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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

January 27, 2017

Dear Southernites and Friends:

Last Saturday, Marian and I drove to Hammond to attend a reception in honor of Mrs. Ann Smith, Chairlady of the Southern University Board of Supervisors. The Hammond Event Center is huge, but could barely accommodate all of her guests. It was clear that our new leader is admired and loved by so many people throughout the state of Louisiana. Congressmen, legislators and representatives of the Governor's office were there to pay tribute to Mrs. Smith. I learned a lot more about our new leader from the wonderful stories that were shared about her from some of her dearest friends and colleagues.

	
Preston and Marian Castille with SU Board Chairwoman, Ann A. Smith	**Chairwoman, Ann A. Smith offering remarks to dignitaries, friends and family**

Mrs. Smith is a former high school teacher, principal and coach. She is a strong believer in educating the children and adults of this state. She is well regarded as a phenomenal team builder. I believe she will bring out the best in each member of the team of administrators, faculty and staff who serve our students. While she has big shoes to fill following Dr. Leon Tarver as chair of the Board of Supervisors, I am confident that Mrs. Smith will continue to elevate the SU System to even greater success over the next two years.

Saturday was a busy night as one of our newest alumni chapters held its first scholarship fundraiser in Amite. Unfortunately, the reception and the fundraiser were at the same time, and I couldn't make it make it to the fundraiser. But, I am so proud of our new chapter. I cannot thank Dudley Williams enough for leading the way to help launch this new chapter. It was a nice gesture on the part of the chapter to honor Dudley for his service to this new chapter

	
New Alumni Chapter, the SUAF St. Helena Chapter hosts first scholarship fundraiser	**SU Alumnus Dudley C. Williams, Sr. was honored at the St. Helena Chapter scholarship fundraiser**

This week, Mayor Sharon Weston Broome's Transition Teams have been finalizing their reports and recommendations to our new Mayor-President. I serve on Mayor Broome's Education Transition Team. Mayor Broome plans to impress upon Southern University the need to play a stronger role in the advancement of the City of Baton Rouge and Parish of East Baton Rouge. Indeed, her various Transition Teams are populated with, and led by, several Southern University administrators, faculty and alumni.



Mayor-President's Education Transition Team

Southern has the capacity to be a significant resource for Mayor Broome's administration, not only in the area of elementary, secondary and postsecondary education, but also in economic development. Southern has the potential to not only lead economic development in North Baton Rouge, but in the entire City-Parish region as well. I'm looking forward to the new world of opportunities that our City and State are facing with our alma mater leading the way.



Preston Castille, Dr. Michelle Clayton and Dr. Diola Bagayoko at final Transition Team meeting



Higher Education Subcommittee Members, Jada Lewis, Dr. Girard Melancon, Dionne McCurry, and Preston Castille

We have gotten off to a great start in 2017 in Louisiana!

Sincerely,

Preston

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