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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

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Dear Southernites and Friends:

I have the good fortune of serving as a member of the House of Delegates of the American Bar Association (ABA). Last week, I traveled to New York for the ABA Annual Meeting and found myself in front of Trump Tower where protesters and counter-protesters were demonstrating. The President had not yet arrived, but the crowd was already growing. It was a typical New York-looking scene -- a melting pot of so many ethnicities and nationalities. As one protester shouted at the front door of Trump Tower, another man yelled back at the protester challenging him. He shouted, "Go home, we love Trump in New York. We love King Trump." I laughed at the exchange, as the men were passionate in their expressions. I thought how fortunate we are to live in a Democracy where there are no Kings and Queens. Instead, freedom of expression and a deep belief in the rule of law undergird our society. Unfortunately, as we recently observed in Charlottesville, some demonstrations end tragically, and we witness the worst of this country and our fellow Americans. We will continue to pray for peace in our great nation.

At the ABA House of Delegates meeting, we heard spirited debate by lawyers and law students on what the rule of law should be on a myriad of thoughtful topics, ranging from gun control to immigration to international crimes and national security. At the last ABA meeting, you may recall the House of Delegates took up a resolution that would have changed the bar passage rate requirements for law schools, and could have had a negative impact on Southern's Law Center. The resolution was defeated with the help of SULC Chancellor John Pierre. We anticipate the issue may come up again at the ABA Mid-Winter meeting in Vancouver. We will stay vigilant and monitor any attempts to weaken SULC or any of the other HBCU law schools around the country.

In the meantime, students are slowly settling in on our campuses. On our Baton Rouge campus, there are signs of growth, as a number of renovation projects are underway, including new sidewalks around many buildings. The new SU Innovation Center has nearly completed its construction led by the SU System Foundation. The new parking lot and landscaping look spectacular. The Southern University downtown location is now in its third semester. I am co-teaching Trial Advocacy with Louisiana State Court Judge Donald Johnson. SULC has also added Judge Jason Verdigets to the faculty downtown. What a treat for me and the students to share the classroom with such experienced jurists.

In Louisiana and Texas, we are preparing this weekend for Hurricane Harvey. Please be safe, my friends. Pay close attention to the weather updates and don't take any unnecessary risks. We want to see all of you in the stands next week as we kick off football season with our home opener next **Sunday** against South Carolina State. The Alumni Federation will be the sponsor of the Pre-Game Show on ESPN, 104.5FM. Please tune in to the Pre-Game show 10:30 Sunday morning.

The new year and football season are here!

Sincerely serving Southern,



Preston J. Castille, Jr., Esq.
National President
HBCU Alumni Coalition President