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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

January 18, 2017

Dear Alumni, Friends and Supporters:

Marian and I recently took our daughters to see the movie "Hidden Figures." If you haven't seen it, you really should. It is the true story of three African-American women who worked for NASA in the 1960s, during the height of the Civil Rights era. It showcases the story of Katherine Goble Johnson, a brilliant mathematician who calculated flight trajectories for NASA's Project Mercury. It was a touching dramatization of how intellect, hard work, and character can overcome deep-seeded prejudices.

Today, many of our modern-day "Hidden Figures" really aren't hidden any more. It doesn't take much effort to look around and see the incredible accomplishments of African-American women in our local communities. Here in Baton Rouge, we just elected our first African-American female Mayor-President, the Honorable Sharon Weston Broome. She is supported by a cast of strong local female leaders in the city such as Senators Regina Barrow and Yvonne Colomb, State Representatives Barbara Carpenter, Patricia Smith, and C. Denise Marcel, plus a host of African-American women on the Metro Council such as Chauna Banks, Erika Green, Donna Collins Lewis, and Tara Wicker.

Within the Southern University System, our Board of Supervisors is led by Chairwoman Ann Smith. Only a few years ago, Attorney Bridget Dinvaut chaired our Board of Supervisors. She is now the District Attorney in St. John the Baptist Parish. Throughout the SU System are so many other examples of extraordinarily brilliant women of color, not the least of which is the new chancellor of SUNO, Dr. Lisa Mims Devezin. Similarly, women are prominently leading the SU Alumni Federation. Most of our national officers are now women. In fact, most of our chapter presidents around the country are women.

As we conclude our Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday celebrations and begin preparation for Black History Month, take a moment to acknowledge our remarkable women achievers who are by no means "hidden" anymore. As my daughters are all too quickly growing up, I'm proud of the advancements our country has made. While we certainly have more to do as a nation, opportunities for young women of all colors continue to rise well beyond the stars.

Go, Jags and Knights,

Preston

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