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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

June 16, 2017

Dear Southernites and Friends:

This week was full of ups and downs. When my son was growing up, we loved the Disney movie, ***The Lion King***. In the movie, Mufasa explained to his son, Simba, the Circle of Life: at some point, we must all leave this world and new life comes along to replace us. I saw this take place this week. As we have been in the midst of celebrating our new students (new life) who are joining our Jaguar family, we also experienced the loss of two mighty Jaguars, Danny Edwards and Lolalisa King. Danny was a former National Alumni Federation officer, past Atlanta Chapter President, and an incredible lover of golf and life. Danny touched so many people around the country and was admired by the Jaguar Nation. As friends in the Atlanta area and nation were reeling over Danny's unexpected death, we learned of Lolalisa's surprise transition as well.

Lolalisa was one of the most amazing women I've met. She was a Southern University-educated architect, and truly a trailblazer for women and African Americans in the field of architecture. Lolalisa served as chair of the Alumni Center Committee during the first term of my administration. During my campaign in 2013, I stated that I was not in favor of moving this project forward because of all of our university's incredible needs. She, Janet St. Cyr Moore, and the other dedicated committee members took this project and breathed new life into it. I very much hope that we can pull this venture off. It would be a fitting tribute to her wonderful legacy. Danny and Lolalisa will be greatly missed.

As we build upon the legacy of both of these prominent alums, I must congratulate the Southern University Alumni Federation and Federation student intern, Perry White. The Federation has been named a finalist as the National Alumni Association of the Year, and Perry has been named a finalist as the male HBCU student of the year by *HBCU Digest*. The Federation was recognized, in part, for its role in helping develop the Southern University Downtown Baton Rouge location, and for its assistance in developing the ***IMAGINE 20,000*** conceptual plan which includes the Center for Alumni and Economic Development and a proposal for the development of a Southern University Medical Campus. The collaboration of the SU Foundation, the University and the Alumni Federation is now garnering national attention, which is pretty exciting.

Perry is a rock star among students. His work with Garrett Edgerson in producing "On the Yard", and co-hosting "Jaguar Journal" with Reggie Flood, apparently caught the attention of the *HBCU*

Digest selection committee. The Federation's hard work and innovative leadership as a national alumni association over this past year have led to transformative change, and I'm proud of all of our alumni and what they do for our university. Five other Southern University notables were chosen as finalists as well. Please see the full list and the article at www.HBCUDigest.com. Well done by all of the finalists!

Congratulations also to the Southern University School of Education. The School joined the Southern University Law Center in offering courses at the downtown Baton Rouge location this week. Students enrolled in the Masters in Education Leadership program began officially taking courses at the downtown location Monday. I must especially thank Education School Director, Dr. Verjanis Peoples, and Ed Leadership Professor, Dr. Esrom Pitre, for their leadership in expanding the presence of the School of Graduate Education to the heart of the City of Baton Rouge, where they will enjoy all the amenities of downtown, along with the opportunity to collaborate more deeply with elementary and secondary students, teachers and leaders in the Baton Rouge community. This is an extraordinarily powerful move by the School of Education to go beyond the borders of our main campus, and to bring the Southern University educational experience to the stakeholders it serves. Kudos to all who helped to make this possible. The School of Education is a part of the College of Humanities and Interdisciplinary Studies and new College Dean, Cynthia Bryant, is also looking into opportunities to expand course offerings at the new location. I'm thrilled by Dean Bryant's enthusiasm for this new expansion initiative.

I respect the Circle of Life, Jags. May we be comforted by knowing that the Circle is not broken, but made stronger, because we were a part of it.

As always, I remain

Sincerely Serving Southern,

Preston

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National President
HBCU Alumni Coalition President