters both had hugely successful Mardi Gras Balls this weekend. Special congratulations to Dr. Warren Valdry and Ms. Brenda LaMotte for being named King and Queen of the L.A. Chapter Mardi Gras Ball. These events continue to keep that "Ole Southern Spirit" alive among our alumni across the nation.

Yesterday, I attended the Southern Univesity System Foundation's Board of Directors quarterly meeting. The Board elected new officers and welcomed a new member, Louis Henry, to its Board. Congratulations to Fred Banks, Allison Young, and Judge Luke LaVergne who were voted in as the new Chairman, Vice Chairman, and Treasurer, respectively, of the Board of Directors. Special thanks to the tremendous contributions of outgoing Immediate Past Chairwoman, Anna Jones, Chairman, Domoine Rutledge, Vice Chariman, Joseph Delpit, and Treasurer Henry Baptiste. I've personally witnessed the transformation of the Foundation into a philanthropic jaugernaut under their leadership with the phenomenal guidance and work of CEO Alfred Harrell and his talented staff. Congratulations to all and we look forward to many more successess by our sister SU support organization.

Finally, qualifying ended yesterday for Alumni Federation elections that will begin in the next few months. The election results will be announced at our National Conference here in Baton Rouge in July. In the meantime, our current national officers are working hard to end this fiscal year by

closing out some key projects. Chief among them are our efforts to begin the construction of our Center for Alumni and Economic Development and advancement of the *IMAGINE 20,000* project. I look forward to continuing my service thereafter as Past President on our Executive Board and Council. But, until then, we have lots of work to do, and I greatly appreciate all of your support.

Happy Mardi Gras,



Preston J. Castille, Jr., Esq.
National President